

INFORMATION NEEDS OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT IN INDIA FOR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN SOCIETY: A STUDY

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The paper aims to determine the information needs of Members of Parliament (MPs) in India for effective leadership in society. It also includes the study of frequency of public meetings and the communication channels for MPs with public to identify societal needs of their constituency. The study was conducted with structured questionnaire including closed ended and open ended questions. The survey results were tabulated and analyzed with descriptive statistics methods (using MS Excel software and SPSS). The findings reveal that majority (92.4 %) of MPs in India collect and are already aware of the information in their area. They interact with people through social gatherings to know the societal needs of their constituency/region. Majority of MPs are found interested in social information related to Religion (85.9 %), followed by interest in information on Gender (79.5%) in their constituency. The majority of MPs believe that the Party's Organizational Status (84.8%) is the major pillar of foundation of Indian politics followed by individual's political background (70.9%). Lastly, the study concludes that majority of Indian MPs are dependent on non-documentary sources of information for collecting societal information for leadership in their Constituency.

Keywords: Information, Information Needs, Social Information, Sources of Information, Channels of Communication, Member of Parliament, India, Political Leadership.

INTRODUCTION

Information is the key currency that every legislator requires at every stage to actively participate in the governance of society. The access to information by legislator is directly related to responsiveness of the Government to community needs. In democracy, people are ruled by their elected representatives. The members of legislative assemblies are most influential decision-makers in any society and expected to be well-informed about a wide variety of issues, while information need is frequently

unpredictable and reactive (Orton, Marcella & Baxter, 2000, p.207). Therefore, a legislator requires adequate and reliable information for taking right and beneficial decision(s) for the whole state/nation.

A Leader or Public Representative in our society through his influential work efficiency, effective personality and ideas works towards the development of his parliamentary constituency. Parameters such as Total Population in the constituency in respect to Gender, Divyang Jan (Differently abled) and Economic Weaker Section (EWS) of the society are considered as important variables to attain a system of effective leadership.

Without factual and authentic information, legislators cannot adequately exercise their powers as a politician. Thus, these research papers focus on “Information Needs of Members of Parliament in India for Effective Leadership in Society” as to analyze the important areas where Parliamentarians need and seek information for the making important decisions related to the development of the society.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A comprehensive and well-developed system of information about society is a fundamental requirement in a democracy (Brundin 2005, p.19). The role of the MPs in parliament is to represent their constituency concerns in parliament as well as to make legislation for their respective government and countries; hence MPs need information in order to have effective leadership to carry out these tasks. There is considerable lack of literature on the sources and areas of

Social information needs of the Parliamentarians in India; thus, the current research study analyses and identifies the varied sources and areas of Social information needs of MPs in India to strengthen the leadership to fill this literature gap to solve the existing and emerging societal problems in India in today's Digital Information Era.

The Members of Parliament form a special group of citizens, highly important by virtue of their status to amend and to make legislation for the country but there are almost negligible amount of research studies on sources and areas of Social information needs, leadership of the Parliamentarians in India and across the globe. This area is mainly neglected by many researchers and information professionals despite the significance of the topic due to limited or restricted access to the MPs/Legislators. Thus, the present study on the ‘Information Needs of Members of Parliament in India for Effective Leadership in Society’ will help to assess the various components of social information handling of MPs to help them to contribute more and develop better services for Indian society.

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The Information needs of members of Parliament are multi-dimensional but the current research study has been limited to leadership of the Indian MPs. All the Indian states have been divided into six regions i.e. North, North East, South, West, East, Central for analysing the survey results. The survey methodology has been followed with the help of questionnaire method as a data collection tool with open ended and

closed ended questions. The results have been analysed using MS Excel and Statistical software for the accuracy of the results. The total number of 80 MPs all over the India were interviewed and included in the study as the sample population for the survey.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The term information need being an elusive term is difficult to define, isolate and measure (Choudhury 2013, p.10). 'An information need is a recognition that your knowledge is inadequate to satisfy a goal that you have' (Case 2002, p.5). According to Reitz (2004) "Information need" is a gap in a person's knowledge which, when experienced at the conscious level as a question, gives rise to a search for an answer. If the need is urgent, the search may be pursued with diligence until the desire is fulfilled. Case, (2006) feels an information need arises when an individual senses a problematic situation or information gap, in which his or her internal knowledge and beliefs, and model of the environment fail to suggest a path towards the satisfaction of his or her goals. Further, Case (2012) states that "an information need is a recognition that your knowledge is inadequate to satisfy a goal that you have". According to Paisley (1968), Information needs are affected by a variety of factors, which includes the range of information sources available; the uses to which the information will be put; the background, motivation, professional orientation and other individual characteristics of the user; the social, political and economic systems surrounding the user and lastly the consequences of information use (as quoted by Cronin 1981).

One of the most important needs of the MPs is to receive, understand and evaluate information and pass on the relevant information with opinions in Parliament and committees including the Government and the society. Being well informed and having up to date information is therefore vital if a Member is to understand and debate the great range of legislation and other issues dealt with by the House and provide an effective representational link between his or her constituents and the Parliament (Rugambwa & Kintu 2013, pp.3-4).

The performance of MP roles is at the heart of democratic politics (Campbell & Lovenduski 2015, p.691). According to James Madison (1997) "a popular government without information or the means of acquiring it, is but prologue to a farce or tragedy, or perhaps both: knowledge will forever govern ignorance. And people who mean to be their own government must arm themselves with power that knowledge gives". It is thus essential for the decision-makers to have information which is free of bias and covers the full range of existing opinions (as quoted by Alemna & Skouby 2000, p.235). The need for relevant, accurate and timely information to support decision making has grown along with democratic governance. As and when the more aspects of society become subject to legislation there is requirement of more knowledge on part of MPs to be able to take right decisions in the areas of little prior knowledge. With the increase in the range of subjects, issues, interests and disciplines of interest to parliamentarians, there has been a parallel increase in the quantity of information available, similar to the "information

overload” experienced in other professions, delineates the importance of information to his work (Marcella, Carcary & Baxter 1999, p.171).

In order to measure the quality of information, two crucial elements must be examined which includes the validity of information and the reliability of its source (Marcella, Carcary & Baxter 1999, p.171). The sources of information that legislators use vary with the sub-process in which they are participating or involved. For example, different sources are used by legislators at the time of writing the bills, when they are deciding on their votes and while persuading their colleagues etc. (Mooney 1991, p.450).

The Legislative information sources can be classified broadly into three categories namely Insiders, Outsiders and Middle range sources on the basis of similarity in nature of their professional experience with the legislator. “Insiders” includes a group of people who are colleagues and staff members of legislator. These people are in daily contact with legislators and have similar kind of pressures and experiences. “Outsiders” are those people whose professional experience is least like that of a legislator and who knows little about legislative life and have little on-going contact with legislators, which includes constituents, officials of other units of government, the mass media, and academics. In between these two extremes lies the “middle range” sources-interest groups and representatives of executive agencies. These people regularly interact with lawmakers and strive to understand them but operate under different constraints and have different

experiences in the legislative process than do legislators. If legislators pursue satisfying their information searches, it is likely that they will use more information supplied by insiders than middle range sources, with outsiders being least attended among all the sources (Mooney 1991, p.447). Different types of legislators view and use information sources differently. Thus, it is important to keep state and regional variations in mind when strategizing to get information to individual legislators (Jackson-Elmoore 2005, p.260).

Members of the parliament need information all the time to fulfill their objectives as decision makers. The information they need can come from varied sources which may be either print or digital and formal or informal. The information centers located in the Parliament/House of Commons are responsible to provide the necessary information to the legislators. Thus, Alfarhoud (2016) focus on the study of the information behavior and needs of the Kuwait National Assembly (KNA) members in collecting information for their legislative work and rapid adoption of new technologies, specifically social media and information centers by members of KNA and Kuwaiti citizens for their decision-making process. The study provides insight that will help to improve the services and resources to enhance the utilization of the information center. This study identifies the gaps and set a clear map on how MPs obtain and use necessary information for their legislative work. Similarly, Hossain et al. (2017) assess the information needs and information-seeking behaviour of Members of Parliament (MPs) in Bangladesh. The study aimed at determining the information sources,

preferred information format, frequency of seeking information and access to information and communication technology and online information services by the MPs. The findings reveal that the MPs mainly seek information to make a parliamentary request/inquiry, to make a speech and to make a decision. The most important sources of information were minutes of sessions, mass media, personal letters and information networks; and they preferred printed formats rather than online documents. The result also showed that only a few MPs were aware of the information services provided by the parliament library and were satisfied with the services they received.

Walgrave and Dejaeghere (2017) found that relying on the bounded rationality theory that elite politicians tend to outsource their information selection to their advisors, as a form of managing information flows. It is claimed that there is little research on how elite politicians select information for use. They find that elite politicians in their case, Belgian party leaders and ministers, employ a set of mechanisms to select information for use in their unlimited information environment. Politicians are held publicly accountable, and they operate in an extremely

competitive environment, not only between parties, but often for position and power within their own party.

Al Baghal (2019) states that understanding members' information needs is important, but the usage and impact of Parliamentary libraries have been less explored in the previous studies. The results suggest that member usage varies significantly and that there is a small but significant relationship between usage and making speeches in the chamber. Further work should explore other indicators of impact, but these methods show promise in creating library metrics, particularly in Parliamentary settings. Thus, the overall findings indicate that elite politicians' information practices concentrate in mastering the flow of information and they paid attention to several kinds of information sources, as well as individuals and organizations on the broad spectrum of issues including political instances and matters.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Leadership is a process of knowing its electorate and fulfilling the needs of society for good governance. In order to have effective

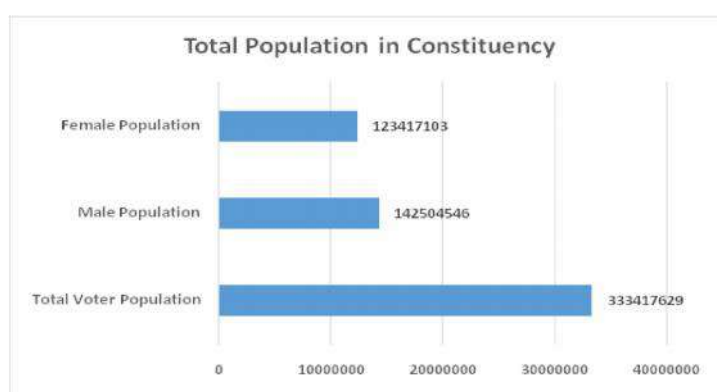


Figure 1: Total Population in Constituency

leadership the data has been analysed on electorate and leadership parameters.

Electorate

To be politically active in the area the public representatives regularly collect electoral data and meet people in the area. In this study total eighty

members of parliament in India have been taken from different regions.

As shown in figure 1, the responses by the MPs about their voters have male population larger than female population with some minor differences.

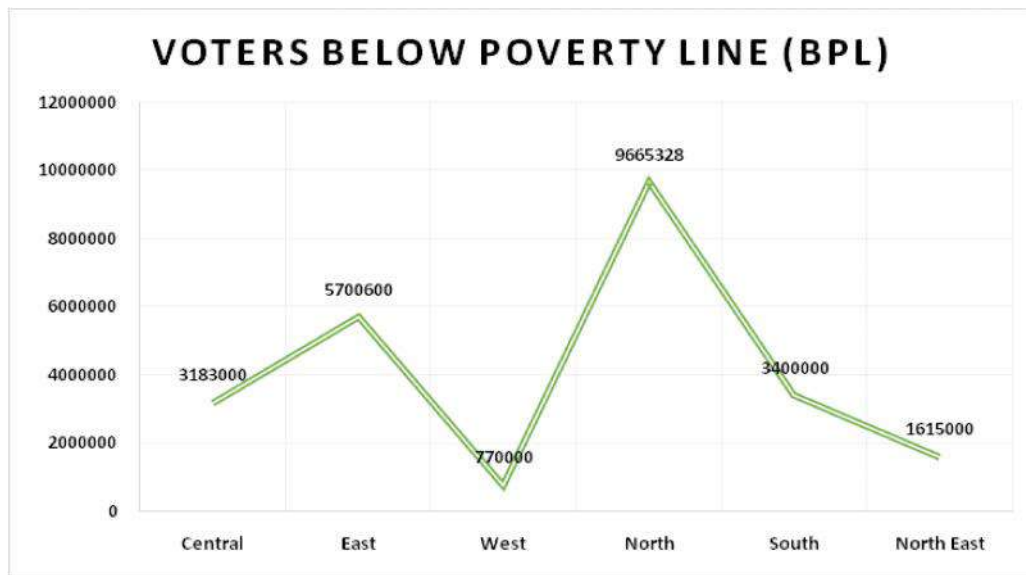


Figure 2: Region Wise Voters below Poverty Line

As shown in figure 1, the maximum voters under the poverty line is in the north region followed by east region, south, central, north east and west region.

Table 1: Response about Information Related to Differently Abled (Divyang Jan)

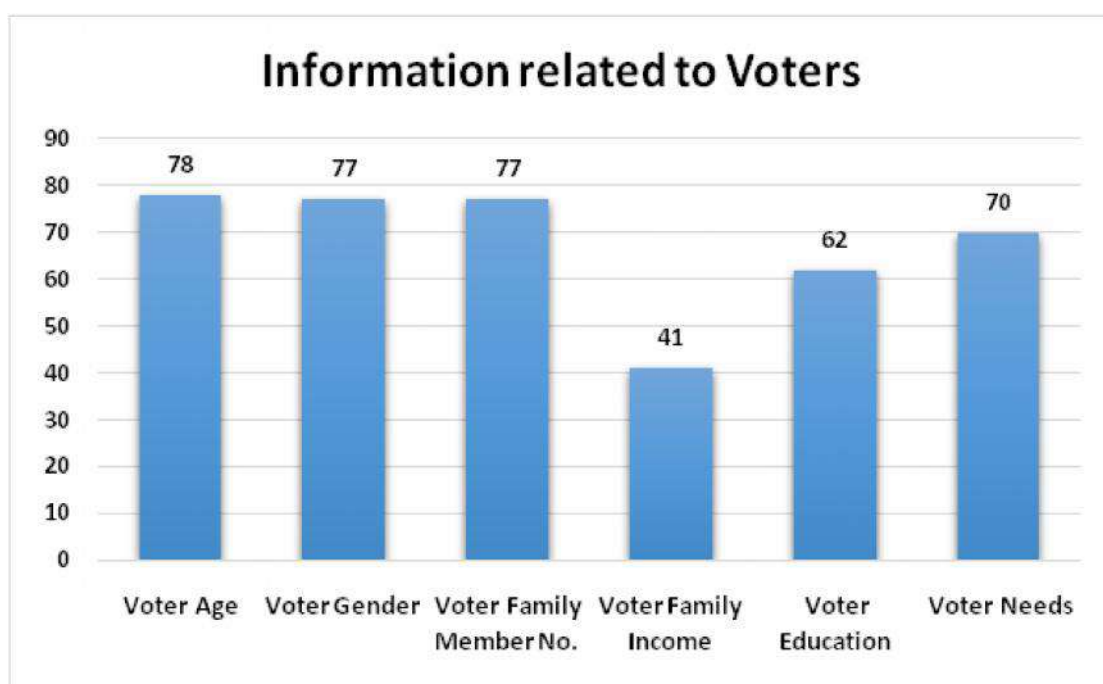
Information Related to Divyang Jan	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	68	85	85
No	12	15	100
Total	80	100	

As shown in table 1, out of 80 respondents, majority of respondents agreed that they have information related to differently abled (Divyang Jan) people in their constituency (85%), on the other hand 15% people do not have any information related to differently abled (Divyang Jan) people in their constituency.

Based on the table 2 and figure 3, majority of respondents collect information related to people on Voter's age (98.7%) and least on voter's Family Income (51.9%).

Table 2: Region Wise Information Related to Voters

Information related to Election Issue	Region													
	North		North East		South		West		East		Central		Total	
	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Voter Age	34	97.1%	6	100.0%	13	100.0%	8	100.0%	12	100.0%	5	100.0%	78	98.7%
Voter Gender	34	97.1%	6	100.0%	13	100.0%	8	100.0%	11	91.7%	5	100.0%	77	97.5%
Voter Family Member No.	34	97.1%	6	100.0%	13	100.0%	8	100.0%	11	91.7%	5	100.0%	77	97.5%
Voter Family Income	9	25.7%	4	66.7%	12	92.3%	7	87.5%	6	50.0%	3	60.0%	41	51.9%
Voter Education	23	65.7%	6	100.0%	13	100.0%	8	100.0%	7	58.3%	5	100.0%	62	78.5%
Voter Needs	31	88.6%	6	100.0%	13	100.0%	8	100.0%	8	66.7%	4	80.0%	70	88.6%
Total	35	100.0%	6	100.0%	13	100.0%	8	100.0%	12	100.0%	5	100.0%	79	100.0%

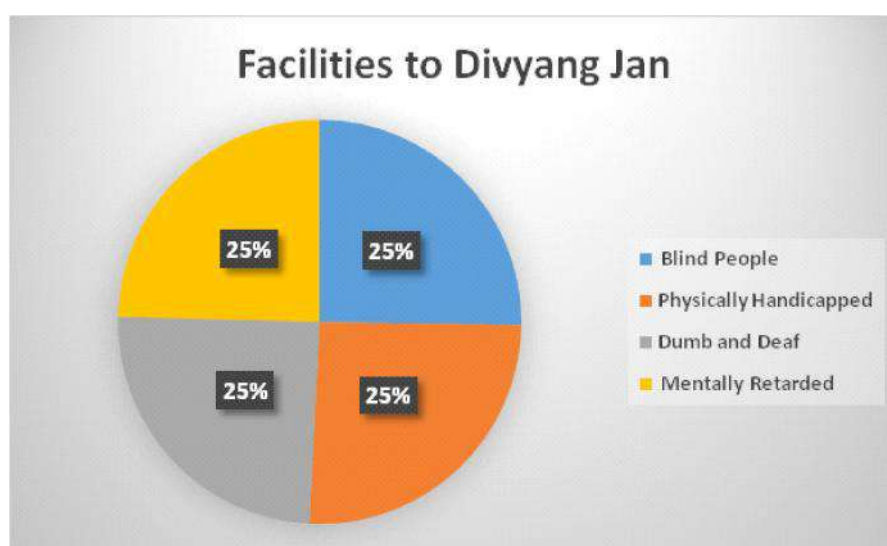
**Figure 3: Information Related to Voters**

Based on the table 2 and figure 3, majority of respondents collect information related to

people on Voter's age (98.7%) and least on voter's Family Income (51.9%).

Table 3: Region Wise Facilities Provided to Divyang Jan

Facilities to Divyang Jan	Region													
	North		North East		South		West		East		Central		Total	
	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Blind People	33	97.1%	6	100.0%	13	100.0%	8	100.0%	12	100.0%	5	100.0%	77	98.7%
Physically Handicapped	34	100.0%	6	100.0%	13	100.0%	8	100.0%	12	100.0%	5	100.0%	78	100.0%
Dumb and Deaf	32	94.1%	6	100.0%	12	92.3%	8	100.0%	12	100.0%	5	100.0%	75	96.2%
Mentally Retarded	32	94.1%	6	100.0%	12	92.3%	8	100.0%	12	100.0%	5	100.0%	75	96.2%
Total	34	100.0%	6	100.0%	13	100.0%	8	100.0%	12	100.0%	5	100.0%	78	100.0%

**Figure 4: Total Facilities Provided to Divyang Jan**

Based on the table 3 and figure 4, majority of respondents Provide facilities to Divyangjan Physically Handicapped (100%) followed by Blind People (98.7%).

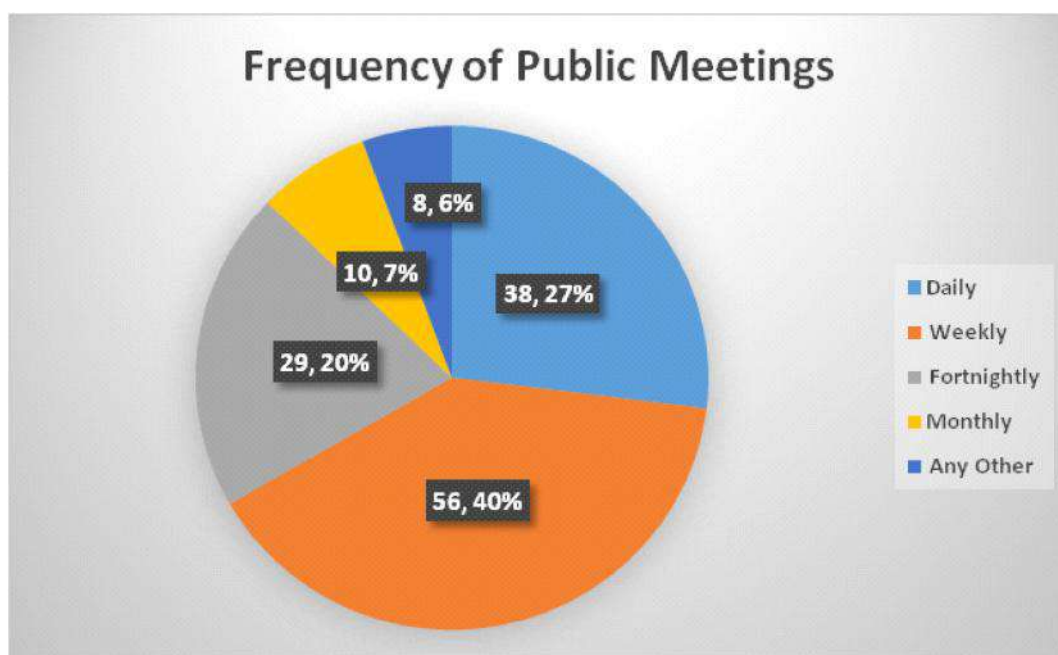
Leadership

The leadership is another important aspect of social information needs; to become a good leader and public representative one has to interact directly and indirectly with the people in the area so as to understand social needs. To have

majority support of the people, the public representative must have mandate of people for successful interactions. Therefore, information related to meetings, performance, electorate, leadership qualities, party affiliation, social places, and modes of communications have been studied.

Table 5: Region Wise Frequency of Public Meeting

Frequency of Public Meeting	Region													
	North		North East		South		West		East		Central		Total	
	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Daily	18	51.4%	4	66.7%	6	46.2%	5	62.5%	3	25.0%	2	40.0%	38	48.1%
Weekly	26	74.3%	4	66.7%	10	76.9%	5	62.5%	8	66.7%	3	60.0%	56	70.9%
Fortnightly	15	42.9%	0	0.0%	5	38.5%	1	12.5%	6	50.0%	2	40.0%	29	36.7%
Monthly	5	14.3%	0	0.0%	1	7.7%	1	12.5%	3	25.0%	0	0.0%	10	12.7%
Any Other	5	14.3%	1	16.7%	1	7.7%	1	12.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	8	10.1%
Total	35	100.0%	6	100.0%	13	100.0%	8	100.0%	12	100.0%	5	100.0%	79	100.0%

**Figure 5: Frequency of Public Meetings**

Based on the table5 and figure 5, majority of respondent's conduct public Meetings on

Weekly Basis (70.9%) followed on Daily Basis (48.1%).

Table 6: Region Wise Coordination with Public Representatives

Coordination For Activities	Region													
	North		North East		South		West		East		Central		Total	
	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Councillor	35	100.0%	6	100.0%	13	100.0%	8	100.0%	11	91.7%	5	100.0%	78	98.7%
Legislature	35	100.0%	6	100.0%	13	100.0%	7	87.5%	12	100.0%	5	100.0%	78	98.7%
Gram Pradhan	26	74.3%	6	100.0%	13	100.0%	8	100.0%	12	100.0%	5	100.0%	70	88.6%
Public Representative	35	100.0%	6	100.0%	13	100.0%	8	100.0%	12	100.0%	5	100.0%	79	100.0%
R.W.A/NGO/Religious Institution	35	100.0%	6	100.0%	13	100.0%	8	100.0%	12	100.0%	5	100.0%	79	100.0%
Trade Association	35	100.0%	6	100.0%	13	100.0%	8	100.0%	11	91.7%	5	100.0%	78	98.7%
Total	35	100.0%	6	100.0%	13	100.0%	8	100.0%	12	100.0%	5	100.0%	79	100.0%

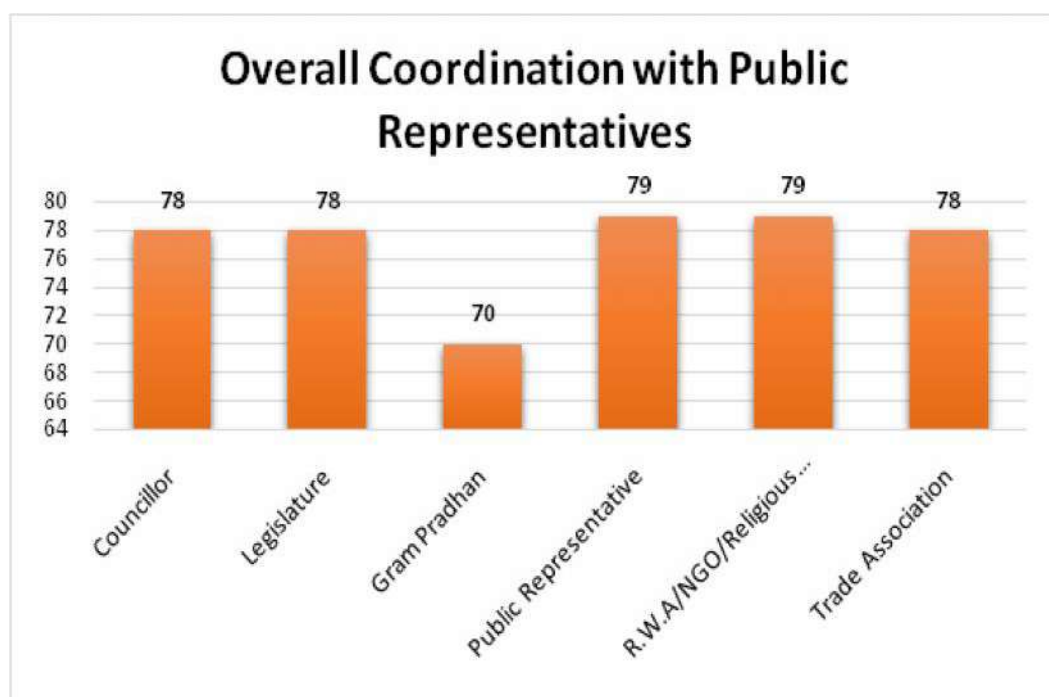


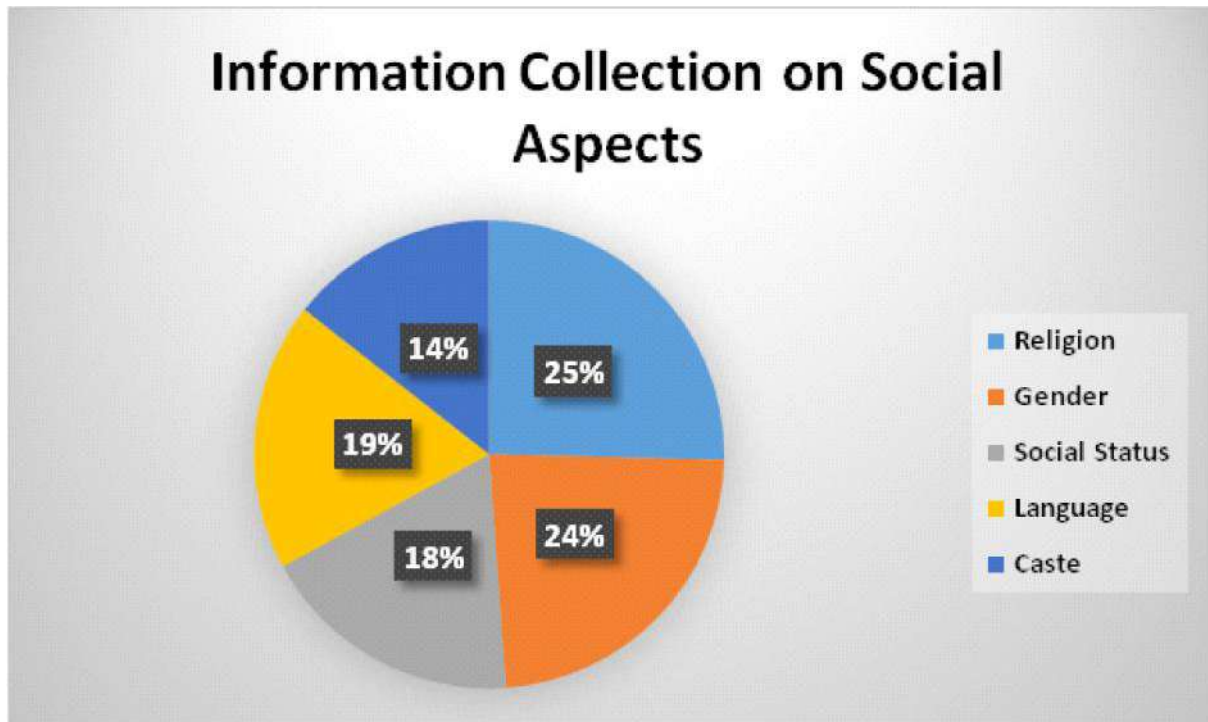
Figure 6: Overall Coordination with Public Representatives

Based on the table 6 and figure 6, majority of respondents Coordinate their activities with Public Representative (100%) and with R.W.A/

NGO/Religious Institution (100%) and Least with Gram Pradhan (86.6%).

Table 7: Region Wise Information on People Social Aspects

Social Aspects	Region													
	North		North East		South		West		East		Central		Total	
	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Religion	30	88.2%	6	100.0%	11	84.6%	8	100.0%	7	58.3%	5	100.0%	67	85.9%
Gender	27	79.4%	6	100.0%	13	100.0%	7	87.5%	5	41.7%	4	80.0%	62	79.5%
Social Status	19	55.9%	4	66.7%	11	84.6%	7	87.5%	6	50.0%	1	20.0%	48	61.5%
Language	17	50.0%	6	100.0%	8	61.5%	6	75.0%	8	66.7%	4	80.0%	49	62.8%
Caste	12	35.3%	5	83.3%	8	61.5%	6	75.0%	4	33.3%	3	60.0%	38	48.7%
Total	34	100.0%	6	100.0%	13	100.0%	8	100.0%	12	100.0%	5	100.0%	78	100.0%

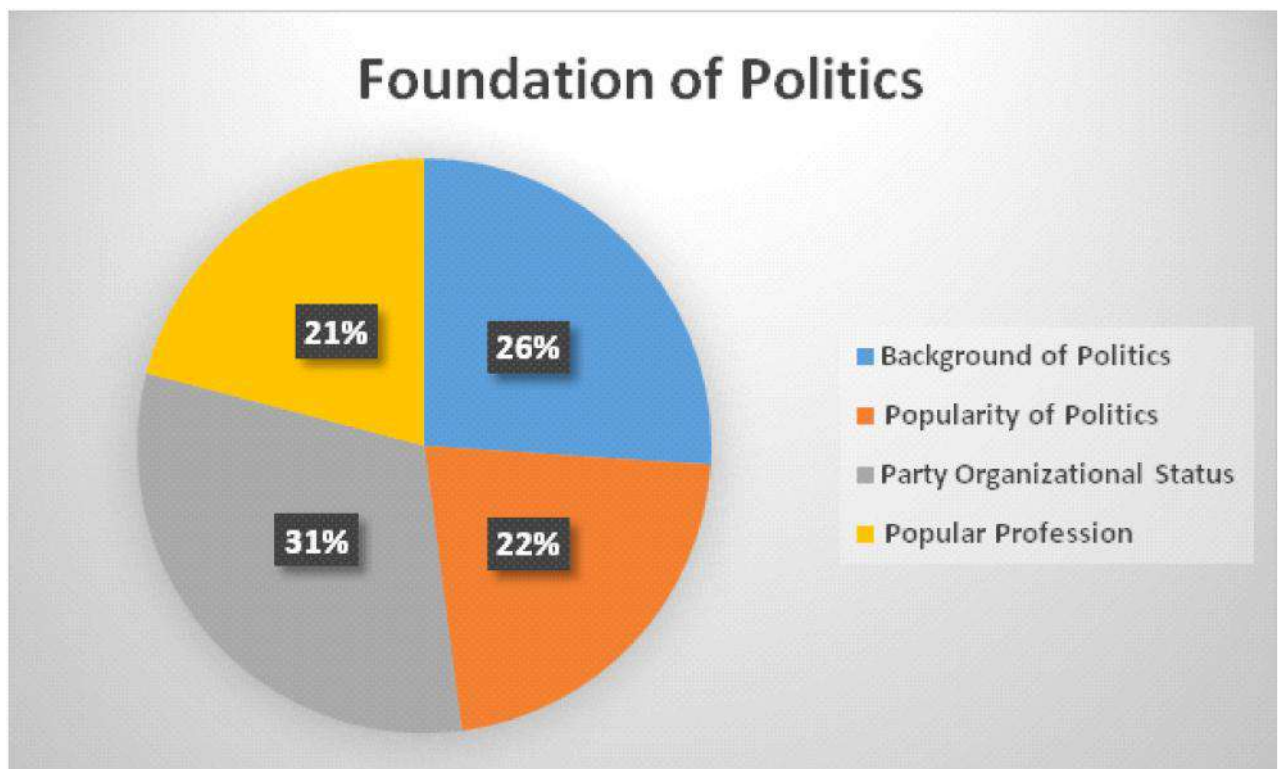
**Figure 7: Information on Social Aspects**

Based on the table 7 and figure 7, majority of respondents Collect information related to

people on the basis of Religion (85.9 %) followed by Gender (48.1%).

Table 8: Region Wise Awareness of Political Foundation

Foundation of Politics	Region													
	North		North East		South		West		East		Central		Total	
	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Background of Politics	25	71.4%	5	83.3%	12	92.3%	5	62.5%	6	50.0%	3	60.0%	56	70.9%
Popularity of Politics	20	57.1%	4	66.7%	11	84.6%	4	50.0%	6	50.0%	2	40.0%	47	59.5%
Party Organizational Status	27	77.1%	6	100.0%	12	92.3%	7	87.5%	11	91.7%	4	80.0%	67	84.8%
Popular Profession	17	48.6%	4	66.7%	10	76.9%	4	50.0%	7	58.3%	3	60.0%	45	57.0%
Total	35	100.0%	6	100.0%	13	100.0%	8	100.0%	12	100.0%	5	100.0%	79	100.0%

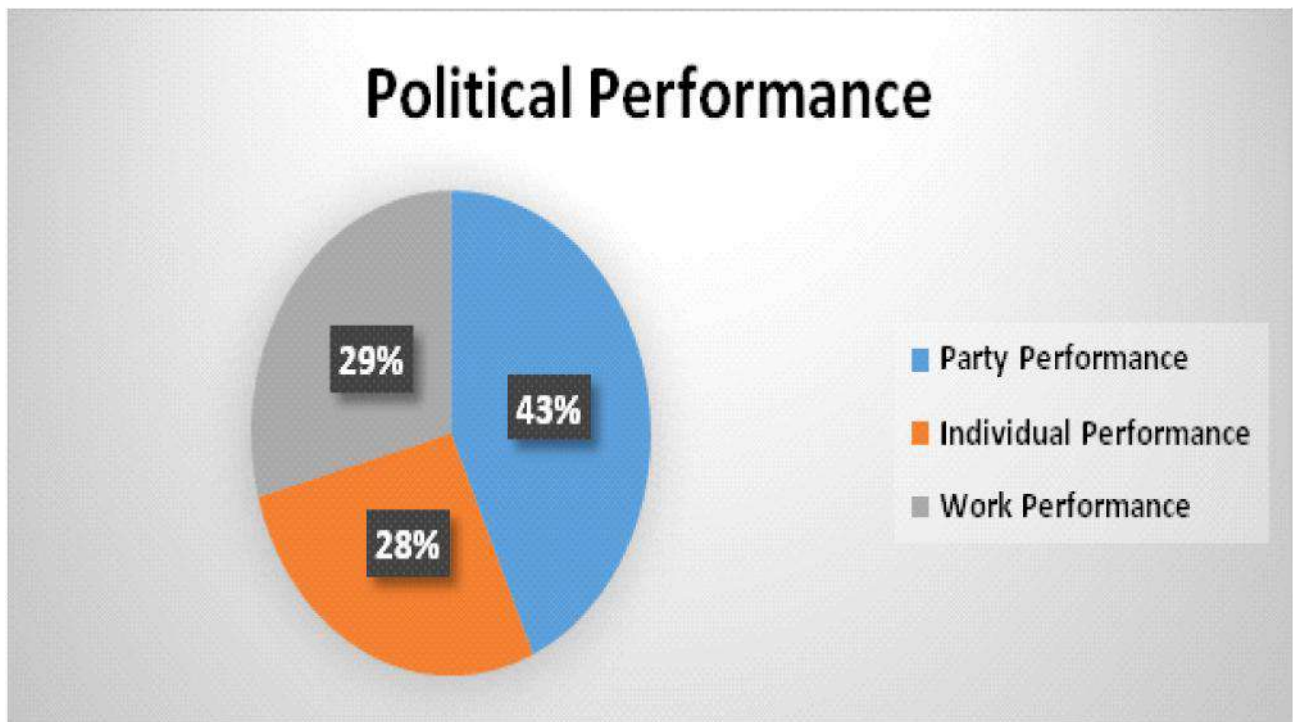
**Figure 8: Total Awareness of Political Foundation**

Based on the table 8 and figure 8, majority of respondents believe that foundation of politics depends upon Party Organizational Status with

effective leadership (84.8%) followed by Background of politics (70.9%).

Table 9: Region Wise Information on Political Performance

Political Performance	Region													
	North		North East		South		West		East		Central		Total	
	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Party Performance	34	97.1%	6	100.0%	13	100.0%	7	87.5%	12	100.0%	5	100.0%	77	97.5%
Individual Performance	14	40.0%	6	100.0%	12	92.3%	7	87.5%	5	41.7%	5	100.0%	49	62.0%
Work Performance	17	48.6%	6	100.0%	12	92.3%	6	75.0%	7	58.3%	4	80.0%	52	65.8%
Total	35	100.0%	6	100.0%	13	100.0%	8	100.0%	12	100.0%	5	100.0%	79	100.0%

**Figure 9: Total Response on the Political Performance**

Based on the table 9 and figure 9, majority of respondents Collect information related to

party performance (97.5%) followed by Work Performance (65.8%).

Table 10: Influence of Qualification and Professional Qualification on Public

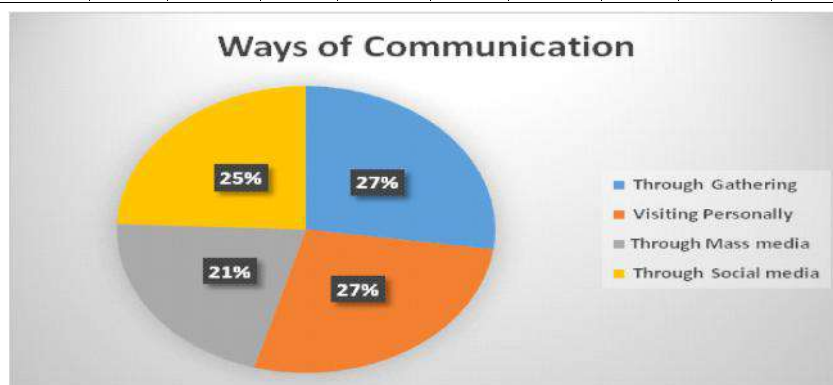
Response on Qualification Influence on Public		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Yes	65	81.3	81.3
	No	15	18.8	100
	Total	80	100	

As shown in table 10, out of 80 respondents, majority of respondents agreed that the qualification and professional qualification of leader's influence the public in the constituency

(81.3%), on the other hand (18.8%) people do not agree that the qualification and professional qualification of leader influence the public in the constituency.

Table 11: Region Wise Interaction of MPs with People

Ways of Communication	Region													
	North		North East		South		West		East		Central		Total	
	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Through Gathering	33	94.3%	6	100.0%	13	100.0%	8	100.0%	12	100.0%	5	100.0%	77	97.5%
Visiting Personally	33	94.3%	6	100.0%	13	100.0%	8	100.0%	12	100.0%	5	100.0%	77	97.5%
Through Mass media	21	60.0%	6	100.0%	12	92.3%	8	100.0%	10	83.3%	3	60.0%	60	75.9%
Through social media	28	80.0%	6	100.0%	12	92.3%	7	87.5%	12	100.0%	4	80.0%	69	87.3%
Total	35	100.0%	6	100.0%	13	100.0%	8	100.0%	12	100.0%	5	100.0%	79	100.0%

**Figure 11: Ways of Communication with people through various media.**

Based on the table 11 and figure 11, majority of respondents Communicate with people in their

constituency through Gatherings (97.5%) followed by Personal Visits (97.5%).



Figure 12: Participation in Social Gatherings

As shown in figure 12, interactions with the people in the MPs constituencies have major impact in the working and popularity of the public representatives, therefore MPs regularly have interaction through various activities like

attending marriage functions at top followed by religious functions, condolence meetings, educational functions, sports event and national/state day celebrations.

Table 12: Leadership Programme Attended

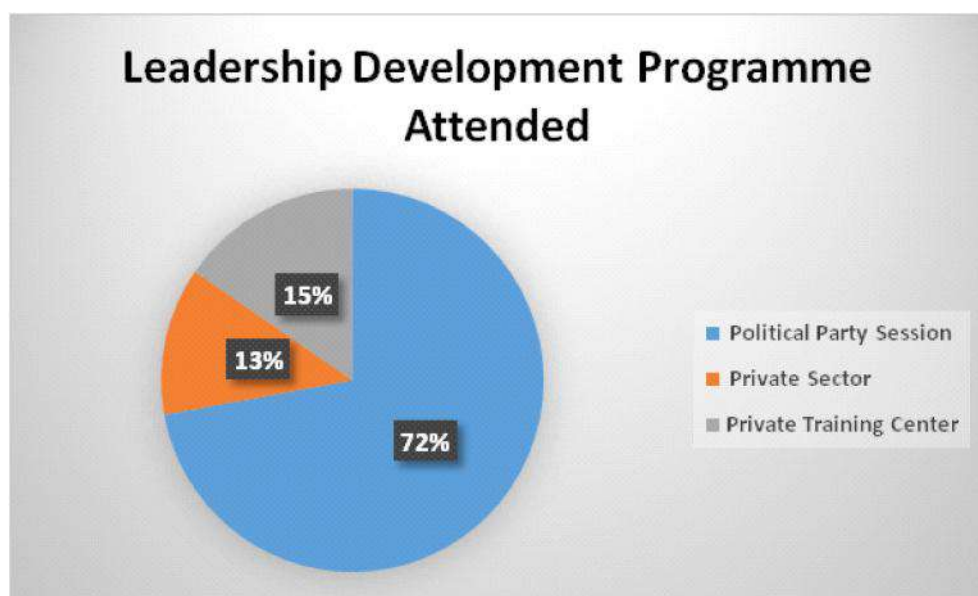
Leadership Programme Attended		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Yes	69	86.3	86.3
	No	11	13.8	100
	Total	80	100	

As shown in table 12, out of 80 respondents, majority of respondents agreed that they attended leadership program organized by the

Parliament of India (86.3%), on the other hand (13.8%) people do not attend any leadership programme organized by the Govt. of India.

Table 13: Region Wise Leadership Development Programmes Attended

Interaction Session	Region													
	North		North East		South		West		East		Central		Total	
	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Political Party Session	35	100.0%	6	100.0%	11	84.6%	7	87.5%	12	100.0%	4	100.0%	75	96.2%
Private Sector	3	8.6%	2	33.3%	3	23.1%	2	25.0%	2	16.7%	1	25.0%	13	16.7%
Private Training Centre	1	2.9%	2	33.3%	7	53.8%	3	37.5%	1	8.3%	2	50.0%	16	20.5%
Total	35	100.0%	6	100.0%	13	100.0%	8	100.0%	12	100.0%	4	100.0%	78	100.0%

**Figure 13: Participation in Leadership Development Programme**

Based on the table 13 and figure 13, majority of respondents attend Political Party Interaction Sessions (96.2%) followed by Private Training Centre (20.5%).

CONCLUSION

The study clearly indicates that majority of MPs in India are aware with the societal information in their area. The majority of

Indian MPs conduct public meetings on weekly basis i.e. (70.9%) followed by some MPs meeting with public on daily basis (i.e. 48.1%) in their constituency which shows that Indian MPs are actively involved in meeting people of their area and are very keen to understand the societal needs. Indian MPs also continue their meetings with public representative such as Councillors,

Legislature and Gram Pradhan (100%) followed by social representatives such as RWA/NGO/ Religious institutions and trade association (98.7%) The majority of MPs are found interested in social information related to Religion (85.9 %) followed by interest in information on Gender (79.5%) in their constituency. The majority of MPs are interested in collecting information on the Voter's age (98.7%) in their area followed by Voter's Gender and number of Family members in Voter's family. The MPs are found least interested towards the Voter's Family Income issue (51.9%). The majority of MPs believe that the Party's Organizational Status (84.8%) is the major pillar of foundation of Indian politics followed by the Background of politics (70.9%).

The Electoral data, Party's overall performance and social places are some of the important factors which play an important role for gathering social information by the Indian MPs. Thus, it can be concluded that Members of Parliament in India are dependent on non-documentary sources of information for collecting reliable societal information for effective leadership in their Constituency.

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