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## An analysis of usage of Integrated Marketing Communications by Political parties to Influence Voters in Tamil Nadu and Kerala in assembly elections 2021

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### ABSTRACT

*Today it is necessary to take a fresh look at the communications process and strategy adopted by different political parties to reach out to their voters (consumers). Many political parties have developed a systematic approach to gain the support of voters. The process of reaching out to voters occurs not merely during the elections but is a process that goes on throughout the year. This research paper aims to analyze usage of Integrated Marketing Communications of Major Political Parties on Consumers (Voters) in Tamil Nadu and Kerala in recent assembly elections 2021*

**Keywords**— *Integrated Marketing Communications, Political Parties, Communications Process, Voters (Consumers)*

### INTRODUCTION

The multi-party system shows an intense competition of political parties and candidates on the “political market”. In the aforementioned context, there is an absolute need for **Usage of Integrated Marketing Communications by Political parties** that helps in show casing and selling political ideas and political philosophy. Of course, political communication exists from the existence of political activities. But with ideologies is seeing downward trend and elections have increasing trending towards person and brand-centric, political parties across the globe are having huge budget on strategizing campaigns that see voters as consumers. In last two decades since early 2000s, to woo of voters, political parties are hiring advertising agencies to have 360-degree communication for candidates.

Elections campaigns can be broadly classified has Content Development which includes elections manifesto, audio- video content, punch lines and slogans. Secondly the channel of communications through which content can be delivered like National and Regional television, radio, National and Regional newspaper, social media through party leaders or influencers, accessories like caps, badges and outdoor advertising, including pamphlets, posters, banners, loudspeakers and hoardings. Thirdly through public events like rallies, road shows, 3Ds shows and crucial visits by political leaders to religious places. With approximately \$5 billion dollars spent on 2014 general elections it is more evident that role of Integrated Marketing Communications by Political parties to Influence Voter in India have increased. Outsmarting strategies are proposed and executed to defame the other each other by exposing their weakness, political parties have understood the need of IMC. Slowly voters or consumers are understanding the strategies adopted by various political parties and their leaders to influence voting behaviours through different marketing communications techniques. Recent assembly elections in Tamil nadu and Kerala are no exceptions for usage of Integrated Marketing Communications by Political parties.

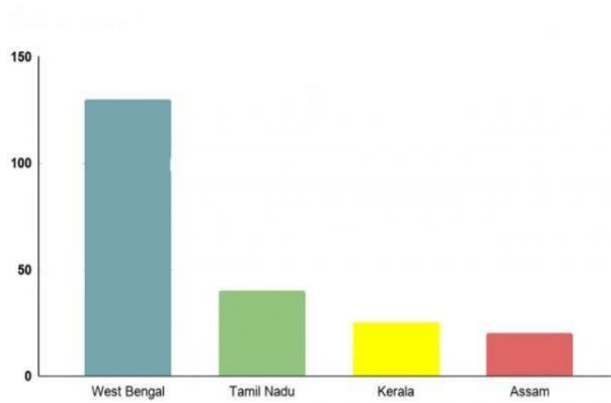
### Tools used of Integrated Marketing Communications used by Political parties

Newspapers, Television, Radio, Magazines, Outdoors, Direct Mail, Publicity though rallies, posters, banners, loudspeakers and hoardings, and Social Media mechanisms are used by political parties as strategic tools of Integrated Marketing Communications.

### Assembly Elections 2021

Assembly Elections were held for a total of 824 seats – this includes 294 seats in West Bengal, 234 seats in Tamil Nadu, 140 seats in Kerala, 126 seats in Assam, and 30 seats in Puducherry in 2021.

Value in Rs crores

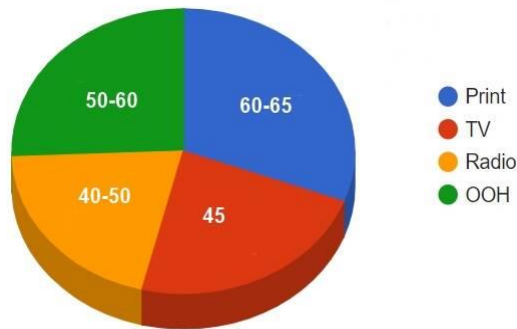


Source: <https://www.financialexpress.com/brandwagon/elections-2021-political-parties>

According to Google transparency report and Chrome Data Analytics and Media, a data analytics company, West Bengal, saw an approximately spending of Rs 120 crore – Rs 130 crore, followed by In Tamil Nadu parties spending in range of Rs 35 crore – Rs 40 crore. In Kerala and Assam ad spend is expected to remain in the range of Rs 20 crore – Rs 25 crore, respectively on various forms of marketing communications.

The following shows the share of political spending by the political parties in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Assam on various forms of marketing communications.

Value in Rs crores



**Industry Estimates**

Source: <https://www.financialexpress.com/brandwagon/elections-2021-political-parties>

**Analysis of Integrated Marketing Communications used by Political parties during Tamil Nadu and Kerala assembly elections 2021**

**STATE OF KERALA**

**Table 1: Showing percentage of spending on Advertising Insertion in various marketing communications channels in the State of Kerala**

Y 2021*	
Advertiser - Overall	% Ad Insertion
UDF (United Democratic Front)	38%
LDF (Left Democratic Front)	34%
National Democratic Alliance (NDA)	26%
Bharatiya Janata Party	1%
Other Political Ads	0.2%
Congress(on 12th Position)	0.004%
Others(7)	0.2%

*% Share based on Ad Insertions*

Source: <https://www.financialexpress.com/brandwagon/television-emerged-as-the-most-preferred-medium-for-political-ads-during-tamil-nadu-and-kerala-elections-tam-adex/2253848/>

From the above table it can be inferred that across the various modes of marketing communications like TV, radio print and Social media. The overall spending on the integrated marketing communications by United Democratic Front (UDF) was approximately 38% share of political ad insertions in 2021 and Left Democratic Fund (LDF) with 34% share in Kerala assembly elections.

Table 2: Showing percentage of spending on Advertising Insertion in various marketing communications channels in the State of Tamil Nadu

Y 2021*	
Advertiser - Overall	% Ad Insertion
DMK	33%
AIADMK	31%
Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam	10%
Bharatiya Janata Party	6%
Makkal Needhi Mayyam Katchi	5%
Congress (11th Position)	1%
Others (32)	13%
% Share based on Ad Insertions	

Source : <https://www.financialexpress.com/brandwagon/television-emerged-as-the-most-preferred-medium-for-political-ads-during-tamil-nadu-and-kerala-elections-tam-adex/2253848/>

From the above table it can be inferred that across the various modes of integrated marketing communications like TV, radio print and Social media in Tamil Nadu elections, regional political parties DMK was approximately 33% share of political ad insertions in 2021 and AIADMK with 31% top five political parties had 86% share of political ad insertions in the year 2021.

Table 3: Usage of Television as a source of marketing communications during assembly elections 2021 in state of Kerala (Right side of the table -2021 and left side of the table -2016 percentage)

Y 2016*		Y 2021*	
Advertiser - TV	% Ad Insertion	Advertiser - TV	% Ad Insertion
LDF (Left Democratic Front)	62%	UDF (United Democratic Front)	39%
Bharatiya Janata Party	16%	LDF (Left Democratic Front)	34%
UDF (United Democratic Front)	15%	National Democratic Alliance (NDA)	25%
National Democratic Alliance (NDA)	6%	Bharatiya Janata Party	2%
Social Democratic Party of India/Samajwadi Party	1%	Communist Party Of India	0.1%
Peoples Democratic Party	0.1%	Bharath Dharma Jana Sena	0.03%
% Share based on Ad Insertions		Congress	0.01%
		% Share based on Ad Insertions	

Source : <https://www.financialexpress.com/brandwagon/television-emerged-as-the-most-preferred-medium-for-political-ads-during-tamil-nadu-and-kerala-elections-tam-adex/2253848/>

From the above table it can be inferred that Television as a source of marketing communications during assembly elections 2021 in state of Kerala had mix response from political parties with UDF increasing the share of spending from 15% in 2016 to 39% in 2021, whereas LDF saw decline in usage of Television communications from 62% to 34%. But the overall spending on Television communications saw a massive increase.

Table 4: Usage of Radio as a source of marketing communications during assembly elections 2021 in state of Kerala Right side of the table -2021 and left side of the table -2016 percentage)

2016		2021	
Advertiser - Radio	% Ad Insertion	Advertiser - Radio	% Ad Insertion
LDF (Left Democratic Front)	39%	UDF (United Democratic Front)	36%
Bharatiya Janata Party	26%	LDF (Left Democratic Front)	35%
UDF (United Democratic Front)	14%	National Democratic Alliance (NDA)	28%
National Democratic Alliance (NDA)	12%	Bharatiya Janata Party	0.3%
Congress	4%	% Share based on Ad Insertions	
Others (3)	5%		
% Share based on Ad Insertions			

Source: <https://www.financialexpress.com/brandwagon/television-emerged-as-the-most-preferred-medium-for-political-ads-during-tamil-nadu-and-kerala-elections-tam-adex/2253848/>

From the above table it can be inferred that Radio as a source of marketing communications during assembly elections 2021 in state of Kerala had mix response from political parties with UDF increasing the share of spending from 14% in 2016 to 36% in 2021, whereas LDF saw decline in usage of Radio communications from 39% to 36%. But the overall spending on radio communications increased

**Table 5: Usage of Print Media as a source of marketing communications during assembly elections 2021 in state of Kerala (Right side of the table -2021 and left side of the table -2016 percentage)**

Advertiser - Print	% Ad Insertion	Advertiser - Print	% Ad Insertion
UDF (United Democratic Front)	36%	UDF (United Democratic Front)	42%
National Democratic Alliance (NDA)	30%	National Democratic Alliance (NDA)	22%
Bharatiya Janata Party	15%	LDF (Left Democratic Front)	20%
LDF (Left Democratic Front)	11%	Other Political Ads	11%
Bharath Dharma Jana Sena	4%	Bharatiya Janata Party	2%
Congress (on 12th Position)	0.2%	Others (4)	2%
Others (7)	5%		

% Share based on Ad Insertions

Source : <https://www.financialexpress.com/brandwagon/television-emerged-as-the-most-preferred-medium-for-political-ads-during-tamil-nadu-and-kerala-elections-tam-adex/2253848/>

From the above table it can be inferred that print Media as a source of marketing communications during assembly elections 2021 in state of Kerala had massive response political parties with UDF increasing the share of spending from 36% in 2016 to 42% in 2021 and LDF also increased in usage of print media communications from 11% to 20%. But the overall spending on print media communications increased

**Table 6: Usage of Television as a source of marketing communications during assembly elections 2021 in state of Tamil Nadu (Right side of the table -2021 and left side of the table -2016 percentage)**

Y 2016*		Y 2021*	
Advertiser - TV	% Ad Insertion	Advertiser - TV	% Ad Insertion
AIADMK	58%	DMK	35%
DMK	22%	AIADMK	28%
PMK (Pattali Makkal Katshi)	7%	Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam	13%
Bharatiya Janata Party	6%	Indiya Jananayaka Katchi	8%
Indiya Jananayaka Katchi	2%	Makkal Needhi Mayyam Katchi	5%
Others (9)	5%	Bharatiya Janata Party	4%
		Congress (12th Position)	0.3%
		Others (9)	6%

% Share based on Ad Insertions

Source : <https://www.financialexpress.com/brandwagon/television-emerged-as-the-most-preferred-medium-for-political-ads-during-tamil-nadu-and-kerala-elections-tam-adex/2253848/>

From the above table it can be inferred that in Tamil Nadu elections, on TV medium, DMK was on top with 35% share of ad insertions during 2021, whereas in 2016, it was on second position with 22% shares. Interestingly, national parties BJP and Congress were on the sixth and twelfth position respectively in 2021 when it came to advertising on television during the elections.

**Table 7: Usage of Radio as a source of marketing communications during assembly elections 2021 in state of Tamil Nadu (Right side of the table -2021 and left side of the table -2016 percentage)**

Advertiser - Radio	% Ad Insertion	Advertiser - Radio	% Ad Insertion
Bharatiya Janata Party	49%	AIADMK	38%
AIADMK	27%	DMK	30%
DMK	17%	Bharatiya Janata Party	10%
Tamil Maanila Congress (TMC)	2%	Makkal Needhi Mayyam Katchi	7%
Congress	2%	Naam Tamizhar Katchi	4%
Others (5)	3%	Congress (8th Position)	2%
		Others (3)	8%

% Share based on Ad Insertions

Source : <https://www.financialexpress.com/brandwagon/television-emerged-as-the-most-preferred-medium-for-political-ads-during-tamil-nadu-and-kerala-elections-tam-adex/2253848/>

From the above table it can be inferred that during the assembly elections, AIADMK and DMK were the top two parties in 2021 on the radio medium with 38% and 30%. Both political parties witnessed the surge in spending on Radio compared 2016 assembly elections

**Table 8: Usage of Print Media as a source of marketing communications during assembly elections 2021 in state of Tamil Nadu**

Advertiser - Print	% Ad Insertion	Advertiser - Print	% Ad Insertion
Bharatiya Janata Party	30%	AIADMK	30%
DMK	21%	PMK/AIADMK/BJP	27%
AIADMK	15%	DMK	16%
PMK (Pattali Makkal Katshi)	9%	Bharatiya Janata Party	11%
Congress	4%	Other Political Ads	3%
Others (35)	21%	Congress (9th Position)	1%
% Share based on Ad Insertions		Others (30)	
		11%	
		% Share based on Ad Insertions	

Source : <https://www.financialexpress.com/brandwagon/television-emerged-as-the-most-preferred-medium-for-political-ads-during-tamil-nadu-and-kerala-elections-tam-adex/2253848/>

From the above table it can be inferred that in print, regional party AIADMK ad insertion share increased by 15% during 2021 over 2016. Whereas there was decline in DMK parties spending on print media.

**Social Media in Assembly elections of Tamil Nadu and Kerala**

With 75-80 per cent voting population in Tamil Nadu using smartphones and In Kerala 5 per cent of voting population are social media users. Hence it made sense for political parties to use social media as platform for election campaigns

Data from Google transparency report, which covers political advertising on Google and YouTube partner properties, show that political parties and affiliated groups have spent ₹46.61 crore, totalling 19,071 ads, across Google platform between February 19, 2019 and March 25, 2021 during assembly elections campaign

Tamil Nadu contributes the highest share at ₹12.52 crore or 27 per cent of the total ad spends in Google. Kerala spent ₹36 lakh in Google. Facebook saw a total ad spend of ₹13.77 crore on its platform across all States in the last 90 days – between December 24, 2020 and March 23, 2021. Tamil Nadu at ₹3.42 crore and Kerala spent ₹41 lakh during this period.

While social media campaigns may have little impact on seasoned party loyalists and party cadres’ youngsters and fence-sitters were targeted by the political parties.

**CONCLUSION**

The substance sourced builds up the conviction that in integrated marketing communications of political parties, image, exposure, visibility, reach and opinions can be cultivated in traditional mainstream media just as the new emerging media, as both are helpful for engagement of voters and works progressively.

Usage of Intregrated Political marketing communications has continued to evolve since 1980’s in India, but never as rapidly as it has since the 2014 Loksabha Elections. It plays a key role in ensuring the reach of the messages to the target voters. Irrespective of what is the individual inclination towards politics or technology, voters found themselves dragged into the vortex of political communication which spanned more than 10 different platforms.

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