CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

*Whatever words we utter should be chosen with care, for people will hear them and be influenced by them, for good or ill.*

- *Buddha*

1.1 Prologue

The Content on Internet remains in the public domain for eternity. Politicians and Celebrities can influence society through what they say and do. With the Internet putting the spotlight on them round the clock, the narrative and image of these influencers are open to scrutiny for every word they communicate.

In a Democracy every citizen has the right to exercise his judgment in a rational manner. A citizen has the choice to lead or follow a leader who can represent him and his interests in the government. In order to keep in touch with the functioning of the Democracy and be participative, a citizen keeps track of his representative through the Media.

There are various Channels of Media like print, television, radio and Internet for the citizen to keep a keen and observant eye on the functioning of his leader. It is in this context that the Content of what the leader says through the Media gains importance. Over the years, the Media has served as the watchdog of the Indian Democracy, forming a very integral part of the four pillars of this democratic institution. It is an opinion former as well as a critic for the 1.252 billion population. It holds up a mirror for the people, allowing them to judge, analyse, formulate ideas and make an action plan. In a country where such freedom of expression is ingrained and deeply entrenched in its very system, the Media plays a significant role.

The Internet has created many platforms to directly communicate with audiences without having to rely on traditional news Media. Today, Indian Politicians and Celebrities have taken to Social Media Channels to make their voices heard without third party intervention.
### 1.2 Meaning and Evolution of Communication

Aristotle in 350 BC through his eloquent speeches can be said to be one of the pioneers in the art of Communication for political purposes. The process of Communication and its evolution however, was studied from an academic perspective in the late nineteenth century. Noted scientist Darwin (1872, p.354) explained about the power of Communication among members of the same tribe. The use of verbal and non-verbal Communication by humans and the Darwinian Theory of Evolution have been the most significant and early understanding of the powers of language and expression. Communication scholars as well as scholars from various other disciplines have always believed that language represents the beginning of our cognitive evolution.

Communication has evolved from the oral traditions of storytelling and depicting drawing on the rocks to the use of Mass Media. From the written word to the printing press, to telegrams, radio, television, Internet and now back to the written word-a 140 character Tweet. The effects of the Media have been well researched and many studies have highlighted the potential benefits as well as the harmful effects of Media.

The coining of the word ‘Communication’ comes from the Latin word ‘communicare’. The use of the term ‘Media’ in its modern presentation and application relating to Communication Channels can be attributed to its use by Communications Theorist Marshall McLuhan for the first time.

Studies in the field of human Communication and its effects became more formal and institutionalized when radio and television became Channels of propaganda during the World War II. The Content of Media, its commercialization, agenda setting by Politicians and depictions of violence and sex became issues concerning Communication by the Media. At the end of the 20th Century, the advent of New Media brought with it new challenges such as Polarization, Fragmentation and loss of Cultural Identity.

The art of telling a story is one that has always been relevant and that has evolved in performance throughout the course of time and alongside the introductions of new mediums, from books and theatre to radio and cinema to television and video
games. A narrative is basically the framework for the story itself, a framework that directs how the story is told which means that the shape of the narrative might differ between platforms and Channels. Stories and the narratives that come with them have steadily evolved to fit with each new medium and Media channel introduced. The narrative or process of storytelling has unsurprisingly found its way into the Internet, and more importantly onto Web 2.0. With Web 2.0 came the rise of Social Media services and connectivity, with all your services connected to one another and a major amount of services for all kinds of purposes. Web 2.0 generally isn’t as much about showing something as it is about sharing something as one of the key aspects of Web 2.0 have turned out to be sharing and Communication.

“An abstract painting represents direct manifestation of creative thought processes as they might appear in computer designs. What we are considering here, however, are the psychic and social consequences of the designs or patterns as they amplify or accelerate existing processes. For the “message” of any medium or technology is the change of scale or pace or pattern that it introduces into human affairs.”

(McLuhan, 1964, p.10)

It was in 1964 that Marshall McLuhan, who was more of a poet than a scholar reenergised the field of scientific research in Mass Communication. Till then, Mass Communication research suffered from disillusionment from the 1950s when some of the early scholars who were initially excited about the potentially powerful effects of the Media failed to come across the effects they expected from it. When these scholars failed to find the power of the Media by understanding its interactions with the people, they returned to research more traditional studies. (Becker, 1982).

“In the area of public opinion research, the theoretical writings of Robert Park at the University of Chicago were extremely important. Park, combining his experiences as a professional Journalist with his academic work in psychology and sociology, gave us important insights to collective behaviour and public opinion. Where Park provided the theory, George Gallup and his colleagues provided many of the sophisticated survey methods which became important for the academic scholar of mass Communication.” (Becker, 1982, p.7).
Marshall however, changed the perceptions that the world had towards Mass Media and was in a way responsible for the resurgence in the theoretical aspect of mass Communication research, which has in turn led to Communication scholars engaging in more voluminous research work.

The rise of New Media has introduced entirely new forms of behaviour, involving interactivity and searching. This is a new force of internationalization which does not observe national boundaries. (Mc Quail, 2010). He also observes that political Communication reflects a continuous process of news management along with a competition to define news events and issues.

“The only way not to feel alienated in the New Media environment, McLuhan said is to understand what is going on in the present, to be keenly aware of one’s environment. Most people, however, do not do this: they live in the past. They suffer from a “rear-view mirror” mentality. Their thoughts and feelings belong to the preceding generation (we’ve all met people who are “still living in the 1960s or 1980s,” still talking about former presidents, the “good old days,” the innocent past). Media are extensions of human beings and affect our outlook and attitudes, our feelings about culture, schools, politics, studies, moral values, societal norms. They can totally disrupt our social existence and equilibrium.”

New Media encompasses the Internet and all the social networking sites such as blogs, You Tube, Facebook and Twitter as well as mobile apps such as Whatsapp. The recent technological advances in mobile technology and India’s growing clout as one of the top five countries which is socially engaged online, makes Social Media a phenomenon which is still largely untapped. It has been perceived to be an important part of the elections in India, which is the world’s largest Democracy. Though the Internet penetration is as low as 7-8 percent in India, according to the Internet World Statistics this translates to 302 million Internet users in a demography which has a very young and rapidly rising profile in the age group 25-35.

The reach and impact of Media have been ascertained on different types of audiences using various statistical tools and techniques. In contrast to many Researchers, Klapper, (1960) downplayed the potential harmful effects of the Media. He summarised what was then known about the social impact of mass
Communication. His viewpoint was influential in the development of a theory of Media effects. Known as the ‘minimal effects position’ his theory concluded that the Media most often reinforced an individual’s existing attitudes and predispositions.

1.3 Communication Revolution in India

Unlike developed countries, Mass Media in India is considered to be an essential development input, and not merely a source for Information and Entertainment. Since India missed the first Industrial Revolution of the late 18th Century being a former colony of the British Empire, it also missed catching up with the Communication Revolution.

Democratic planning in India set out with the framing of the Constitution that came into effect on 26th January 1950. The Constitution stated that it was the States directive “to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice-social, economic and political - shall inform all the institutions of the national life.” The year 1950 also saw the Planning Commission of India being established by the Government of India and India became one of the first newly free colonies to embark on planned development.

Soon after India gained independence in 1947, the new government announced a development-oriented agenda of governance dedicated to the enhancement of the economic, educational, and health conditions of the people. The goal of the new government was the use of Communication for the development of the country and this became the mainstay of its Communication policies. The use of modern Communication as a developmental resource became a high priority issue during the Congress era when the planners explored the vision of using radio as a development tool for information and enlightening the people in the thousands of villages and towns across India on issues of agriculture, health, sanitation, education and other developmental concerns.

In formulating a Communication Policy, the Government of India had to take into account various challenges and limitations way back in 1950 when the Constitution was framed and the Planning Commission of India was constituted. The Freedom of Speech and Expression is a Fundamental Right guaranteed by the Indian
Constitution (Article 19 (1) (a)). Hence the current Media Policy is an outcome of the country’s Media experiences over the last six decades.

The Press and its freedom have a vital role in giving expression to the country’s aspirations. Hence the Government values the freedom of the Press and does not impose itself on the Press. Therefore the onus is on the Press to regulate itself and act in a responsible manner for the interest of the society. The Government expects the Press to extend its cooperation towards the development of the country and hence this is the basic philosophy that governs the process of Communication in India.

Radio came into being in 1927 in India and is still considered to be the medium that can reach the nooks and corners of this country. The first television centre in India was set up on an experimental basis in 1959. The Satellite Television Experiment (SITE) which began in 1975 and ended in 1976 after duration of 1 year is considered to be one of the biggest Communication experiments of its kind. Modern means of Communication, traditional Media and inter-personal Communication have blended together and complemented each other. The Song and Drama Division, Directorate of Field Publicity, Films Division were set up by an exclusive Ministry handling Information and Broadcasting as early as in the 1950s for development Communication.

The challenge for Communication in a diverse and geographically expansive country like India with around 22 official languages and more than 2000 dialects is a significant challenge indeed. The federal structure of the Indian political system is another challenge. Under the Constitution, certain areas of responsibility fall under the Central governments review and some under the State governments review, while some fall under a category where both the governments can review. While broadcasting and film censorship falls under the Centre's jurisdiction, the State governments control the remaining aspects making it difficult to have a consensus.

The official website of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting lists out “New Media” as a new department, but does not provide any information on the government’s policies. The department has however, in its annual budget for 2015-2016 allocated Rs 5 crores for Development Communication & Dissemination under
the Social Media Platform. The total plan provision for People’s Empowerment through Development Communication (Concept and Dissemination) is Rs. 151.00 crore. Activities for promoting Digitalization has been listed as a scheme that has been dropped during the 12th five year plan (2012-2017).

India’s Communication revolution with adopting New Media started with the launching of the National Satellite-based Computer Network (NICNET) in 1987. This was followed by the launch of the District Information System of the National Informatics Centre (DISNIC) programme to computerise all district offices in the country for which free hardware and software was offered to the State Governments. NICNET was extended via the State capitals to all district headquarters by 1990. In the ensuing years, with ongoing computerization, teleconnectivity and Internet connectivity established a large number of e-Governance initiatives, both at the Union and State levels.

The formulation of National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) by the Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DEITY) and Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DAR&PG) in 2006 has boosted the e-Governance process. However, the actual use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for developmental goals has been made use by the Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India by formulating a National Policy on ICT in School Education in 2012.

ICT comprises of all tools and devices that can be converted into Digital forms. These tools are then utilized for teaching, learning, providing access to resources, capacity building, and management of systems. ICT encompasses devices connected to computers, software applications, Digital Content, process of Digitisation, satellite communication devices, radio and television services, web-based content repositories, interactive forums, learning management systems, and management information systems.

Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL) was instrumental in bringing Internet to India in March 1986, when it took over from Overseas Communications Service (OCS). The dotcom bubble that burst in the beginning of the 21st century in India, which saw hundreds of websites including news portals closing down all over the
country, was probably an indicator that the conditions were not right for this Internet revolution. 15 years on, the revolution has swept across the country, with the mobile phone technology reaching the remotest corners and changing the lives of people from all strata of the society.

Some scholars suggest that we live in a hybrid Media system (Chadwick, 2013), nevertheless the rise of Social Media has shown that the web is not a plain environment, and we should distinguish the Web 1.0 (a mass medium) from the networked Web 2.0 (O’Reilly, 2007).

Internet users in India spend an average of 58 hours a week online—some eight hours a day, or more than half the time they are awake. It is interesting to note that more than half of those interviewed for a survey admitted to suffering from Internet withdrawal within the first three hours of being cut off from the web. (Irani, 2012)

The Information Technology (IT) Act in India was amended in 2008, to allow for broad government control and authority over the Internet under various circumstances.

On March 24, 2015 the Supreme Court of India—the highest judicial body said that the Sec 66 invades right to free speech and that every expression used in it is nebulous. Section 66A of the amended IT Act extends criminal liability beyond receipt of stolen computer resources, identity theft, cheating by impersonation, violation of privacy, cyberterrorism, obscenity, and child pornography to cover the sending of offensive messages through a Communications service. “It is clear that Section 66A arbitrarily, excessively and disproportionately invades the right of free speech and upsets the balance between such right and the reasonable restrictions that may be imposed on such right,” said a Bench of Justices J. Chelameswar and Rohinton F. Nariman. The definition of offences under the provision was “open-ended and undefined”, it said.

The Bench also turned down a plea to strike down sections 69A and 79 of the Act, which deal with the procedure and safeguards for blocking certain websites and exemption from liability of interMediaries in certain cases, respectively.
According to Bavitz and Han (2013) three features of the amended Act are particularly worthy of note. First, the Act contains provisions that allow for government blocking of websites. Second, provisions in the IT Act (and similar provisions in India’s Copyright Act) provide for “safe harbors” available to online intermediaries. And, third, the Act generates several computer-related criminal offenses that directly relate to online speech and the ability of Internet users to engage in free expression.

Courts in India have interpreted the IT Act to not cover alleged copyright or patent infringement. In June 2012, amendments to the Copyright Act created a safe harbor provision for websites for copyright infringement. Under Sec 52(1)(c) of the Copyright Act as amended, “transient or incidental storage” of a work, where the links, access, or integration have not been expressly prohibited by the right holder, is not copyright infringement unless the person responsible for the copy has reasonable grounds for believing it is copyright infringement.

1.4 Politicians and Celebrities in a Democracy

Politicians and Celebrities share a common relationship. The perceived ‘larger than life’ image in the public’s mind of these two categories of people through the realms of Media helps us understand the way Media influences and functions in relation to these two power groups. The Celebrities cannot be dismissed as people providing lightweight entertainment. Using theoretical and historical context, it is possible to analyse the significance of their social position in the contemporary society. Marshall (1997) maintains that the concept of Celebrity is “a modern idea that is very much linked to the development of mass democracies and concerted efforts to contain the power of the mass in those democracies.” (p.241). Marshall (1997) also stated that, “the Celebrity system principally addresses the organisation of concepts of individuality and identity for the culture.”(p.185).

In order to nurture and sustain a healthy and Participative Democratic environment, how should people interact in a Democracy? How should they communicate and contribute to Public Discourse? What will be the outcome and effect of such a Democratic Process? These questions have surfaced in Political
Theory for many years. Classical Theorists like Rousseau, Mill and Locke to contemporary Political Theorists have been seeking to understand this process.

Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards & Rucht (2002), for convenience sake divided Democratic Theory into four traditions, namely Representative Liberal, Participatory Liberal, Discursive and Constructionist/Feminist.

In order to highlight Normative Criteria, Ferree, et al. (2002), organised the criteria around the norms for participation. The criteria that emerged from this analysis were inclusiveness, civility, dialogue, argumentation, narrative, empowerment, closure and consensus. When we compare how each of these Theories are met in the Indian context, we can see as the Analysis unfolds, that India does relatively better on those criteria emphasised by the Participatory Liberal Theory. When it comes to norms such as who should speak, what they should speak, style of speech preferred and the relationship between discourse and decision making (outcomes), we can see that there is a desire to maximise the participation of citizens in public decisions that affect our lives. This is the common thread that binds the diverse cultural heritage of India. Hence the Participatory Liberal Theory is most suited in the Indian context and the use of Social Media such as Twitter ensures that citizens are active participants in this Public Sphere which is an ongoing process.

Political Theorists, according to Stears and Humphrey (2012) seeking to respond to public concerns about citizen behaviour in democratic politics might turn to the literature on public reason. Since the Internet became widely available in the 1990s, scholars have studied the online discourse around public affairs and politics. Davis (1999, p.162) studied political conversations on the now little-used Internet message board system Usenet and found what he calls “discussion dominance” in which posters (people who post messages) “launch into rhetorical excess” and talk not to one another but past one another.

1.5 Political Communication in Modern Media

Political Communication has grown increasingly complex over the past decades with the advent of new Communication techniques and the evolving Communication Technologies. Politicians have been known to adapt themselves to changing times and forms of Media. In the 19th Century, if Politicians made heavy use
of newspaper, pamphlets, magazines and posters, the 20th Century saw them diversifying into radio and television to reach their electorate. The 21st Century is seeing them become increasingly involved with utilization of Social Media and Smart Phones through the Internet.

This constantly changing relationship between Politicians, Journalists and Citizens has transcended into a horizontal and a vertical dimension, where the political elite and the traditional Media work together but also compete with each other, and at the same time interact with the public (Brants and Voltmer, 2011). Brants and Voltmer argue that this relationship is going through a process of ‘de-centralization’. They continue that “as citizens increasingly challenge the legitimacy and credibility of institutionalized politics […], they are turning away from “high politics” towards alternative or simply non-political spheres of Communication” (2011, p.8).

The role of the Internet in Political Communication was insignificant in the early 1990s. McNair (2004) states when the first edition of his book was published in 1995, Internet was not considered to be a vital tool for Political Communication, but when his fourth edition was published in 2007, the reach and effects of the Internet were already apparent in the 2004 US Presidential Elections. The campaigning and properties of networking that came with the use of Internet was yet to be tapped by Politicians in other democracies, but the 2004 elections became an eye opener for political actors to emulate. McNair further asserts that by 2010, Internet had arrived as the standard Communication practice for Political Communication, with Social Media in particular; being viewed as most successfully used in the 2008 US presidential elections by Barack Obama.

1.5.1 Political Communication in India

The Indian political system has a history of thousands of years. The various rulers of this land have for over centuries established regimes and ruled over the people, however varied and diverse the land is- geographically and culturally. In the pre-Independence era, freedom fighters and revolutionaries garnered support for their causes and led massive uprisings against the British Raj. This was possible because they communicated their ideas and beliefs in a very effective manner. How did they
manage to reach such a large audience? How did they communicate to this audience? How did they understand the medium to retain power and influence people? These are some of the basic questions that will be deliberated upon to try and understand the Communication strategies in the backdrop of Social Media Communication gaining prominence today. Ancient India produced a sizeable work of literature on political systems. Ancient Indian political thought can be traced back to Arthashastra, which is the only known body of work from that period. There may have been other works, but they have been lost forever. (Drekmeier, 1962). The author observes that Kautilya may not have been India's greatest political mind, as the works of his peers were not accessible.

The political system is an essential thread that binds together our societal fabric. Governments in a democratic establishment use the Media to formulate, select and transmit messages to its citizens. The citizen would use this information to make his own reasoning of the political climate and make his own adjustments in the system whenever he encountered problems. This connective link connects the Government, Media and Society. (Nimmo, 1964). He further states that this interaction can be explored and examined to concur with Herring, who states that “this relationship between the government and the public in actual practice is narrowed down to contacts between a small group of officials and a small group of newspaper correspondents.”

The political system in India is deeply entrenched and has a long and checkered history. Politicians in this country have for decades interacted with the massive electorate here through the traditional forms of Communication. Research in Political Communication covers the linkages between Mass Media and Political Communication, exposure to Mass Media and awareness about politics and voting behaviour (Madhavi and Prasad, 2003).

Today, it is no longer the prerogative of the ruler to be unattainable and unavailable to his citizens. Every Politician wants to be connected with his electorate. The Prime Minister of India today Tweets directly to his 10 million plus followers on Twitter. The President of the United States of America, Barack Obama, made the best use of New Media tools for his election campaigns and this can be seen in the number
of research papers that have been published in this particular field in developed countries like USA, UK, Germany and Canada.

Since Politicians have now come to understand the power and impact of Media, they are using it to fulfill their Communication goals. However, the implications of Promotion, Propaganda and the use of Public Relations Techniques connected with Political Communication are the most stressed by critics who oppose use of Media for Political Communication.

The role of New Media in Political Communication can have far reaching effects if tapped to its maximum potential. The access to a large database of electorate on the Internet gives a political party a huge opportunity to analyse and evaluate this database.

A greater utilisation of new Communication technologies for political and administrative purposes came during the reign of N Chandrababu Naidu, Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh in 1999 when he gave importance to Participatory Communication through teleconferences, video conferences with district officials which led to e-governance (Murthy, 1999).

Videos were used on a large scale in the 8th Lok Sabha elections in 1984 for political advertising and it was believed to be one of the major factors for the sweeping victory of the Congress party. By the 9th Lok Sabha Elections, the full impact of video was realised. (Ghosh,1991). The advent of satellite television Channels contributed to a large extent to the potential of using Media in Political Communication. It was during the 1998 elections that BJP’s campaign first appeared on the Internet and the party launched its website with much fanfare. Political Communication in India evolved into a Multi-Media approach. However, every political formation in the country tries to influence and manipulate the Media to its own benefit. (Dhuliya, 1999). The Media has an effective reach to those segments of the electorate which are opinion leaders and in our jargon rightly known as vote banks.

Mass Communication strategies for political and electoral battles may see a more diverse and imaginative application of campaigns to attract the voters in the future. (Gujaral,1999). An insightful observation indeed, coming from a former Prime
Minister in 1999. Little did he know that the 16th Lok Sabha elections in 2014 would be played out across a convergence of Media platforms—from mobile sets to television studios.

India has over 100 million Facebook users and 33 million people on Twitter. These Digital bulletin boards on which views and attitudes are freely and emphatically expressed, formed the engine of the Aam Aadami Party’s (AAP) game plan. A group of students from the prestigious IIT Bombay devised an algorithm which helped the AAP to understand the conversation on Twitter and formulate its election manifesto. With data such as this available on the Internet and advanced analytics available to understand this data, it will become easier for the political parties to understand the demographics, profile and aspirations of its 1.252 billion electorate.

Technology is a double-edged sword and the onus lies on the user to make a positive impact with its use. The NDA government at the centre, with a tech-savvy Prime Minister has ensured that all its Ministers have a Twitter account. Hence the priority of these elected representatives is to reach out to their preferred audiences. However, these Politicians should ensure that their credibility is not at stake when sensitive and controversial topics are discussed in this platform.

Social Media was used by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) extensively in the 2013 Madhya Pradesh Assembly elections. According to the party’s IT cell officials, “In 2008, Social Media was not a great Media for political campaigning. In 2013 it became a great platform to adopt in terms of time, money and location. It was used to communicate not only with the public, but also with party workers and party supporters. Though Social Media is a Western phenomenon, it is most suited for the Indian context as Indians are more social and do not hesitate to share their views about potential affiliations publicly. (Madhav, 2013). The party used 5 types of Social Media platforms and collaborative projects (Wikipedia). They also created localized applications for users to download on to their smartphones. The idea was to increase outreach, capture space, increase accounts, monitor quality of Content and use freelance and citizen Journalists to spread the message. The challenges according to the party were the barriers of language, as Madhya Pradesh has many dialects of Bundelkhandi. Also the applications they had created for smartphones would have to
be downloaded and workable even in offline mode, when there was no Internet connectivity.

This medium is one place which is dependent on self-regulation. It is creating conversations, enabling direct interaction with senior party leaders and policy makers. People now feel part of the democratic system. Issues that are not raised by the Media are now discussed on Social Media. However, it has brought down the levels of discussion. Inspite of this limitation, the arrival of Social Media for political Communication shows that our Democracy has matured. (Dutta, 2013).

The Congress party ironically failed to use this medium in the 2014 elections, though Former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was instrumental for introducing computers and the IT revolution in India.

In view of the Election Commission of India banning the display of posters for campaigning, the Social Media platform was used to publicise events and achievements. The Election Commission of India, taking note of the huge spending on Social Media publicity during elections, has now asked candidates to furnish details of this budgeting too when they file their nominations in the elections.

1.6 Importance of Public Sphere

Habermas states that through Digital Technology and the use of Social Media like Twitter, a more democratic and deliberative Public Sphere can be created and this is enabling citizens to participate more freely and more actively in political decision-making. The meaning of the Public Sphere can be best explained as the jurisdiction of our social lives where we come together to form a public opinion. This coming together of citizens to converse, consult and deliberate within the orbit of the societal norms of freedom of speech and expression and freedom to assemble peacefully, in order to make their opinions public in an unrestricted manner, can be called the Public Sphere. (Pusey, 1978, p.89).

Yet, Fraser (1997) argues that Habermas’s conception of “the public sphere . . . is not the state; it is rather the informally mobilized body of non-governmental discursive opinion that can serve as a counterweight to the state” (p.134). Weak publics are those Habermas identified as people discussing among themselves without
direct effect on policy. Strong publics are those that are both discursive and have decision making duties, including voting.

Schudson (1997) explains that “politics . . . was more a communal ritual than an act of individual or group involvement in rational-critical discussion. This extended all the way to the ballot box.” (p.159).

The role of Internet in Collaboration, Participation and Empowerment of the people in a Democracy cannot be undermined. Bruns (2012) acknowledges that even the simple task of liking a post or Tweet is commercially productive and can be said to be a minimal participative tool by the citizens. However, many scholars have argued that the involvement of audiences who are using the Internet in a Public Sphere needs to be assessed. This is because the vast numbers of Internet users are not really ‘visible’.

Carpini (2000) asserts that the Internet will change the youth’s participation in political activities. Many studies have introduced debates on the role of Internet in creating platforms and opportunities for the public in general and the youth in particular to participate in political discussions, exchange information on important social and political issues, to express their anger, protests and frustrations against political systems and to brainstorm on burning social issues. In fact, earlier studies had predicted that Internet was unlikely to mobilize people for political causes. However, the Arab Spring and other movements proved these scholars otherwise.

The Internet does have the potential to be an efficient political instrument if it were seen as part of a Democracy where free and open discourse within a vital Public Sphere plays a decisive role, according to Gimmler (2001). The model of Deliberative Democracy, as developed by Jürgen Habermas and Seyla Benhabib, serves this concept of Democracy best. The scholars explore the model of Deliberative Democracy as a ‘two-track model’ in which Representative Democracy is backed by the Public Sphere and a developing civil society. The concept of the Public Sphere and its core ideas, namely the uncoerced Communication of equal participants with equal access and equal rights to intervene or propose themes exemplifies the role of Internet in the Public Sphere.
Dahlgren (2005) opines that a Public Sphere is understood to be functioning if it is seen as a gathering of large communicative spaces in a society that also permits the free circulation of information, ideas and debates. Ideally this is possible if the formation of this public opinion is done in an unrestrained manner. These spaces, in which the Mass Media and now, more recently, the newer interactive Media figure prominently, also serve to facilitate communicative links between citizens and the people in positions of power in society.

Thus the Internet could easily fit into this concept of Public Sphere and influence the quality of political debates, and this emphasizes the important role it can play in the political process. Many research initiatives have studied the effects of Internet on political process and have tried to give conceptual framework about Internet Communication. The Public Sphere can be conceptualized as consisting of three dimensions: Structures, Representation and Interaction.

1.7 Electronic Democracy in Democracy

The use of Media, especially Social Media for Political Communication in a Democracy is a term referred to as Electronic Democracy. Blumler & McQuail (1968) in ‘Television and Politics: Its Uses and Influences’ were among the first Researchers to study the use of a Mass Medium as source of political information. Their findings indicated that, when both radio and television were available to British voters, television was preferred as a source of political information.

Nimmo (1970, p. 114), looking at the same issue, from an American perspective, said that studies “dating back to 1959 indicate that increasing proportions of Americans get most of their news from television rather than from radio, newspapers or magazines.”

Likewise, when examining “The Effects of Mass Communication on Political Behaviour”, Kraus and Davis (1976, p. 51) concluded that “a majority of those who do notice some political news in the printed Media, nevertheless, feel that they learn more about what is going on politically from the spoken Media (radio and television).”
Discussing about the debate involving ‘Electronic Democracy’, Street (1997) critically examined the two conflicting ideas about the possibility of virtual polity which upholds the ideals of ancient Greece and the possible destruction of Democracy. The author argues that the issues involved in both the cases are not justifiable to the positions that we take a stand for. The technical changes that are involved are significant the author argues. The article concludes by highlighting the importance of the cultural character of Technology to make ‘Electronic Democracy’ more fully recognised.

The use of Media power manifests itself in the choice of information and format, in the shape and style of programs, and in the effects of its diffusion in Agenda Setting, or the Priming and Framing of Issues (Callaghan and Schnell, 2005).

In an Electronic Democracy, Politicians avoid being dependent on traditional Communication Channels like news Media. Through the use of the Internet, they remain in control over their political messages (Broersma and Graham, 2012).

In the Indian context, where Internet cannot be accessed and affordable to all sections of the society, the impact of these socioeconomic variables over Internet usage does exist. Scholars have commented and acknowledged that the space for marginalized voices does open up through communicative practices and the messages on Mass Media. However, debating and acting in a Democratic set-up is not being fostered effectively. On the other hand, scholars argue that Mass Media is largely isolating individuals and channelling them into objects of media spectacles, publicity stunts, consumers and manipulating their need for instant gratification.

Against these cynical assessments of the Mass Media, there has been much excitement about the possibility of the Internet in supporting, enabling, advancing, and fostering autonomous and Democratic Public Spaces. This has been possible through e-mail, Web pages, Weblogs, open publishing/editing systems, peer-to-peer connections, Webcasting, podcasting, and other interactive, relatively low cost, and globally accessible Computer Networked Communications. The Internet is being viewed as a space for providing and enabling the free flow of information, supporting the forum for open debates and exchange of ideas and the formation of critical public
opinion. In a Democracy, this leads to the empowerment of the citizen as he will scrutinize those in power and give his inputs in the process of decision making.

1.8 Social Media for Participatory Democracy

While Social Media is a term that encompasses platforms as diverse as online social networks, blogs, micro-blogs and video and photo-sharing sites, it is services such as Facebook and Twitter that have garnered the most attention for their use in Political Discussion, Engagement and Mobilisation, especially amongst the young. Social Media and Digital Media across the board is here to stay, and it’s going to be here a long time before a new form of Media Revolution takes over from Social Media.

In Western Democracies, traditional way of politics and political campaigning has witnessed a decline with regard to people’s participation and their interest in politics. This growing and dangerous chasm between Politicians and Public is potentially dangerous. Hence, in these countries, Governments, Politicians and Parties have been turning towards Social Media to close this gap. Social Media is viewed as a potentially effective means of improving this relationship between citizens and their representatives (Coleman and Blumler, 2009).

Twitter and other Social Media Channels are considered central to the current changes in public discourse. They have provided a public platform for the rising middle class in India who have access to the Internet and Smart Phones. Social Media has given this rising middle class section of the population the opportunity to voice their concerns and share their grievances about institutional corruption, failure of the judicial system, and various other social issues. While it is true that only a relatively small fragment of the population in India uses Social Media, they are nonetheless very articulate and seen as influential in shaping debates and conversations in other Media outlets. This section of people was hitherto not getting involved in the process of Democracy. They were either too busy making a living or bogged down by the red-tapeism and hierarchial set-up of political institutions. Social Media has changed their outlook towards Democracy. They are being more participative and are voicing their opinions fearlessly through these Channels on the Internet.
A brief description of few Social Media Applications is given below:

Blog: A blog is a personalized online diary combining text, images, and links to other blogs on the World Wide Web.

Instagram: A social networking platform for the sharing of pictures and videos with facility to link it to other Social Media Channels like Facebook and Twitter.

Facebook: A social networking website which at the time of writing this Thesis boasts of more than 1.49 billion active registered users worldwide. In India, the number of registered users is 125 million.

Twitter: An information network made up of 140-character messages (including photos, videos and links) from all over the world. India had 22.2 million active Twitter users in January 2015.

Whatsapp: A Social Media application owned by Facebook, for making calls, sending messages and sharing pictures and videos on mobile phones through the Internet.

You Tube: An award winning service and application which allows users to upload videos over the Internet and share them with others.

1.9 Salient Features of Twitter

Twitter is a Social Media program available on the Internet and as an application on mobile phones for sending out 140 character messages called ‘Tweets’ over the Internet. Created in 2006 by Jack Dorsey, Twitter has gained notability and popularity worldwide. It had 307 million users by the end of September 30, 2015. (‘Statista,” 2015). Twitter is free to use on a computer connected to the web, it might be possible that the cell phone data provider charges extra for accessing it on the cell phone (this depends on the data network plan of each mobile service provider).

A real-time information network, Twitter is powered by people all around the world and the presence of Politicians and Celebrities makes it all the more interesting for the user. It allows the user to follow any Politician and Celebrity, without having to request them for permission. This lets users share and discover trends and happenings from around the world. The many features on Twitter such as “Retweet,”
“what’s happening,” “favourites” make it attractive for users. Twitter’s use in disasters, activism, public health and citizen journalism has been evident and many studies have been done on these issues.

In India, Twitter had 22.2 million active users in January 2015 (Huffington Post, 2015). India is set to become Twitter’s largest market after the US with a projected 40 million users by 2018, eMarketer data suggest, up from 17 million now.

When the founders of Twitter Jack Dorsey, Evan Williams and Biz Stone founded this social networking site in 2006, protecting people’s privacy and making money were their primary concerns. Little did they imagine that it would become a platform for serious discussions and revolutions and that world leader would use it as their mouth piece (Grossman, 2009).

These platforms were used to add information to the official perspective, to give another point of view, to report from the ground, to show images that were not displayed on conventional Media. (Sierra, 2010).

As Twitter in India clocks a double digit growth rate, the micro-blogging site accounts for only 17 per cent of the total social network users in one of the world’s largest Internet market. 7,697 Tweets are sent out every second all over the world. (“Beevolve,” 2012)

According to a report by market research firm eMarketer, Japan will boast of the largest Twitter population in Asia Pacific at 26 million followed by India at 22.2 million users. The growth in 2015 in India, is expected to be more than twice as fast at 30.4 per cent. While it shows signs of slowing, it will still climb by 16.5 per cent in 2018, the report said. (http://www.emarketer.com/corporate/coverage#/results/1298).

Twitter is also working towards boosting its business and revenues in India by partnering with India’s largest private sector bank and acquiring a Bangalore-based mobile marketing start up. The efforts are part of its strategy to strengthen its platform, especially on mobile devices, and connect brands with customers. Earlier, the research firm projected the Microblogging site’s rival, Facebook will have more than 100 million users accessing its platform using mobile phones. India will surpass the US to lead the global tally of the largest Facebook user base on mobile by 2017, it
had forecast. Recently, Facebook announced that the growing Internet penetration and a large youth population have helped it expand its user base in India to 112 million, which is the largest after the USA. Of the 112 million users in India, more than 99 million utilise the platform on their mobile phones at least once a month. About 45 million users in India are using their mobile phones every day to connect with their friends on Facebook.

To make this distinction and read in between the 140 characters, there are many Social Media analytical tools available today. Big Data as it is called can be collected using automated data aggregation and mining, web and mobile analytics, visualization of large Datasets, sentiment analysis/opinion mining, machine learning, natural language processing, and computer-assisted Content Analysis of very large Datasets. (Malcolm, 2014). However, Twitter does not allow the access of Tweets in its archives for more than a week and most data analytics firms tightly manage this data, thus making it difficult for Researchers, particularly Communication and Media scholars to access it. (Giglietto and Selva, 2014). This Digital Divide is creating a pool of ‘data rich’ or ‘data poor’ Researchers.

Hence, Communication Researchers may find themselves content with the fact that companies will share only selective Data. Such constraints will have serious implications on the quality of Research in the coming years.

There are various types of online participation and this is strongly correlated with age. It has been observed that younger people show higher online participation and are likely to share a news link, comment on news, or post a picture in a social network. Reuters Institute Digital News Report (2013). Tweets from public accounts (including replies and mentions) are available in JSON format through Twitter’s Search API for batch requests of past data and Streaming API for near real-time data.

Twitter now has a Data Grants program, where Researchers can apply to get access to Twitter’s public Tweets and historical data in order to get insights from its massive set of data. Twitter offers three levels of access to its database- Application-Programming Interface (API), Firehose and Tweet Archives. Since Twitter has more than 500 million Tweets a day, research institutions and academicians will not get the Firehose access level- instead they will only get the Dataset needed for their research
project. The limitations in accessing Tweets especially for Researchers are a hindrance for good quality of Research.

1.10 Relevance of Tweets in Contemporary Society

The relevance of Tweets and Twitter’s potential as a Digital Platform that facilitates information dissemination, dialogue and participation between its various stakeholders is tremendous. Around the world, users of Twitter have live-Tweeted calamities, terror attacks, natural disasters, elections as well as revolutions.

The Internet is now all about interactivity and conversation. Mark Pfeifle, a former USA national-security advisor, was so captivated by Twitter’s role in Iran, that he wanted Twitter to be nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. When student protests shook Tehran, the US State Department had step in and ask Twitter to suspend planned upkeep of its Website. This was because the world, and especially USA was keenly tuned in to the happenings in Iran through Twitter and since Twitter was playing a key role in organizing and connecting people connected to the demonstrations in Iran, the Western Democracies felt that without Twitter, the people of Iran would loose out on feeling empowered and confident to stand up for their freedom and democracy.

Earlier social activists were defined by their causes, now they are defined by the Tools that they use on Social Media. ‘Fifth Estate’ is a phrase coined by researcher William H. Dutton. He argued that the development of the Internet, and in particular the falling costs of production and distribution, led to the development of this so-called ‘Fifth Estate’, where voluntary groups, bloggers and individuals can have a significant influence or hold on Politicians and the Media. (Dutton, 2007)

The proliferation of Technology in our everyday life, through Social Media, Smart Phones and various other Internet associated devices, has made us dependent on Technology, but at the same time, Technology functions ideally when it is shaped and designed by creative people and used by intelligent consumers.

Tweets have become a great source for generating new ideas and exchanging information. It has enabled its users to exploit the power of distant connections with great adeptness. As a new Tool of Social Media, Twitter has reinvented and rekindled
civic activism. Twitter has been used by demonstrators in Egypt, Moldova, Tunisia and Iran to come together against political authority and overturn them. Twitter has made it simpler for the common man to coordinate, collaborate and express their concerns.

Twitter has also provided essential connections between Journalists and a wide variety of feminist activist groups concerning social issues such as rape in India. This has helped strengthen the Democratic Process by allowing various groups to collaborate and plan a common action plan around particular issues. It has further helped Journalists cover such issues. The Nirbhaya gang rape case in Delhi in December 2012 garnered widespread activity among Twitter users. Tweets on topics such as these, help in keeping issues related to gender violence consistently in the public memory. Twitter does not allow public memory to fade away unlike in the past, when the Media coverage ceased to exist after an incident occurred. It is this sustained interaction around an issue that builds a solid foundation for civic activism and ultimately Political Engagement in a Democracy.

Twitter has also been used for giving updates during the floods in Jammu and Kashmir in 2014 by the then Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir Omar Abdullah. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the first to Tweet about the devastating earthquake in Nepal on April 25, 2015. In fact, the Nepalese Prime Minister Sushil Koirala who was not in Nepal at the time of the quake, learnt about it from Modi’s Tweet about 40 minutes after the first tremors hit Nepal. PM Narendra Modi tweeted about the Earthquake from his official account, “News has come in about an Earthquake in Nepal. Several parts of India also experienced tremors.”

Recently in the worst floods that hit Chennai in December 2015, Tweets were used to inform people and the Media about stranded victims and mobilise relief supplies such as food and medicines.

The Relevance of Tweets in Contemporary Society cannot be ignored. Tweets can help health care workers respond to emergency situations by providing real-time updates from the scene of the mishap. Researchers at Harvard Medical School could examine Tweets that were Tweeted 20 minutes after the April 2013 Boston Marathon Bombings within a 35 mile radius of Boston and found that these Tweets could be
useful if they were integrated into the state-wide emergency systems. Since Social Media and other web-based platforms available on Smart Phones have the option of letting its users post messages along with their geographic locations, their messages can help track terror outbreaks, coordinate aid in disaster response and give quick insights in conflict zones, where official machinery takes weeks to collect and analyze data.

There is an opportunity to make use of Twitter streams and speed up the response mechanism. Social Media data in such emergency situations can provide positive as well as negative effects. The researchers in the Boston Marathon Bombing situation found that Tweets with words like “explosion,” “explode,” or “bomb” began to appear within three minutes after the bombings in April 2013. (Cassa, et al. 2013).

In India, of late, the common man has been using Tweets to get the attention of the higher authorities in Government. There have been many incidents reported recently when Tweets to the Union railway minister Suresh Prabhu from rail commuters have received immediate responses. For example, when Satyendra Yadav was travelling with his wife and 18-month-old baby in a train which had no pantry car and his baby began crying inconsolably, as the train was delayed for hours between Allahabad and Fatehpur in Uttar Pradesh due to lack of availability of milk, Yadav took out his phone and tweeted to the railway minister, asking for help. The Minister promptly informed the Railway authorities at the next station in Fatehpur station, where milk was kept ready for the child. Yadav was so surprised by the gesture that he Tweeted back in Hindi- “We have got milk for our son. Thank you, Suresh Prabhuji.”

1.11 Significance of the Study

Communication is a two-way process. The goal of Communication is not considered to be fully achieved if the receiver has not understood the sender’s message. Hence, it is not sufficient if the speaker conveys a message or an idea. This message or idea should be understood by the receiver. Only then, it is assumed that the process of Communication has been achieved. It is in this context that the significance of Tweeting assumes importance. To be able to convey a clear, effective
message within the word limitation of 140 characters is indeed a challenging task for any Communicator.

It is against this backdrop that the selection of this topic for this study assumes significance. As a Communications Researcher, it was with curiosity that led this Researcher to look at these 140 characters called Tweets from a critical perspective. On closer examination the study found that the usage of Tweets all over the world was being increasingly used by world leaders, Celebrities and individuals in influential positions to convey their message directly to their audiences and to others beyond their official audiences.

When this study set out to compare the ideologies and motives behind the need to Tweet by the two selected groups-namely Politicians and Celebrities, there was a common objective-perception of their own self-image. Politicians and Celebrities were also Tweeting to satisfy certain cognitive, affective and entertainment needs that they had as individuals.

The Indian political system is undergoing a rapid transformation. From being very traditional in their approach, and campaigning through public rallies and door-to-door interaction with their electorate, Indian Politicians and Parties are now investing heavily in Social Media to reach out to a wider audience.

Celebrities too are using the technique of Self-Communication over Mass Communication to connect with their Followers and make their views known. Politicians have been able to tap this new medium of Twitter to communicate with their electorate. 25 percent of actual voters are on Social Media, given India’s growing youth population. This presents a huge opportunity for the future of the Indian Democracy. Going by the 2014 General Election results trend in India, it comes as no surprise that Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s active use of Twitter helped him to engage, enthuse and make the voter respond in a positive way. Same is the case with Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

The population in the age-group of 15-34 increased from 353 million in 2001 to 430 million in 2011. Current predictions suggest a steady increase in the youth population to 464 million by 2021 and finally a decline to 458 million by 2026. Twenty years from now, India will still be a rather youthful country, with 8-9 percent
of its population 65 years of age or older and a Median age of 31-32 years (compared to roughly 13 percent and 37 years, respectively, for the United States today).

About 68 percent of India 2030’s population will comprise men and women of working age (conventionally defined as the 15-64 group), compared with 65 percent today. This means that the working-age manpower is set to grow more rapidly than overall population in the decades immediately ahead, by about 1.3 percent per annum on average. (*The National Bureau of Asian Research*, 2011)

The Study assumes importance in the world’s largest Democracy which will see a large percentage of its population in the younger age group. It is a well-known fact that the young generation is logged into the Internet round-the-clock. In order to kindle the interest of this young population in matters of governance and issues of national interest, it is imperative to catch them in the medium that they patronize- Social Media. Hence, the usage of Tweets as a tool for Communication by Indian Politicians and Celebrities is putting them on the same public platform to engage and enthuse the youth and thus creating a vibrant Participative Democracy. Hence the present study is designed to make an in-depth Analysis of various aspects of Content of Tweets by Indian Politicians and Celebrities.

Critics however argue that this is leading to a ‘Digital Divide’, increasing fragmentation between users and non-users of Digital Technology in terms of the generation gap, social factors like lack of access to such modern means of Communication devices, etc. Politicians and Celebrities have taken to Twitter and are using it as Communication tool in a widespread manner. This is due to the fact that Twitter gives them a Direct, Real-time, Public Communication Channel to reach out, feel the pulse of the public and interact. This of course depends on each individual’s own style of Tweeting. We will start from the assumption that Political and Celebrity Tweets on Twitter has intensified in the last two years, especially in the backdrop of the 2014 General Elections.

The Study will do a Content Analysis on the Nature of Tweets and the use of this Microblogging Tool. Given the diverse demographic structure of India, the place occupied by Twitter in the Media landscape is different compared to other countries. Cultural and Infrastructural Issues do exist in a country of 1.252 billion (Census
2011), given that Internet penetration is a mere 7 per cent. The impact that the Tweets have on voter intentions has however, not been mapped, as it requires the use of advanced algorithms and data mining software. Though the Content of what the Politicians and Celebrities Tweet have been Analysed, the response of their Followers have not been accounted for, in the present Study.

Twitter is a Social Media platform that has transformed the way to communicate in 140 characters. To understand this medium, its Content and its reach, we have to study the history of Political Communication and the use of Media by Celebrities to get a right perspective. Hence, it is imperative to not merely focus on the data and the description of this empirical evidence, but to base our findings explicitly in the context of large Theoretical discussions.

In view of the growing importance and recognition of Twitter as an important tool for Political Communication and Communication tool used by Celebrities, and the certain limitations from the Research point of view, the present Study was concerned with identifying a common nature of the Tweets and the need to Tweet by these two influential groups-Politicians and Celebrities.

The present study has been chosen due to the following:

a. Twitter is a unique Communication tool which is instantaneous, reaches millions of its users at one go through the Internet and uses a convergence of Media such as pictures, videos and links.

b. The Internet and the Technologies associated with it are rapidly gaining prominence as tools for Communication in developing countries.

c. The advancement of Communication Technology and the reach and impact it can have on development in a geographically diverse country like India is manifold.

d. The role of Twitter in Disaster Management, Agricultural Practices and other Development Issues can be harnessed further and scientifically analysed to promote development.

e. The use of Twitter to create unity among the culturally diverse populace of India and its unique feature to connect everyone, makes it a very personal medium for Communication.
f. A continuous and sustained effort to research the new Communication Tools such as Twitter, is necessary for a young Democracy like India to understand and assess how to keep its citizens actively engaged in a Democracy.

1.12 Objectives of the Study

1. To understand the nature of Content of Tweets of Indian Politicians and Celebrities.
2. To assess the Usage of Twitter by Indian Politicians and Celebrities.
3. To study the Preferences of Tweeting of Indian Politicians and Celebrities.
4. To examine the Attitude of Indian Politicians and Celebrities towards Twitter.
5. To analyse the Cognitive, Affective, Personal Integrative and Social Needs of Indian Politicians and Celebrities through their Tweets.

1.13 Presentation of the Study

The presentation of this study has been structured into six chapters.

The first chapter is the introduction chapter that presents the background and ground work for the title of the study. It consists of chapters explaining the Meaning and Evolution of Communication, Communication Revolution in India, Politicians and Celebrities in a Democracy, Political Communication in Modern Media, Political Communication in India, Importance of Public Sphere, Electronic Democracy in Democracy, Social Media for Participatory Democracy, Salient Features of Twitter, Relevance of Tweets in Contemporary Society, Significance of the Study, Objectives of the Study, Presentation of the Study, etc.

The second chapter is the Review of Literature chapter that presents brief discussions on past studies in the area of this study. Past studies conducted at international and national levels have been categorized under different sections such as Social Media application for Political Communication, Celebrities and Twitter, Twitter and Elections, Twitter and Political Agenda Setting, etc.

The third chapter is the Methodology chapter that goes about explaining the context of the present Study, its Significance, the reason for selecting Twitter as the Tool of the Study, the Hypotheses, Method of the Study, the Sample Tools of Data Collection, the Procedure Adopted, changes made for the Main Study after the Pilot
Study was conducted, details of the Sample, the Main Study, Statistical Tools employed, certain Operational Definitions of terms used in the present Study and a Summary.

The fourth chapter explains about the Analysis of Data results through two methods: Empirical Analysis of the Sample and Content Analysis of the Sample, which is followed by a Summary of the results.

The final chapter gives an introduction about the findings of the Study, Testing of Hypotheses, Limitations of the Study, Implications of the Study for Politicians, for Celebrities and for Government Agencies and the Utility of this Research, Suggestions for further Research, gives Recommendations for Government Agencies, for Politicians and Recommendations for Celebrities, followed by the Epilogue. After this, the Annexures presented in this Thesis contain the Bibliographical References, a selection of interesting Tweets, the list of the Politicians and Celebrities who’s Tweets were used in this study and the Coding Manual employed for this Study.

1.14 Summary

The Image of a Politician and Celebrity in India has since long been associated with feelings such as ‘larger-than-life’, ‘glorification’, ‘worship’, ‘cult-following’, ‘mass hysteria’ and ‘person with moral qualities’ by the majority of the population who tend to place them on a pedestal rather than treat them as equals. Politicians and Celebrities have always been looked up to and revered due to deep-rooted cultural practices prevalent in Indian society. This traditional image of the Politician and Celebrity, perceived to be endowed with ethical orientations has been given considerable continuity in contemporary India.

The Internet and Social Media in particular has brought the people closer to the Politician and Celebrity and has emboldened them to interact and participate in a meaningful dialogue. Politicians and Celebrities too have understood the significance of Mass Media in retaining their power and influence over the people, and the Media has helped in creating a Sphere connecting these Political actors and Celebrities to their Audiences.
Social Media, in particular has helped them in reaching out to their audiences in a faster way with much more Impact. Hence, their representation of their own selves has been enabled by Social Media quite successfully. For Politicians and Celebrities, this form of Communication can strongly affect them even as they compose messages and send them in an Online Environment.

The messages that these Politicians and Celebrities are Tweeting in real-time and impressions that these messages convey about them, to their Followers, is what this Study seeks to establish. When the Tweets of Politicians and Celebrities reveal their concern, attitudes, preferences and emotional bonds it brings them closer to their Followers. In modern Democracies this is an emerging trend. India is a young Democracy and this trend of Tweeting which has emerged in more mature Democracies across the world is making its way slowly but steadily into the Indian social fabric. Its effects and ramifications are yet to be deeply understood by Communication Researchers. This Study is a small step in this direction.