

International Seminar on  
**‘Public Discourse and New Media’**

14-15 Dec 2013

Makhanlal Chaturvedi National University of Journalism and Communication (MCU), Bhopal and Asian Media Information and Communication (AMIC), Singapore jointly organised an International Seminar on "Public Discourse and New Media". The seminar was held at MCU Bhopal, on 14 and 15 December, 2013. The seminar focused on ways to explore the new forms of public discourse that are emerging as a result of New Media, its impact on the users and how specific features of public discourse in social media influence political discussion, participation and democratic values. The dynamics of interaction in online communities and how the participants of these online sites experience, propagate and influence others in their discourse in public sphere were also examined in the seminar.

Seventy research based abstracts were received from invited authors working in this area, only 27 were selected for presentations in the seminar. National, International academicians, Research scholars and representatives from media associations participated and deliberated over the issues on these two days.

**INAUGURAL SESSION**

Vice Chancellor of MCU, Prof. B.K. Kuthiala chaired the inaugural session and Dr. Binod C. Agrawal, Board Member, AMIC Singapore elaborated the Conference theme. He said the rapid proliferation of social media in a short duration has led to several significant outcomes, the political arena has seen a silent light India into a talking India, without much affecting our value system.



The main speaker of the session Mr. Vijay Saighal, former editor, Dainik Tribune, Chandigarh, said that the rapidly proliferating new media is still a enigmatic area for investigation, with many useful, innovative features, yet loaded with serious concerns prone to misuse as distorted media ethics, breach of privacy technology infiltration without proper checks & balances. He said that, new media was not a threat to traditional media in India - the latter have changed with time and integrated many dimensions of the former. Prof. B.K. Kuthiala reiterated that the objective of the seminar on an emerging area was to view new media from a new perspective, so that fresh insights could be created on the holy marriage between journalism and new communication technology. He spoke about the remarkable future scenario where the world's virtual population would exceed the population of the earth and said that the new media phenomenon could be viewed as a sequence of the ongoing organic evolution.

‘MCU News’, a quarterly in-house magazine, designed to facilitate effective communication between different stake holders of the University associated study institutes was released in the inaugural session.

There were 6 technical sessions on

1. *Theorizing: New Media and Social Discourse*
2. *Political Communication and New Media*

3. *New Media empowering the citizen*
4. *Dynamics of social media*
5. *Web media and new paradigms of development*
6. *New dimensions of media*

In every theme based technical session, the research work was presented by the authors. A keynote speech was followed by a special address of the chairman on the theme of the session.

A special session on *Role of New Media in Political Communication*, was organized in the seminar. Hon. Shri. Anil Dave, Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha was the Guest of Honour. Mr. Dave spoke on the need for the ruling establishment to be techno savvy, to appreciate the potential of new media innovation, but emphasized the need for use of social media for better governance.



IT cell coordinators of two major Indian political parties – Vikas Bhondriya (BJP) and Dr. Tanim Dutta (Congress) presented, the way new media was used for reachability in recent elections.

### **VALEDICTORY SESSION**

Shri. Rajendra Sharma, Chief Editor, Swadesh, Member, Management and General Councils of the University, registered the advantages of New Media as immediate access, cost effectiveness, but added that traditional media remains important to

conserve the sanctity of our emotional heritage and beauty of the written language. In his special discourse Mr. S.K. Pandey, Additional Director General, Disaster Management gave a presentation on the impact of social media and its challenges.



In his address, Mr. Rajesh Badal, CEO, Rajya Sabha T.V. cautioned the audience on the negative impact of new media on the Indian family system. Dr.P.Sasikala presented the proceedings of the two day seminar. In his concluding remarks, Prof. B.K. Kuthiala, highlighted the seminar's output in terms of new ideas generated and expressed his hope that the new media would play a significant role in strengthening our democracy with emergence of new research methods and ideas from such seminars helping in this process.

In his concluding address, Dr.Binod C. Agrawal recalled the message of Shri. Martin Hadlow, Secretary-General, AMIC, Singapore that, the explosion in the use of mobile phones, especially in texting and accessing social media, has given a voice to those who previously were marginalized from mainstream media and communication processes. He questioned, Does un-moderated 'new media' comment, when used by mainstream media as information content, add to the democratic conversation in a meaningful way or is it merely an adjunct to simply provide entertainment, trivia and celebrity gossip to end-users? The discussions carried out in the two day seminar were significant.