CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1 Findings

The emergence of new media is changing the whole gamut of communication and it has become people’s media. It has been used by various strata of society including the political class. Indian elections have been witnessing increased usage of new media.

The present study focuses on the usage of new media by politicians of Karnataka for their personal and public work.

The findings of the study are presented in five parts:

Part A: Sociodemographic and Economic Profile of the Politicians.

Part B: Media habits of politicians in terms of use of reading/listening/viewing of newspaper, magazine, radio and television.

   I. Type of Media & Consumption
   II. Media Credibility
   III. Content Priority

Part C: Participation of Politicians in Media

   I Participation
   II Media Responsibility

Part D: New Media and Politicians

   • Use of Devices That Access New Media
   • Use of Types of New Media
   • Social Media

Part E: New Media Effects
PART A

5.1.1 Sociodemographic and Economic Profile

- Among the respondents, a majority (91.2%) was male and the rest (8.8%) were female. It is clearly established that women have a long way to go in getting representation in politics. The tradition of male dominance in politics in all political parties is continuing. However, unlike the Karnataka Legislative Assembly and Indian Parliament, there is a legal provision for reserving seats for women in Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike, the civic body. Such a provision is not there in the legislative bodies of Karnataka.

- A majority of the politicians (31.2%) in the State were middle aged – 44–55 years. It is generally believed that in India, it takes not less than 40 to 45 years to settle down in politics and even middle-aged persons are considered young in politics (Only 4.8% of the respondents fell in the age group of 25-35 years and 17.6% in the age group 36–45).

- A majority of the respondents (56.8%) were graduates/degree-holders followed by post-graduates (20.8%) which cumulatively accounts for more than three-fourth of the total respondents for the study. Only a small proportion (13%) of the respondents had completed SSLC (10th standard) and hardly (2%) were school dropouts. The positive is that the more academically oriented people are entering into politics.

- The respondent politicians belonging to the general category were more (60.8%). And the next highest (24.8%) constituted the Other Backward Classes (OBCs). Those who are socially and educationally stronger are more in politics.

- When it comes to occupation, a majority (40.8%) of the respondent politicians were in both politics and agriculture, while the second highest (34.4%) were both in politics and business. The data showed that the financially well-off were playing a major role in politics. Businessmen and those in the agriculture
business had a major say in politics. Only a meagre (8.8%) had only one profession – politics. A smaller percentage (5%) joined politics from professions like legal, academics, engineering and medical among others, it was found.

- A majority of the respondents (47.2%) had a monthly income of more than Rs 3,00,000, followed by those (24%) who had income in the range of Rs 76,00,000 – Rs 1,50,000. No legislator or MP’s monthly salary could be less than Rs 1.4 lakh a month in Karnataka. Legislators (MLA and MLC) are entitled to a fixed monthly salary of Rs 25,000. And, with various allowances, their total salary is not less than Rs 1,40,000 a month. In addition, the sitting charges and travel allowance to attend official meetings, a foreign trip once in their five-year term or two tours within India are allowed. Members of Parliament (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha members) get a salary of Rs 50,000 a month and with various allowances it touches Rs 1,40,000. A Bengaluru Corporator gets around Rs 8,000 honorarium a month, while a Mayor gets about Rs 20,000. Medical bills are reimbursed by government for all types of members of democratic institutions.

**PART B**

5.1.2 Media Habits

**Types of Media & Consumption**

- All the respondent politicians (100%) were reading the newspaper, the traditional media. They attached a lot of importance to reading the newspaper.

- A maximum (56%) of the respondent politicians said they read both Kannada and English newspapers. The next highest (20%) said they read only Kannada newspapers. The data indicates that the respondents had the habit of reading both Kannada and English dailies.

- In terms of spending time on reading/watching/listening media, the results showed that more than half (58.4%) of the respondents were spending an hour for reading newspaper. And, a little higher than one-fourth of the respondents
(27%) were glancing through the dailies for about 30 minutes and a little more than one-tenth (14.4%) were devoting a couple of hours to reading the newspaper. However, among those respondents spending less than 30 minutes on reading, a majority (60%) were the Corporators, who were members of the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike. The politicians were attaching importance to reading newspaper and spending time on it.

- Among the respondents, only 50% had the habit of reading magazines. And, of them, a majority (75%) were spending less than 30 minutes on read and one-fifth of them (22%) were spending about one hour reading magazine in a day.

- Now, with respect to radio, among the MLAs, 59% of them did not listen to radio at all and, among the MLCs, 61.5% did not listen to radio; among the Corporators - 68%, among the Seasoned Politicians - 50%, and among the MPs (LS) - 55.6% of them did not listen to radio. Going by the educational status of the respondents, it was observed that among the graduates, 66.2% of the respondents did not listen to radio at all and, among the post-graduates, it was 34.6%; among the SSLC-passed respondents, it was 66.7% and finally, among the diploma-holders, 66.7% did not listen to radio.

- The data analysis showed that the maximum number of (75.4%) respondents were watching television for less than half an hour in a day. This also meant that either they surf channels rather than keenly watching, or they might be spending some time to watch the highlights of news or part of a programme. Those who spent an hour in a day watching television were less than half of those who were spending less than 30 minutes. Nearly one-fourth (22.1%) of them were watching television for a couple of hours in a day. But those who were not at all watching television were marginal. Watching television has become a habit or part of daily life. However, the respondents were spending more time on reading newspaper than watching television.

- As much as 34% of the respondent politicians only watch Kannada television channels for news purpose, while 55% watch both Kannada and English. And, another 11% watch Kannada, English and other language channels.
• Among the respondents, more than one-third (86.4%), irrespective of the nature of their membership on democratic institutions, watched television daily and the rest (14%) were watching – frequently/occasionally/once a week.

• A whopping 86.4% said they watched television every day. Among the MLAs, 80% of them were watching it daily; among the MLCs - 88%; among the Corporators - 96%; among the MP-LS - 100% and, among the Seasoned Politicians, 80% of them were watching television daily. Interestingly, the next highest percentage -6.4% -of the total respondents said they were watching television frequently (4 to 5 days a week). Surprisingly, three respondents - 2.4% - of the total respondents stated that they did not watch television at all. When the replies were taken in its entirety, it showed that the politicians were watching television though it could be for a short duration in a day.

• In comparison to newspaper and television, politicians listening to radio were only 39%. This indicated that radio is losing its sheen when it comes to popularity. Among the listeners of radio, a majority (75%) were spending less than 30 minutes listening to radio in a day.

**Media Credibility**

• With respect to credibility of news, a majority (78.4%) felt that the credibility of news in newspaper was moderate, followed by the next highest percentage (13.6%) rating it as high.

• Though all the respondents were reading newspaper and considered it as a major source of news, a majority (78%) considered the credibility of news as moderate. Only 14% gave high credibility to news published in newspaper and seven per cent felt the credibility was low.

• When it comes to credibility of news in radio, among the 49 respondents who were listeners, a majority (43%) of them stated the credibility was high. And, only for a meagre number (12%), the credibility was moderate and nearly half of
them (45%) did not offer comments. Only All India Radio is giving news bulletins.

- In case of magazines, for a little more than three-fourth (79%), the credibility of news was moderate and about a tenth (11%) found it as high and about an equal percentage (10%) rated it as low. This clearly showed that the respondents had given a positive skewed response to news in magazines.

- With respect to credibility of news in television, the data was indicative of poor trust enjoyed by the respondent politicians. The highest number (59%) respondents indicated that they considered the credibility of news as low, while the next highest (38%) percentage found it moderate. More than half of them found the credibility low. The interesting point to note was that none found the credibility high.

### Content Priority

- On a scale of 1 to 4 ranking with 1 being the highest and 4 being the least and with multiple choices given to choose the ranking, 99% of the respondents gave Rank 1 to newspaper as their major source of information. Rank 2 –for the one per cent of the respondents. And for none of the respondents, newspaper was Rank 3 and Rank 4 as a major source of information.

- When it comes to television as a major source of information, only 2% gave Rank 1 and 89% of the respondents gave Rank 2. As much as 9% gave Rank 3, and none chose to assign Rank 4 for television as a major source of information.

- As for as radio, only 13 respondents (of the total 49 respondents who were listening to radio) ranked their choices. Among them, none of the respondents gave Rank 1 to radio as a major source of information. Only 23% gave Rank 2, 23% gave Rank 3 and 54% gave Rank 4.

- In case of the Internet as a major source of information, only 58 respondents (of the 117 respondents who said they have access to the Internet) ranked their
choices. Of them, 7% of the respondents assigned Rank 1, 14% gave Rank 2, 75% gave Rank 3 and 10% gave Rank 4.

- The respondents were given eight subjects to indicate which type of news interested them most in newspaper, television and radio. They had the option of responding to more than one subject. Accordingly, in terms of the content, for cent per cent (100%) of the respondent politicians, it was the political news in newspaper which interested them most. In case of television, for the maximum respondents (92.8%), political news interested them most. Only a meagre (8.8%) of the respondents liked political news in radio. The second most interesting type of news for the politicians in newspaper was development-related reports (31.2%), while it ranked fifth (11.2%) in television; and in radio, it became the third most preferred option (1.6%).

- The data showed that crime news was hardly interesting (6.4%) to the respondents in newspaper, while in television it was a meagre (2.4%).

- In the case of entertainment news, television seems to be more interesting (42.4%) than newspaper (20%) to the respondents. A majority of the respondents were not interested in reading entertainment-related news in newspaper.

- Science-related news emerged as the least attractive subject across the politicians irrespective of the nature of their membership, in all three types of media – newspaper, television and radio.

- All the respondent politicians were found to be reading news reports. Besides news reports, the next highest readership (65.6%) was for editorials, followed by (61.6%) for columns.

- A little more than half of the respondent politicians (57%) were not giving priority to Letters to the Editor Column.
PART C

5.1.3 Participation of Politicians in Media

Participation

• None of the respondents was found to have functioned as guest editor in newspaper. They had also not contributed as columnists. Hardly 6.4% had written articles/features and an even smaller number (2%) had written to Letters to the Editor section.

• Nearly half (47.2%) of the respondents did not participate in panel discussions conducted by television channels. However, a similar percentage of them had given sound bites to television channels.

• A third (33.6%) of the respondents were found to have not given interviews to television channels. Nearly one-fourth (22.4%) had given interviews to television channels regularly and a similar percentage of them were found participating in panel discussions regularly. A higher percentage of the respondents had not participated in panel discussions and given interviews compared to those who had given interviews regularly. They were keen on giving sound bites on a regular basis.

• The data revealed that media ownership by the respondent politicians was negligible – be it newspaper (1.6%), magazine (0.8%), television channel ownership (1.6%) and stakeholders in television channels (2.4%) and none had invested in radio.

Media Responsibility

• The respondents were asked to rate the degree of responsibility of television channels in news coverage on a measurement scale of ‘Responsible’ to ‘Highly Irresponsible’. Accordingly, a higher (43.4%) percentage of them categorically stated that television channels’ treatment of news was ‘Irresponsible’ and a little
more than one-tenth (12.3%) of the respondents were of the view that the channels were ‘Highly Irresponsible.’ Cumulatively this constituted a little more than 50% of the respondent politicians.

- Totally 43% of the respondents were critical of television channels’ treatment of news by saying they were ‘Irresponsible’ in covering news. Among the MLAs, 40% stated that television channels were ‘Irresponsible’; a similar opinion was expressed by 46% of the respondents among the MLCs; among the Corporators- 46%; among the MPs (LS)- 67%; among the Seasoned Politicians, 42% were of the opinion that television channels were ‘Irresponsible’ in covering news. On the educational front, among the graduates, 48% and 32% among the post-graduates, stated that television channels were ‘Irresponsible’ when it came to news. Among those who had passed SSLC, 44% were of the opinion that television channels were ‘Irresponsible’ in treatment of news.

- A little more than one-third (36%) of them stated that the treatment of news in television channels was indeed ‘Responsible’ to some extent and a smaller (5%) percentage of them stated that the channels were ‘Highly Responsible.’ Among the MLAs, 13% of them were of the opinion that television channels were ‘Responsible’ and another 32% of them stated that channels were ‘Responsible to a Certain Extent.’ Among the MLCs, only 4% of them were of the opinion that television channels were ‘Responsible’ and another 35% of them stated that the channels were ‘Responsible to a Certain Extent.’ Among the Corporators, none was of the opinion that television channels were ‘Responsible’ and 38% of them stated that the channels were ‘Responsible to a Certain Extent.’

- Again, on the educational front, among the graduates, 48% of them and among the post-graduates, 32% of them found treatment of news by television channels to be ‘Irresponsible.’ Among the graduates, 33% of them and among the post-graduates, 40% of them were of the opinion that television channels were ‘Responsible to a Certain Extent’ in the treatment of news.
PART D

5.1.4 *New Media and Politicians*

Use of Devices that Access New Media

**Computer**

- Nearly 95% of the total respondent politicians were found to be using computer.

- Among the users of computer, 96% of them were graduates and 100% were post-graduates. About 89% were those who had completed SSLC and 100% of them were diploma-holders. Going by the nature of membership of the respondents and owning computer, among the MLAs, 95% were using computer; all the MLCs and the MPs (LS) were found to be using computer. Among the Corporators, 92%, and among the Seasoned Politicians, 95% were using computer.

- On funding of computers, more than three-fourth (75.9%) had bought it personally, 13.3% had got it as a gift from the Karnataka government (can also be read as Karnataka State Legislature Secretariat), and for 10.8%, the Central government had funded their computer purchase.

**Datacard**

- As much as 76% of the respondent politicians said they owned datacard and of these, 66% said their datacard was their personal possession and 8.8% said the Karnataka government had funded it.

- As much as 56% said that they used datacard on a daily basis. The next highest percentage – 23% - said they were using it rarely (once a week), followed by those who were using it occasionally – 11%, and 3% said they used it frequently.
Laptop

- It emerged from the frequency distribution that 84% of the respondents had laptop. Among those who had laptop, about 31% of the respondents had received it free from the Karnataka government, while 62% of them had purchased it on their own and 7% of the politicians had got the laptop from the Central government.

- Of all the respondents who had laptop, among the MLAs, 87% were using laptop. Among the MLCs, 92% were using laptop; among the Corporators, it was 80%; among the Seasoned Politicians, 70%; and among the MPs (LS), 78% said they were using laptop. Observing the usage from the education qualification point of view, among the graduates, 82% were using laptop, the post-graduates- 96%, and among those who had completed SSLC, 68% were using laptop.

- When it comes to frequency of using laptop, it was found that 27.6% of them were not using laptop despite having it and nearly one-fourth (26.7%) of the respondents were using it rarely. This was followed by those using it daily–21.9%; occasionally 17.1%; and frequently 6.7%. Even among those who had laptop, those utilising it were fewer.

- In the context of the frequency of usage of laptop by education level, a hypothesis was drawn to know whether the frequency of usage of laptop was independent of the education level. The analysis found that there was no statistical evidence to conclude that the frequency of usage of laptop is dependent on education level. In support of evidence, the data showed the percentage of frequency of usage of laptop by the lesser qualified (SSLC pass) was almost in the same proportion to those who were graduates and post-graduates.

The statistical analysis showed that there was no evidence to conclude that the usage of laptop increased with the nature of membership of the democratic institutions. By way of evidence the data showed that the percentage of the usage of laptop by the
members of the lower level of democratic institutions such as the civic body and the legislature was the same as that of the Members of Parliament.

The statistical analysis showed that there was no evidence to conclude that the frequency of usage of laptop is dependent on the age group. As a support of evidence, the data showed that the percentage of frequency of usage of laptop by the lower age group (25-45 years) was almost the same proportion as those of the higher age group (46-55 years).

iPad

- As much as 75% (94 of the 125 respondents) of the respondent politicians owned iPad. Among the 94 politicians, 67 politicians had received the high-end device free from the Karnataka government (State Legislature). Of the 67 politicians, 36 were MLAs, 26 were MLCs, three were Seasoned Politicians and two were Seasoned Politicians who happened to be MLAs. Among the ten MPs (LS), four had received iPad from the Central government funding.

- Those politicians who had received iPad from Karnataka government, about 62% (58 of the 94 respondents) were not carrying it while attending to public duties. Among those MPs (LS) who had purchased iPad with the Central government fund, all said they were carrying it for public duties.

- Only 10 of the 25 Corporators were having iPad which was their personal possession. Of them, 70% (7 of the 10) were carrying iPad for public duties. The government/the civic body had not gifted iPad to the Corporators.

- The Corporators were not gifted with iPads from government unlike the legislators and some of the MPs. The Corporators who had purchased iPad on their own, were also found using it for public duties. Their percentage was more as to the members of the other democratic institutions.

- With regard to personally operating iPad, among the MLAs, 78% were operating it themselves while attending to public duties. Among the MLCs, 80% of them were operating iPad; among the Corporators, it was 86%; and among
the MPs (LS) - 80%; and no Seasoned Politician said he/she was operating iPad personally while attending to public duties.

- In the context of the frequency of usage of iPad by education level, a hypothesis was drawn to know whether the frequency of usage of iPad was independent of the education level. The analysis found that there was no statistical evidence to conclude that the frequency of usage of iPad is dependent on the education level. As a support of evidence, the data showed the percentage of frequency of usage of iPad by the lesser qualified (SSLC pass) was in similar proportion to those who were graduates and post-graduates.

The statistical analysis showed that there was an evidence to conclude that the frequency of usage of iPad increases with the nature of democratic institutions’ membership at 10% level of significance. As supporting of evidence, the data showed that the percentage of the usage of iPad by the members of higher institution such as Parliament was significantly higher than those of the members of the lower level of institutions such as the legislature. However, this hypothesis was asserted statistically with a much lower level of confidence (90%).

The statistical analysis showed that was no evidence to conclude that the frequency of usage of iPad is dependent on the age group. As supporting of evidence, the data showed that the percentage of the frequency of usage of iPad by the lower age group (36-45 years) was almost the same proportion of those who were in the higher age group (46-55 years) and higher.

**Mobile Phone**

- Of the 125 respondents, all of them except one possessed mobile phone, a commonly used gadget.

- Among the total respondents, nearly 10% said they were using mobile phone to supplement their presentation/participation during official meetings. Among the graduates, only 10% of them and among the post-graduates, only 11.5% of them were using mobile phones to supplement their presentation/participation during the meetings.
**iPhone**

- Of the 125 respondents, only 35 (28%) of them were having iPhone. They had purchased the gadget on their own.

- As much as 90% of the respondents having it were found using it every day.

- iPhone is a fairly new hi-end device; the usage across the respondents irrespective of the nature of membership was uniformly distributed.

- Among the graduates, 23% were using iPhone; among the post-graduates, 42%; among those who had completed SSLC, 11%; and among those who had completed diploma, 50% were found using iPhone.

- In the context of the frequency of usage of iPhone by education level, a hypothesis was drawn to know whether the frequency of usage of iPhone was independent of the education level. The analysis found that there was statistical evidence to conclude that the frequency of usage of iPhone is dependent of education level at 10% level of significance. As support evidence, the data showed the percentage of frequency of usage of iPhone by the higher qualified (graduates and post-graduates) was in a significantly higher proportion compared to those respondent politicians who had completed SSLC. However, this hypothesis was acceptable statistically with a much lower level of confidence (90%).

The statistical analysis showed that there was an evidence to conclude that the usage of iPhone by the respondents increased with moving from a lower level of democratic institutions to a higher level at 10% level of significance. As supporting evidence, the data showed that as the level of membership to democratic institutions moves from the lower to higher (Corporators to MPs), the percentage of usage of iPhone was also higher. However, this hypothesis was acceptable statistically with a much lower level (90%) of confidence.

The statistical analysis showed that was no evidence to conclude that the frequency of usage of iPhone is dependent on the age group. As supporting evidence, the data
showed that percentage of frequency of usage of iPhone by the lower age group (36-45 years) was in the same proportion to those in the higher age group (46-55 years).

**Use of Types of New Media**

**E-mail**

- Among the respondents, 77% had e-mail account. While 13% did not have e-mail account, the rest 10% included those who could not recall and those who could not specify the address (e-mail ID).

- Interestingly, 92% of the respondents said they responded to e-mails they received, while 8% said they did not respond.

**The Internet**

- As much as 94% of the respondents had Internet connection at home and at office, while 6% of them did not have the facility at their residence.

- As much as 80% of the respondents said Karnataka government had not funded their Internet connection at their residence. However, 9% said that their bills were footed by the government, while 11% said the Internet bill was being cleared by the Central government.

- As much as 68% of the respondents were using the Internet at office on a daily basis. Among the MLAs, 75% were using the Internet daily; among the MLCs, 76% were using; among the Corporators, 65%; among the MPs (LS), 78% were using the Internet at office daily. On an average, the rest 25% of the respondents who belonged to different types of democratic institutions were found using the Internet in a span of once in two days to weekly once.

- It was observed that irrespective of the nature of membership, the duration of time spent was less than 30 minutes by a majority of the respondents.

- On surfing the Internet, 38% of the respondents, despite having the Internet facility, were not surfing.
In the above context, a hypothesis was drawn to know whether with the increase in duration of using the Internet, the downloading of information also increases. The statistical analysis showed that there was a significant and positive correlation between the time spent on the Internet and the volume of information downloaded.

As much as 34% of those politicians who had the Internet facility surfed the Internet daily between 15 and 30 minutes. The next highest users (25%) were those surfing occasionally and 22% were surfing with the help of others. The data showed that a majority of the politicians hardly spent any time surfing the Internet. The maximum time they spent was less than 15 to 30 minutes.

Among those surfing the Internet, 74% said they were surfing for the past two years.

When it comes to the purposes for which the surfing was done, the topmost priority was collecting ‘Information’ (96% of the total respondents). The medium priority (77%) was for ‘Surfing News’ and the low priority (19%) was attached to ‘Surfing for entertainment’ information.

On specific purposes of surfing the Internet, 16 types of utility were provided with a provision to choose more than one utility. Accordingly, all the respondents were found to be using it for e-mail purpose. As much as 73% used it for ‘Collecting information for debates/discussions in meetings’; for ‘Getting news online’ (60%); for ‘Educating their constituency people’ (40%) and for ‘Speech writing’ (29%). The respondents were found using the Internet for the following personal use– Ticket Booking (30%); To Do Business (29%); for Paying Bills (27%); To Chat (7%); To Download Music (3%); and for Collecting Information Regarding Entertainment Field (3%).

With regard to the frequency of surfing the Internet by education level, a hypothesis was drawn to know whether the frequency of surfing the Internet was independent of education level. The analysis found that there was no statistical evidence to conclude that the frequency of surfing the Internet is dependent on education level. As supporting evidence, the data showed the percentage of the
Internet surfing by the less qualified (SSLC pass) was similar in proportion to those who were graduates and post-graduates.

The statistical analysis showed that there was no evidence to conclude that the surfing of the Internet increases with the nature of membership of democratic institutions. As a support of evidence, the data showed that the percentage of the Internet surfing by the members of lower level of democratic institutions was the same as that of the members of higher institutions.

The statistical analysis showed that there was no evidence to conclude that the surfing of the Internet is dependent on the age group. As a support of evidence, the data showed that the percentage of frequency of Internet surfing by the lower age group (25-45 years) was in the same proportion to those who were in the higher age group (46-55 years).

**Social Media**

**Membership**

- In all, 11 social media sites were given as options for the respondent politicians to indicate whether they were members. They had the option to indicate more than one site. Accordingly, 51% of the respondents were members of Facebook, 16% were members of YouTube and 13% were on Twitter. Hardly 4% of the respondents were the members of Google Circle. For the rest of lesser known social media sites like Tumblr, Reddit, Orkut, Wayn, Hi5 and MySpace, there were no members.

- When it came to awareness of the Internet-based platforms of communication and social media sites, the respondents were given five choices to indicate their responses. They had the option of choosing more than one. That included – Skype, ChatOn, Internet Chatting, WhatsApp and GoogleTalk+. Accordingly, 61% said they were not aware of any of the above communication platforms. As much as 32% of the total respondents were found to be aware of WhatsApp and an equal number of the respondents were aware of Internet Chatting.
as 22% were aware of Skype and 14% of ChatsOn, followed by 13% of the respondents being aware of GoogleTalk+.

**Facebook & Twitter**

- Going by the nature of membership of the respondents, among the MLAs, 68% said that they were active on Facebook. Among the MLCs – 67%; among the MP (LS) – 80%; among the Corporators – 93%; and the Seasoned Politicians – 50% were active on Facebook. The young respondents (36-45 years) were active on Facebook. This was followed by those belonging to the age group of 46-55 years.

- Among the graduates, 71% said they were active on Facebook; among the post-graduates, 63%; and among those who had completed SSLC, 67% said they were active on Facebook.

- Among those who were active Twitterites all the MLCs, MPs (LS) and Corporators and Seasoned Politicians said they were active users. But among the MLAs, 60% were active on Twitter.

- Going by the age group, it was those who belonged to the age group of 25-45 years who said they were active on Twitter. Among the graduates, 71% were active on Twitter; among the post-graduates – 60%; and SSLC pass – 50%.

- It emerged that Facebook and Twitter were not extensively (only 14% of the total respondents) used by the politicians for giving out information on government welfare and development activities for the public.

- As much as 38% of the respondent politicians were aware of blogs, while 62% were unaware of blogs.

- Among those who were aware of blogs, 92% were not bloggers. Hardly 8% of the respondents were found blogging, though not regularly.
5.1.5 New Media Effects

E-mail/blogs/website/mobile phone

• As much as 55% of the respondents were making their secretaries to reply to the e-mail they received, while hardly 6% were personally replying. And, 31% of the respondents were taking secretaries’ help to reply.

• As much as 50% of the respondents were found not communicating on public issues with government departments over e-mail.

• On the reason for not using the e-mail facility for public purposes, the respondents were asked to indicate the reason(s). They could give more than one answer from the five reasons listed. Accordingly, 58% of the respondents stated that their ‘Belief in Conventional Way of Communication’ was the main reason for not using e-mail facility for the public purposes. Another 50% found that e-mail ‘Did Not Help in Communicating’ with government departments. As much as 19% were ‘Unfamiliar with the Technology’ and for 9% of the politicians, it was the ‘Language Barrier’ which posed a problem to not being able to communicate with government departments. Here the language means English.

• As much as 82% of the respondents said English language did not pose them a challenge to them in using e-mail and social media networks.

• The respondents having their personal websites were not many, as 74% of them were found not having them. And, 26% had their personal websites. As much as 58% were found not checking websites of government, while the rest 42% were checking websites.

• As much as 73% of the respondent politicians were not checking websites of political parties and politicians, while the rest 35% of the respondents were checking.
Regarding the opinion on e-governance, multiple choices were given to express their opinion. Accordingly, 85% of the respondents were found to be of the view that e-governance Benefits the Public, It Improves Administration (82%), Public Not Aware of It (42%), Not Helping Public (6%) and those who had No Opinion (2%).

Among those who were surfing the Internet, 66% were downloading information on public issues and the rest (34%) were not downloading.

Regarding the help obtained from the use of new media, the respondents were given a list of ten kinds of usefulness. They could choose more than one option. Accordingly, 84% of the total respondents said the use of new media had helped them. The new media included e-mail, blog, social media tools, etc., for their ‘Routine office work.’ A majority (84%) of the respondents said they were taking the help of new media for their ‘Routine office work.’

Among the MLAs, 67% were taking the help of new media for their routine work. Among the MLCs, - 96%, MPs (LS) – 90%, the Corporators– 76% and Seasoned Politicians– 80% were using it for routine work.

In terms of releasing press notes using new media, among the MLAs, 23% said they were releasing press notes via new media. Among the MLCs, 36%; among the MPs (LS) – 60%; among the Corporators– 20%; and among the Seasoned Politicians– 36% were releasing press notes with the help of new media.

Among the age group, 17 % of the respondents who belonged to the age group of 22-35 years said they were ‘Releasing press notes’ through new media platforms. And, 27% of the respondents who were in the age group of 36–45 years, were using new media for press notes, and 38% belonged in the age group of 46-55 years and 31% in the age group of 56-65 years who were found releasing press notes via new media.

The respondents were found using new media the least (1%) during ‘Political Crisis.’
For 58% of the total respondents, new media served as an ‘Easy Mode of Communication’; for 54%, it was a ‘Quick Way of Getting Connected with People’ and for 48% it was a ‘Mode to Express Their Views.’

For 34% of the total respondents, new media usage was for ‘Election Campaign’; for 33%, it was for ‘Releasing Press Notes to Media Houses’ and for ‘Uploading Video Clippings/Photos’ of their public functions. For 29%, it was for ‘Clarifying Media Reports’ and hardly 4% were using new media during ‘Political Crisis.’

The Seasoned Politicians were the highest among those who found that new media had helped them in ‘Clarifying Media Reports’ (44%), for ‘Election Campaign’ (44%) and to ‘Express Their Opinion’ (60%).

Among the MLAs, 49% said new media had helped them in ‘Easy Communication,’ 66% said it had helped them in “Routine Work’ and 26 % - during ‘Election Campaign.’ Among the MLCs, 54% said new media had helped them in ‘Easy Communication,’ 96% - for ‘Routine Work’; 15% – for ‘Election Campaign.’ Among the Corporators, 52% said it had helped them in ‘Easy Communication,’ 76% - ‘Routine Work’ and 28% - for ‘Election Campaign.’ Among the MPs (LS), 80% said new media had helped them in ‘Easy Communication,’ 90% - for ‘Routine Work’ and 50% - during ‘Election Campaign.’

When it came to uploading video clippings, it was the MLAs (33%) and the MPs-LS (50%) who were the highest among the respondents. The rest were not found to be eager to upload their videos.

As much as 91% of the politicians were using mobile phone to listen to public grievances and to speak to officials.

As much as 85% of the politicians were using mobile phone to get feedback on public importance from people.

Among the users of mobile phone, 66% used it to reach out to the media houses.
• Among the mobile phone users, 21% of them were using mobile phone for election campaign purpose.

• Hardly one respondent (0.8%) was using mobile phone for recording public grievances.

• Only 8% of the respondents were utilizing mobile phone for all the above mentioned public-related activities.

• Cumulatively, about 67% of the politicians were making between 50 and 100 calls a day, indicating that they were making good use of the communication gadget.

• In the above context, a hypothesis was drawn to know whether there exists any significant difference in the average number of calls made per day across the nature of membership of democratic institutions. The statistical analysis showed that there exists a difference in the average number of phone calls made per day across the various types of membership. It was the MLAs who were making more number of calls.

• Cumulatively about 66% of the politicians were receiving calls in the range of 50 to 100.

• All the respondents (except the ones who did not have) had shared their phone number with the public.

• As much 51% of the politicians disclosed that they were not sending SMSes (text messages) at all.

• As much as 40% of them were sending SMSes in the range of 25 to 50 numbers a day, followed by 4% stating that they send anywhere between 51 to 100.

• As much as 36% of the respondents said that they did not read messages they received and hence they were not keeping count of the messages.

• Among the mobile phone users, 26% said they received less than 25 messages a day, while 18% said that they received 25 to 50 messages.
• As much as 90% of the respondent politicians were not using their mobile phone to supplement their presentation/participation in meetings and discussions. Among those 10% who were supplementing their contribution to meetings/discussion using mobile phone, the MPs (LS) and the Corporators constituted the highest percentage.

• Those who were using mobile phone to supplement their presentations, the highest number fell in the age bracket of 36-45 years. Among them, the graduates were the highest to use mobile phone.

• A majority—about 71% of the politicians among the 105 respondents who had laptop were not using the device for public duties.

• Among those who were operating laptop on their own for public duties, 86% of the Corporators were using the device on their own while attending to public duties. Among the MLCs – 80%; among the MLAs – 78%; and among the MPs (LS) – 60%.

• The respondents in the age group of 36-45 years were the highest (100%) to operate laptop personally for public duties. The post-graduate respondents who were highest (75%) to operate laptop personally while attending to public duties, followed by those who were graduates.

• When it comes to personally operating laptop while attending to public duties, 33% of them were not operating it on their own. This also implied that it was their secretaries who were operating laptop for them.

• Among the MLAs, 49% of them were carrying iPads while attending public duties. Among the MLCs, it was 80%; among the Corporators – 86%; and among the MPs (LS) – 60% were carrying iPad while attending to public duties. Among the age group, those respondents who were in age group of 36-45 years were the highest (53%) to carry iPad while attending to public duties. Going by education qualification, the post-graduates were the highest to carry iPad (50%).

• Among the MLAs, 78% were operating iPad on their own while attending to public duties. Among the MLCs– 80%; among the Corporators– 86%; and
among the MPs (LS) – 60%. Among the graduate respondents, 74% of them said they were operating iPad on their own while attending to public duties. Among the post-graduates, it was 64%; and among those who had completed SSLC, all said they were operating iPad on their own.

- Of the 4 MPs (LS) who had received iPad from the Central government, only two were using it for public duties.

- As much as 78% of the respondent politicians were not reading newspaper online and 22% were reading newspaper online. Going by the nature of membership of the respondents, 28% of the total MLAs were reading newspaper online. Among the MLCs, it was 19%, among the MPs (LS) – 44%, among the Corporators– 16% and among the Seasoned Politicians– 20% were reading newspaper online.

- As much as 89% of the respondents were not watching television programmes online and 11% of them were watching online. Considering the nature of membership of the respondents, 10% of the total MLAs were watching television programmes online. Among the MLCs, it was 8%; among the MPs (LS), 22%; among the Corporators- 12% and among the Seasoned Politicians – 12%.

- The respondent politicians could indicate their responses on usage of laptop under five types of utilities. Accordingly, nearly half (48.6%) of the respondents were using laptop for accessing the Internet alone and another 25.7% to download information. Hardly 8.57% of them were using the device for sharing ‘Information in Meetings’ and 19% used it for ‘Making Presentation in Meetings.’ Nearly 43% of the politicians who possessed laptop were yet to maximise it as a supportive device for public-related activities.

- As much as 58% of the respondents’ family members were using various types of media devices some of which are new, while some are not so new. As much as 34% of the respondents’ family members used computer (34%), laptop (27%), iPad (17%) and iPhone (0.8%) and those who were found not using any of the devices were 2%.
• With respect YouTube, 82% of the respondents were aware of YouTube. However, only 30% of them were accessing YouTube occasionally, while 70% were not at all accessing it. Among those who were using YouTube, 81% of the respondents were uploading videos of their public functions. However, 92% of them were uploading only once a month.

• Among those who had Facebook account, 66% were found to be not active on the site.

• Though Twitter account holders were lesser compared to Facebook members, 63% of them were active on their Twitter account.

• To find the nature of participation of the respondents on Facebook and Twitter, five multiple choices were given. Accordingly, the most chosen nature of participation on Facebook was to ‘Post Views/Issues’ (69%). This was followed by activity of ‘Sharing Photos’ (58%), ‘Giving Comments’ (52%), ‘Posting Views on Government Programs for the benefit of public’ (27%) and ‘Initiating Debates’ (14%).

• In the context of the nature of participation (i.e., sharing of photos, posting views/photos, giving comments, posting government programmes and initiating debates) on social media site Facebook by education level, a hypothesis was drawn to know whether the nature of participation on Facebook was independent of education level. The analysis found that there was no statistical evidence to conclude that the nature of participation on Facebook was dependent on education level. As a support of evidence, the data showed the percentage of nature of activities on Facebook by the lesser qualified (SSLC pass) politicians were similar in proportion to those who were graduates and post-graduates. The statistical analysis showed that there was no evidence to conclude that nature of participation on Facebook increases with the nature of membership of the democratic institutions. As a support of evidence, the data showed that the percentage of the members of lower level of democratic institutions was same as that of the members of higher democratic institutions.
The statistical analysis showed that there was no evidence to conclude that the nature of participation on Facebook was dependent on the age group. As a support of evidence, the data showed that percentage of respondents uploading different nature of activities by the lesser age group (25-45 years) was in the same proportion to those who were in the higher age group (46-55 years).

- When it comes to nature of participation on Twitter, the most frequent activity was ‘Giving Comments’ (63%), followed by ‘Sharing of Photos’ (44%) and ‘Posting Information on Government Programmes’ (6%).

- In context of the nature of participation (i.e., sharing of photos, posting views/photos, giving comments, posting government programmes and initiating debates) on Twitter by education level, a hypothesis was drawn to know whether the nature of participation on Twitter was independent of education level. The analysis found that there was no statistical evidence to conclude that the nature of participation of various activities on Twitter was dependent on education level. As a support of evidence, the data showed the percentage of politicians uploading different activities on Twitter by the lesser qualified (SSLC pass) was similar in proportion to those who were graduates and post-graduates.

The statistical analysis showed that there was no evidence to conclude that nature of participation on Twitter increases with the nature of membership. As a support of evidence, the data showed that the percentage of participation of the politicians on the nature of activities on Twitter of members of lower level of democratic institutions was the same as that of the members of higher institutions.

- Among those who were active on Facebook and Twitter, only 27% of the respondents were checking comments posted by State/National/International politicians.

- When it came to taking online help by the respondents for promoting political parties, 82% of them were found ‘Not Taking Help,’ while the rest 18% had ‘Taken Assistance.’ Among the MLAs, 15% said they had taken online help to ‘Promote Party.’ Among the MLCs– 8%; among the MPs (LS) – 44%; among
the Corporators– 20%; and among the Seasoned Politicians– 20% said they had taken online help to ‘Promote their political parties.’

- When it came to taking online help to promote department programmes, only 14% of the respondents said they had taken online help. Among the MLAs, 22% said they had taken online help to ‘Promote department programmes.’ Among the MLCs – 8% among the MPs (LS)–22%; among the Corporators– 8%; and among the Seasoned Politicians–5% had used online assistance to ‘Promote department programmes.’

- When it came to taking online help to ‘Promote political career,’ 40% of the total respondents said they had taken help. Among the MLAs, 33% of them said they had used online for ‘Promoting their career.’ Among the MLCs–27%; among the MPs (LS) – 67%; among the Corporators– 36%; and among the Seasoned Politicians– 50% had taken online help for ‘Promoting their career.’

- The MLAs were the highest among the members of democratic institutions to take online help to ‘Promote their political career.’ To a certain extent the MPs (LS) had taken help, but they were next only to the MLAs.

- Among the respondents, only the MLAs (39 in number) and the MLCs (26) were imparted training to use new media and electronic devices by the Karnataka Government. Of these, 77% (50 respondents) were found attending the training session to use new media and 17% had not attended and the remaining 6% could not recollect whether they had attended or not.

- As much as 91% of the respondents had recommended that politicians should use new media. Those who were not in favour of it were 2% and those who had no opinion were 6%. In general, the opinion was in favour of usage of new media by politicians.

- The respondents, who were found using online media including social media sites, were found using it for self-promotion by posting photographs of them and their public programmes.
The political parties were just using their websites as a billboard to advertise or talk about the activities and to promote state/national level leaders of the parties.

The respondents were not equally enthusiastic to use the Internet-based media for publicity or to keep in touch with constituents on the grounds that the Internet was not available for everyone and everywhere.

Most of the content on the digital platforms of the respondents and the political parties was not useful for the public.

The content on social media sites and websites mostly were in English and were monologues.

The political party websites were not interactive.

The respondents, by and large, were not engaging people with either political debate, discourse or conversation.

The respondents and political parties were found to be shy or unenthusiastic to raise and debate-sensitive issues though debates could be held without disturbing the peace of society or hurting the sentiments of anyone.

The respondents, who otherwise do not use online media, were found trying to use online platforms when they contested elections.

The respondents and political parties were not found using digital forums for abusing their opponents though they mock at each other.

All the major political parties in Karnataka were having websites and some of them had presence on social media sites too.

More than the political parties, it was individual politicians who were found active often on social media sites.

The websites of the parties and the respondents lacked transparency and also not paying attention to give a professional touch to the designing aspect.

In terms of the impact of new media on the respondents, it was found that there was considerable impact in terms of usage of devices that helps in accessing
new media and also awareness regarding popular social media networking sites. However, the usage as well as awareness is not very extensive and also the purpose for which they were used is limited. And the usage was found to be independent of their age, education and nature of membership of the democratic institutions. For example, with respect to using laptop, the data showed that about 73% of those respondents who had completed 10th standard were also using laptop though the percentage of its usage was higher among those who had higher qualification. As a device, laptop had made an impact in terms of usage irrespective of the qualification. The same holds good for the usage of iPad wherein 58% of the respondents among those who had completed 10th standard found using this electronic device. The usage of iPad was found to be same among the Corporators and MLCs as compared to the MPs. With statistical evidence, it was established that the usage of the devices to help in accessing new media was effective across the respondents irrespective of their nature of membership. This does not imply that the usage was for the maximum extent for the good of the public. Devices like laptop and iPad were found to be more used for mailing purpose and accessing information.

But the usage of the devices by the respondents for attending to public duties was found to be limited. Even those operating the devices on their own were very limited. The impact of the usage of the devices would be more if the respondents themselves operate them. However, the usage was found to be independent of the nature of membership. But this argument did not hold good while assessing the usage of iPhone. Firstly, the usage itself was limited with hardly 28% of the respondents found having an iPhone. Secondly, the statistical analysis showed that the usage was more among those who had higher education. Thirdly, among the limited number of users, it was the younger politicians who were found using iPhone more than the others.

When it comes to surfing the Internet from the utility point of view, 80% of the respondents were found to be surfing the Internet. The main purpose of surfing was to send e-mail for routine office work, extract information, followed by searching for news and then for entertainment purpose. Indeed, the Internet was
found to be having a good impact though the purpose for which it was used was limited.

Coming to the usage of popular social media networking sites like Facebook, there was no statistical evidence to conclude that the higher educated respondents were making better usage of the sites than the lesser qualified for the public purpose. On the contrary, it was found that among those who were better qualified, a majority (75%) of them had restricted their usage for sharing photos, posting views and making comments. But for the question whether social media sites like Facebook had made an impact on the respondents in terms of usage, the result was not very impressive. A good number of the respondents had their presence on social media sites but the activities were for limited purpose. The politicians were found to be still continuing to have their debates/discussions in traditional media such as television rather than doing it online or giving equal primacy to both the media. Such mindset was seen across all the types of members irrespective of their age, qualification and nature of the membership on the democratic institutions.

5.2 Suggestions

Media intervention in public service assumes significance in the era of information society. Politicians who exercise enormous power in the corridors of government are expected to serve the public and the connectivity with the masses matters in participatory democracy. It is true that there is criticism about the void existing between politicians and the common man. Conventional media like press, radio and television could not bridge the gap between public and the politicians. It is under this perspective the use of social media by politicians assumes significance. Social media have democratised human communication with its interactivity and created a public platform for everybody. The present study analysed the impact of new media on politicians and has inferred that politicians have to take a big leap towards digital communication to get connected with the stakeholders. In this context, it was felt absolutely necessary to give suggestions on strengthening the new media usage by politicians;
• Social media should be used extensively by the politicians to bridge the digital void to promote public participation in government activities.

• Politicians should sustain their online activities to make people visit the websites regularly.

• Online language, preferably regional language, should be used in an informal yet refined and restrained so that even the common man evince interest and connect.

• Digital platforms of politicians should be interactive and should encourage users to post feedback, opinions, and grievances to get connected with the masses.

• Daily engagement/diary and contact phone/address of politicians, especially those of elected representatives, should be available online.

• There should be feedback mechanism on websites/social media sites. At present, mostly, they are using the sites just to post information on themselves.

• Digital forums should be informative to public. In addition, they should hyperlink their digital platforms to those sites which are of public utility.

• Politicians should utilise new media to build confidence among the public whenever there is tension in society.

• At present, a majority of the online sites of politicians are serving as advertisement board for themselves or for their party. They are just digital form of printed version of invitations or handouts. The sites have photographs of politicians’ functions which are not much of utility to the public.

• Instead of talking about themselves, they should reflect their work done for citizens. They should offer information that matters most to people. Complaints and applications received from the public could be listed on the sites. The follow-up actions could also be posted.

• A meticulously prepared power point presentation made using electronic devices like laptop and iPad in official meetings by politicians go a long way in
improving their participation. This would reflect their interest and involvement.

At present it is mostly officers who make presentations. Politicians should also share the presentations on their sites for public consumption.

- Efforts should be made to involve the common man in political process through social media sites by conducting debates/discussions.

- It is common to see the public conveying their grievances and complaints against officials for not extending co-operation to attend to their problems. In such situation, politicians could do audio/video recording on their smart phones or other devices, of the complaints. The same could be played before the officials concerned to get the grievances addressed.

- Politicians should upload the works completed in their constituencies using their MP or MLA funds or infrastructure projects taken up by government for the welfare of society.

- Legislators are lawmakers. They should upload draft bills on their sites to get feedback from the public. They should also upload Questions they wish to raise in legislature/Parliament and also share the replies they get. Such transparency in work culture will keep the public informed about the government.

- Elected representatives tour a lot. In their absence, people who come to meet them in their offices go unattended. To avoid inconvenience to the visiting public who bring serious grievances, politicians may interact with them via video calls through apps or videoconference with the civil servants.

- Politicians, by and large, have e-mail account. They should ensure that every e-mail is attended to even if they cannot address every problem.

- Politicians may conduct online surveys on decisions that they or their government may like to take which have ramification on larger sections of society.