

A STUDY OF EFFECTIVENESS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES FOLLOWED BY INFORMATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT (IPRD) OF BIHAR GOVERNMENT**Md. Mudassir Alam***

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*Corresponding Author E-mail: pro@cub.ac.in<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23154108>**ABSTRACT**

Globally the history of professional use of Public Relations (PR) goes back to more than 100 years and it is being used by the individuals, organizations and government for building and showcasing its image in a positive way. Even in India the concept of PR and its use is nothing new, it was used for the first-time way back in 1920s by the Indian Railways to garner the attention of avid travelers from England to explore the tourist spots of the British controlled Indian subcontinent. Over the years the concept and use of Public Relations has witnessed many changes in the global arena including India. Right after the liberalization of Indian economy in early 1990s the Public Relations sector too made its foray into the market and its trend keep on growing year-after-year. As of now, be it corporate firms or government organisations, educational institutions or healthcare sector, banking, railway or travel companies, Public Relations has carved a niche for itself in almost all sectors, directly or indirectly engaged with the public. This study seeks to study the Effectiveness of Public Relations (PR) Strategies of Information & Public Relations Department (IPRD) of the Government of Bihar. Public Relations (PR) campaigns are launched with the use of various PR tools and strategies in order to reach the public. Effective PR strategies and impactful PR tools primarily help to build a trust among the masses or target public, make a loyal bonding and overall made a strong foundation for positive image building. In this study, the researcher has done any analysis of the *modus operandi* of the PR departments of the Bihar Government and its impact among the public. During this study it is observed that while there are lots of study done for analyzing the effectiveness of PR in private sector, a few literatures explore the challenges and opportunities faced by the PR departments of Bihar Government. This study tries to address the gap and provide valuable insights into how IPRD or other PR departments of Government of Bihar can contribute towards positive image building. This study will not only be an addition to academia but it also provides deep insights for PR departments of the government to strengthen their PR strategies for effective image building in today's competitive communication environment.

Keywords: Public Relations, IPRD Bihar, Bihar Government PR, PR department, Government Public Relations

1. INTRODUCTION

Globally the concept of Public Relations (PR) is existing for over 100 years and it is being used by professionals and different types of organisations in various ways. Even in India before Independence in 1920s, during the British colonial era the Public Relations (PR) campaign was first used by the Indian Railways to attract the tourists from England. In the recent decades, the Public Relations sector has witnessed a major growth in India with the urge of the public as well as private organisations to build a positive image for themselves. In the present scenario, be it corporate or government organisations, educational institutions or healthcare sector, banking, railway or travel companies, Public Relations has made it foray into almost all sectors directly or indirectly engaged with the public. Be it a positive image building for an organisation or promotion of product and services, spreading information or awareness about the government schemes, the Public Relations campaigns are used in one or many ways. Initially the PR campaigns were run through print medium of communication like newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, etc. Later on, with the advent of electronic medium of communication like radio and television, Public Relations campaigns got a wing to reach the larger audience. Further, the innovation of computer followed by the internet and mobile phones added new feathers to the wider reach of the PR campaigns to the targeted audience or the target public. As of now there is no any dearth of mode of communication for launching and measuring the effectiveness of a PR campaign. Now the onus lies only on the willingness, wisdom and zeal of the PR professionals working for an organization or a company or service provider to make an influential PR strategy to reach the target audience / public for getting the desired result (outcome). This particular study seeks to study the Effectiveness of Public Relations (PR) Strategies of Information & Public Relations Department (IPRD) and other Public Relations department of the Government of Bihar. Public Relations (PR) campaigns are launched with the use of various PR tools and strategies in order to reach the public. Effective PR strategies and impactful PR tools primarily help to build a trust among the masses or target public, make a loyal bonding and overall made a strong foundation for positive image building. In this study, the researcher has done an analysis of the *modus operandi* of the PR departments of the Bihar Government and its impact among the public.

This study seeks to evaluate the Public Relations strategy employed by the department of Government of Bihar in building a positive image and good reputation among the public. This study specifically seeks to analyze the working patterns of professionals working in the PR departments of the government. It also seeks to examine the role of DPRO (District Public Relations Officer) or Public Relation Officers (PRO) associated with the IPRD and other departments in managing the time-to-time campaigns and enhancing the reputation of the particular department that overall make an impact upon the image building of the government. Besides, the study also examines the effectiveness of the PR tools viz. websites, social media platforms (Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram and Youtube), outdoor advertising like flex, banners, etc. used for any campaign by various department of the government. Additionally, the study also aimed at identifying the

challenges faced by the IPRD and other departments of the Bihar government in disseminating the information about the targeted PR campaign related to any project, development scheme or other related schemes.

With this study the research gap identified that there very fewer pragmatic investigations have been done about the effectiveness of the IPRD and other PR departments of the Government of Bihar. In the fast-moving world, while there are lots of study done for analyzing the effectiveness of PR in private sector, a few literatures explore the challenges and opportunities faced by the PR departments of Bihar Government. This study tries to address the gap and provide valuable insights into how IPRD or other PR departments of Government of Bihar can contribute towards positive image building. This research will not only be an addition to academia but it also provides deep insights for PR departments of the government to strengthen their PR strategies for effective image building in today's competitive communication environment.

1.1 Concept of Public Relation

Public Relations is basically an effort for making relationship with the public that may include the common masses or the targeted people for an organization. Since the evolvement of the civilization, Public Relations is used as a tool to develop a good relationship by the human beings. In a nutshell, Public Relations has witnessed its development among the human beings, starting from the stone age till the time of Prof. Edward Louis Bernays, an American considered as the pioneer of PR and also referred as the 'Father of Public Relations'. According to Edward Bernays "Public relations is the attempt by information persuasion and adjustment to engineer public support for an activity, cause, movement or institution."

John W. Hill, an American public relations executive said that PR is "The Management function which gives the same organized and careful attention to the asset of goodwill as is given to any other major asset of business."

Rex Francis Harlow, a public relations pioneer from USA said that "Public Relations is distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and cooperation between an organization and its publics; involves the management of problems or issues; helps management to keep informed on and responsive to public opinion; defines and emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the public interest; helps management keep abreast of and effectively utilize change, serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends; and uses research and sound and ethical communication as its principal tools."

Public Relations Definition as per the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA)

Initially a formal practice for goodwill which is now referred to as 'Public Relations' dating back to the early 20th century, Public Relations has been defined in different ways by different practitioners and organizations. The definition of PR has evolved with its changing roles and technological advances. In the earlier days, the definition of PR emphasized 'press agency and publicity', while further the more modern definitions incorporated the concepts of 'engagement' and 'relationship building'. The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) adopted a definition, "Public relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics." ⁰¹

As per PRSA, public relations is about influencing, engaging and building a relationship with key stakeholders across numerous platforms in order to shape and frame the public perception of an organization. Public relations also encompasses the following:

- Anticipating, analyzing and interpreting public opinion, attitudes and issues that might have an impact, for good or ill, on the operations and plans of the organization.
- Counseling management at all levels in the organization with regard to policy decisions, courses of action and communications including crisis communications considering their public ramifications and the organization's social or citizenship responsibilities.
- Protecting the reputation of an organization.
- Researching, conducting and evaluating, on a continuing basis, programs of action and communications to achieve the informed public understanding necessary to the success of an organization's aims. These may include marketing; financial; fundraising; employee, community or government relations; and other programs.
- Planning and implementing the organization's efforts to influence or change public policy.
- Setting objectives, planning, budgeting, recruiting and training staff, developing facilities — in short, managing the resources needed to perform all of the above.
- Overseeing the creation of content to drive customer engagement and generate leads.

1.2 Need For Public Relation?

Why there is Need for Public Relations? It's a very basic question. Public Relations help an organization in its brand building and achieving its objectives and goals effectively without any hassle or chaos. For any organization with a bad team or activities, Public Relations can't be used as a medium to create a positive image. In fact, a positive image based on propaganda can't sustain for a longer period of time as truth may expose before the public any moment. Keeping in mind the basics of positive brand building an organization can launch a PR campaign about its products or services and attract the targeted group (public) or potential customers to use the product or service. The effective PR campaign not only

encourage the positive participation of the public but it also results in a better image building of the organization. An efficient PR strategy can create and build up a positive image for an individual, an organization, a government or a country. Most importantly, in the time of crisis or adverse (negative) publicity of an organization or individual, the effective Public Relations planning and implementation can wipe out the 'misconception' or 'misunderstanding' between the organization and the public. The PR comes to the rescue of the organization or individual time-and-again as per the need since ages. Now, with the technological advancement where the information is easily accessible the need for PR gained rapid momentum which is used by the individual or organization including government bodies for a positive image building.

1.3 Functions of Public Relations?

- Public Relations is establishing the good relationship among the two groups (between an organization and public).
- Public Relations is an Art or Science of developing reciprocal understanding and goodwill.
- Public Relations analyses the public perception and attitude, identifies the organization policy with public interest and then executes the programmes for communication with the public.

Some of the disciplines/functions within PR as described by PRSA are as follows:

(i) Corporate Communications	(vi) Marketing Communications	(xi) Social Media
(ii) Crisis Communications	(vii) Integrated Marketing Communications	(xii) Multimedia
(iii) Executive Communications	(viii) Media Relations	(xiii) Reputation Management
(iv) Internal Communications	(ix) Content Creation	(xiv) Speechwriting
(v) Investor Relations Communication	(x) Events	(xv) Brand Journalism

1.4 Public Relations Objective

For developing an efficient and effective Public Relations Campaign, well-described and clear-cut PR Objectives needs to be established. The Public Relations Objectives are to build relationships, manage reputations, and influence opinions of the target audience. The PR objectives should be very specific and quantifiable as PR professionals aims to shape up the public perception about an organization, company, government or cause. "PR is responsible for managing an organisation's reputation and ensuring that its communication with the public is effective. The main objectives of PR are to build relationships, influence opinions, manage reputations, and communicate messages that effectively relate to the organisation. PR practitioners need to be able to understand the needs of their organisation and align their activities with its business objectives. They also need to be aware of the different channels through which they can reach their target audience and how best to use them. Good PR requires careful planning, creativity and a keen understanding of human behaviour." ⁰²

1.5 Public Relations Strategy

To achieve the goals set in the PR Objectives there is a need for formulating a meticulously planned Public Relations Strategy. "A public relations strategy is a comprehensive plan that outlines how a company or individual communicates with the public, media, and other stakeholders. It is a deliberate approach designed to enhance the brand's public image and reputation, ensuring consistent, effective, and positive engagement. This strategic framework encompasses various components, including objectives setting, audience identification, message crafting, media relations, and performance evaluation. By aligning these elements with the organisation's overall goals, a public relations strategy ensures that every communication effort is purposeful and coherent and contributes to building a strong, favourable brand image." ⁰³

1.6 Public Relations Process

As per the basic definition mentioned in DOPT training module "Public Relations (PR) is building a relation with the target audience or general public through publicity done by various communication medium. The PR professionals do the publicity of about the functions of a company, organization, government and other similar firms. It also informs the public about the activities, policies and other related information in order to create a favourable public opinion about the concerned organization. PR is a planned effort to influence the public opinion through good character building by giving a responsible performance, which is primarily based upon mutually satisfactory two-way communications." ⁰⁴

1.7 Origin of Public Relation Profession or Concept in the Context of World

A generalized statement is made about the PR profession and it is said that it is comparatively a new profession or concept in comparison to other professions. However, without delving into the roots and historical references one would simply answer, Yes, PR is new profession or concept. However, while doing the study on the topic the researchers came across the fact that PR is used since the beginning of civilization in the world. In fact, PR is directly or indirectly related to Communication and the origin of PR can be linked with the evolution of concept of Communication

With the help of Historical references and achieves it is observed that the concept of Communication was used by the terrific-trio of Ancient Greece philosophers Socrates, Plato and Aristotle dating back to 470 BCE to 322 BC. The great philosopher Socrates (469-399 B.C.E.) is known worldwide for giving Socratic method of putting the question and getting

the answer. Socrates' claim that he was ignorant of himself in life (or he was aware of his own lack of knowledge in the life). His claim that for human beings, the unexamined life is not worth living. Socrates was also the inspiration for Plato, a renowned philosopher and the founder of the Western philosophical tradition. Plato also served as the teacher of another philosopher Aristotle, thus altogether establishes the famous trio of ancient philosophers: Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.⁰⁵

1.8 Origin of Public Relation Profession or Concept in India

Most of the scholars are univocal about the early practice of 'PR-like activities' in India. From the Indus Valley Civilisation to the era of Ashoka the Great, one can find shreds of evidence of persuasive communication practice to propagate and promote various messages and precepts mostly related to governance and religion (Sriramesh, 2013). Similar practices continued in the times of the Muslim (Vil'Anilam, 2014) as well as the British rule. Various Indian rulers and preachers have used different communication activities to reach the mass (Kaul, 1992; Reddi, 2019; Sriramesh, 2013). These activities can be called rhetorical PR practices (Bardhan & Sriramesh, 2006). Coming to recent time, Public Relations has established itself as a significant component (department) of any organisation be it corporate offices, brands, companies, public sector organisations, educational institutions, and governments. Although there is diversity in the organisations but the goal is more or less similar to reach out to the targeted audience (people), potential buyers and other stakeholders for making a positive image. In other words, with the use of PR at one side the organisations usually intend to make their presence among the stakeholders, on the other hand, companies and brands use PR as a marketing tool to introduce or sell their products.

In the context of India among the government-owned firms (organisations) the Public Relations was first used by the Indian Railways in the 1920s. The Indian Railways made use of Public Relations for the publicity of activities like festivals, exhibitions, etc. through advertising in newspapers published in India and England to attract the tourists. Taking cue from the idea of PR from the Indian Railways other government entities (organisations) in the pre-independence and post-independence era adopted PR for branding their image and selling the products or services. However, the PR strategy or the profession didn't get much attention till the liberalization of Indian economy in 1991 by the then Congress government led by Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao. In order to foster Indian industry a plan was laid out that allowed foreign investment. In order to incite foreign investment, the Liberalization allowed pre-approve all invest up to 51% foreign equity participation that permitted the foreign companies to introduce latest technology and industrial development. With the onset of liberalization of Indian market, the PR profession also got a fresh lease of life and it got a rapid growth in the country.

1.9 Public Relation Industry in Bihar

With the liberalization of Indian market and its aftereffects to the PR Industry and PR profession in India, the state of Bihar remained somehow slow-paced. A part of BIMARU (an acronym for Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh), states described by the demographer Ashish Bose in the 1980s in a research paper presented to the then Prime Minister Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, Bihar was seen from a sympathetic view as its lagging in major financial indicators like economic growth, healthcare, literacy, employment, etc. The term BIMARU coined from 'bimar' literally means 'sick' used for Bihar was like a BIG blot for India as it was eyeing for all round development of the country. Branding of Bihar as a developing state and erasing the tag of BIMARU was a daunting task before the policy makers of the government. Development focused various corrective measures were taken and various financial corrective measures were tried by the governments of the state to get rid of BIMARU tag. In the meantime, ranked as a backward state in the development indexes, Bihar also got an infamous tag of 'lawless land'. The division of the state of Bihar in the year 2002 into Bihar and Jharkhand was another blow to development fortune of the state. So, it was obvious that the PR industry of the state was at a receiving end. Things started to change for Bihar with the formation of government in the year 2005 on development agenda. It is obvious that if any government working for the state and its people would intend to propagate its achievement through publicity that is possible with PR. The government of Bihar understood the significance of Public Relations for projecting a positive image of the state of Bihar and the Information and Public Relation Department (IPRD) was given the responsibility to look after the PR activities.

As per the official website⁰⁶ of Information and Public Relation Department (IPRD), the department is established to communicate with the press, issue of press notes on behalf of the tone and review office of Hindi, English and Urdu newspapers published in the state, issue of accreditation and certificates to press representatives in different areas, issue of classified advertisements in newspapers. Publications and displays, centralized payment of bills, publication of publicity literature in different languages about the achievements and development programs of the government, cultural programmes, publicity of achievements of the Government of Bihar within the state and through information and public relations created by the department. Further, the vision statement says, "To disseminate and propagate government policies, programmes, schemes and achievements, effectively for public awareness. Documentation of progress and achievements of various department. To know and understand the mood, perception and feedback of people on different issues by analysis of news published in the media and to arrange quick response of governments views/ point among general public through media as necessary. To disseminate policies, programmes and achievements of various departments for educating people and mass communication by performing role of facilitator by using various, method and resources of educating people and mass communication. Formation of creativeness for publicity of programmes, schemes and achievements of various departments through poster, pamphlet, folder, booklet, etc. and to facilitate the advertisement work."

Information & Public Relation Department (IPRD), Government of Bihar

IPRD was structured, meant for providing the Public and the Media with timely and up-to-date information on government policies, programmes, schemes, initiatives and achievement through print, electronic and social media undertaking of publicity campaigns, trade fairs and different cultural activities and also for gathering the response, suggestions and demands of the public and bringing them to government attention.³⁸

Organisation Structure of IPRD, Government of Bihar



Tools Used by IPRD, Government of Bihar for Publicity

In order to follow its vision, the IPRD of Government of Bihar uses various communication tools for reaching out to the public and disseminating the information. The publicity materials (content) usually centered around the government policies, welfare schemes, disaster management as well as disaster precaution measures, normal informative advertisement for common masses, and other related materials. Both the traditional as well as the latest evolved communication (PR) tools are used directly by the different departments of the government as well as publicity platforms managed by the IPRD of Bihar Government. Although the platforms are varied, the departments and agencies are different the prime goal (motive) is to amplify the information and reach out to the maximum number of citizens.

Languages / Dialects used for Publicity in Bihar

Language of the publicity material an important aspect of reaching the message to target people / citizens. Hindi is the official language of Bihar and it is widely used for communication by the government with the public. Urdu is the second official language in Bihar, while Maithili is an official language of India included in Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India. Bhojpuri is also spoken in the western part of Bihar along with Magahi, Angika, Bajjika, Santali, Kurukh and Surjapuri (dialect). Since Hindi language is spoken and used by the majority of the population so the content of the publicity campaign and advertisements are written as well as spoken in Hindi. Government advertisements are also published in Urdu and English. For Audio-Visual advertisement Bhojpuri is also used by the government as it spoken in Bihar along with parts of eastern Uttar Pradesh and neighboring state of Jharkhand. The aim of using different languages is maximizing the reach and impact of the advertisement and PR campaign. People of Bihar are deeply connected with cultural ethos that includes their native language or dialect. When a government advertisement is aired or telecasted in their local language they get emotionally attached with the particular campaign and it beacon their mind. The task of government's IPRD become a bit easier with the use of local language and dialect in the awareness campaign or promotional PR activity. Only the shortcoming of the local language or dialect is not having a script for writing so it can't be used for print media advertising or outdoor advertising through hoardings / banners, etc.

The researchers have observed that traditional medium of media such as television, radio and newspapers are widely used by the department for the wide circulation of the information and publicity material in the form of advertisement. Two government owned television channels namely, DD News Bihar and DD Bihar Channel are used to telecast the publicity materials of the Bihar government. Specially produced television advertisement carrying information about the government policies or schemes or some handy information, are telecasted in the government television channels at regular intervals. Also, the same information produced for the government are telecasted in state based private television channels like Kashish News, ETV Bihar, Zee Bihar-Jharkhand, etc. Similar exercise is done through the radio channels including government radio stations namely Aakashvani, AIR, FM Gold or private FM radio channels such as Radio Mirchi, Red FM, Big FM, Radio City, etc. Newspapers are other traditional medium that are largely published in three main languages English, Hindi and Urdu in Bihar. The Government of Bihar has inclined towards publicity through social media platforms like X (earlier known as Twitter), Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, etc. for publicity campaign. The researchers have observed that the Government of Bihar is doing extensive publicity through the social media pages of IPRD and other departments. IPRD and other departments share the social media posts about the activities of government, chief minister and ministers at regular intervals. Even the police, district administration and other important departments have their social media pages to share the activities, achievements, public awareness notification and other stuff. Impact of such campaigns is not yet quantified but it obviously creates the buzz put long-lasting impact in the minds of people i.e the targeted audience of the PR campaign. Outdoor advertising through hoardings / banners, hot air balloon (now this mode of

advertising has decreased as per observation of the researcher), wall painting, etc. are used by the government of Bihar for publicity. Electronic Display Boards, LED Display Boards and other similar types of boards are put at capital city Patna and other big cities to show the pollution indicators and other data (statistics) of the government. Bihar government has understood the nuances of the advertising and publicity campaign, and its handy tools. Right from the house or apartment in television, radio, newspapers, laptop to mobile to lanes, road, highways, parks, playgrounds, government buildings, schools, colleges, hospitals and other places, people intentionally or unintentionally come across the publicity campaign / advertisement of the Bihar government. The PR is also about the perception and hitting the right chord of the targeted audience, and the study further zeroing upon the impact of PR campaigns of the government of Bihar.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Media relations is one of the essential components of public relations which involves strategic communication module or method to build a mutually beneficial relationships between organizations including the government and the stakeholders of media to shape up a positive public perception. Following this basic principle of media relations aiming towards public awareness and developing trust, the Information and Public Relations Department (IPRD) of the Government of Bihar has adopted the public relation strategies to disseminate the information about the government policies, programmes, major achievements and other related information. The review of the existing research works related to the topic of study can be helpful upto big extent to understand the problem in a better way. Particularly in the exploratory research design the review becomes very important as it help to understand the research problem in the appropriate direction. For this research the review of the existing literatures both offline and online have been done. The available literatures on public relation, media relations, public perception, etc. with the prime focus on the application in the context of government including Bihar government's IPRD has been reviewed.

In comparison to usual organizational public relations, the Government related public relations faces some specific challenges that include the political constraints of the ruling government, scrutiny from the media houses and also the poor perception of the public towards the government communication. In the context of the government the Media relations usually involves liaising of the IPRD or other concerned departments with the local level and national level press, issuing press releases as and when required at frequent intervals, and analyzing the tone and response of media to understand the sentiment of masses. The study through this research gives the indication that PR of government or its concerned department in general functions under the public information model (James Grunig and Todd Hunt, 1984), disseminating the information usually in one direction, however there is a paradigm shift toward two-way models to build trust and mutual understanding with the target audience i.e. public. Zeroing on the functioning of IPRD of Bihar it is observed that the Media relations strategies include the DPRO (District Public Relation Officer) or related officials functioning in the department, accrediting the press personnel and representatives of different media houses, publication of the publicity materials including newsletters, magazines, books, flyers, banners, etc. In addition, the Bihar government specifically organizes the cultural events, fairs and other related events to exhibit and promote the achievements of the government. With this study it is observed that the PR professionals are responsible for managing the positive image of the government. At the same time, the Media relations officials of the department ensure the consistent messaging through the social media platforms, media channels like television, radio, newspapers and portal. The department also manage the negative press and media professionals to safeguard the reputation of the government. The study reveals the PR department of Bihar government often give more focus towards reducing the negative coverage instead of building a positive long-term media relationship. Some of the important works related to Public Relations have been reviewed during this study:

1. **D. S. Mehta** in his book entitled 'Handbook of Public Relations in India' has discussed various dimensions of Public Sector PR problems. In this chapter he has focused on different aspects of complexity of operations and socials features of Public Sector. Mehta has pointed that, "Apart from socializing the means of production in strategic areas, the public sector provides a countervailing power to the growth of large houses and large enterprises in the private sector."⁰⁷ Further in the book Mehta says "Public relations is an essential adjunct to the public sector. The PR effort should not be used for non-productive purposes. The PR man should be associated with the decision-making processes in the enterprise. He should be deeply involved in its affairs."⁰⁸
2. **J. M. Kaul** in his book with the title 'Public Relations in India' has mentioned about the different prospects of PR profession in India. In the chapter 'Public Relations for Public Sector', Kaul has discussed about the significant features of public sector PR. He has also highlighted the pattern followed by the public sector PR and also described about the changing role of Public Sector in India. Kaul has mentioned that, "In view of the growing importance of employee-employer relations. Communication with the employees is a crucial public relations responsibility. The head of the public relations department should be present at meetings where important decisions are taken concerning company policies and plans affective employees."⁰⁹
3. **K. K. Khanna** in his book entitled "Management of Public Sector PR in India" dedicated a chapter to 'Accountability of Public Relations' and discussed the accountability of the PR towards the public. He has also discussed the related aspects such as 'Question and debates in Parliament', 'The Committee on Public undertakings (COPU)' etc. Khanna has observed that "Industrial relations which is one of its main public relations programs, is also at stake in spite of the fact that Government organizations are expected to be model employers. The concept that public undertakings are for service to the community has hardly found favor with the rank and file of the public sector enterprises."¹⁰

4. **Lee C. Bollinger** published an article entitled “Public Relations, Business and the Press” in *Questia Media America* a Public Relations Quarterly, Vol. 48, Issue – 2, 2003 and highlighted the professional knowledge of the PR practitioners. He has pointed that “Public relations practitioners do not have journalism training. Therefore, another suggestion is for practitioners to get their journalistic training known to editors or reporters with whom they regularly communicate.” Such journalistic trainings are needed for the top officials and staff working in the IPRD of Government of Bihar for a better outcome of the PR activities.

3. AIMS & OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Likewise, any kind of research, for the social science research the most important step at the onset is clearly setting the objective, so that the research problem can be studied in a right way in a given perspective. Literally, in a research, objective also called the goal, is a question or a sentence that describe the intended results (outcomes) of any research project or research topic. Only with the well-defined objectives and established goals, the research topic can be analyzed and researcher can reach to a logical conclusion (outcome). In social science research including this particular research topic the basic requirement is the study of social relationship between the government and the public. With the study of social relationship one can get a clear picture of the various dimensions of development focused PR campaigns run by the government in a scientific manner. Social issues and related growth paradigm can be studied and examined based on the standardized development indexes, and Public Relations analyze the outcome based on government-public interactions through various communication tools. The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To understand the PR Process and tools used by the PR department of Government of Bihar
2. To Evaluate the efficacy of PR tools used by the IPRD and other PR departments of Bihar government
3. To assess the Impact of PR campaigns launched by the Government of Bihar
4. To explore the administrative readiness of Government of Bihar for training infrastructure set up for PROs
5. To examine the challenges of Government PR due to proliferation of digital and AI based technology. Suggest measures for strengthening Government PR

4. METHODOLOGY

A Social Science Research is based on the problems related to human beings and understanding various aspects of the social problem. Finding out the solutions to the social problems is not an easy job as different strata of the society may be interconnected. In Communication Research it has been noticed that the active human participation is required to find out a solution of the development-oriented problem. “Many influences have shaped the field of human communication. From the early rhetorical tradition to the mechanistic perspective offered by the Mathematical Model of Information Theory to socio-psychological contributions and general systems theory, human communication has continued to pique the curiosity of many scholars and laymen. Indeed, no other field touches you so deeply, for you are communicating beings. Communication is not only at the heart of your humanity but is also the vehicle of your intentions toward others. Only through communication can you realize your social potential. Without communication you would be evolutionary misfits.”¹¹

Public Relations is a form of persuade communication i.e. to persuade or influence the targeted people, and it also applies in communication research. Hence, the establishment of the truth and fact can be done with the use of basis of scientific methods of research. As Karl Pearson has said “The classification of facts, the recognition of their sequence and relative significance is the function of science, and the habit of forming a judgement upon these facts unbiased by personal feeling is characteristics of what may be termed the scientific frame of mind. This scientific method of examining facts is not peculiar to one class of phenomena and to one class of workers; it is applicable to social as well as to physical problems.”¹²

In order to understand the problems of Government sector Public Relation we have to study and observe the problems related to the communication gaps hampering the PR campaigns on the basis of keenly planned research. In fact, the effectiveness of PR department of Government of Bihar may be improved on the basis of this research. Organizations are open systems that interacts with the public, (Anslem, 2017). They are comprised of equipment, including various categories of employees who works together to achieve to achieve set objectives (Nwachukwu, 2009).¹³

In view of the opinions given by the experts for organizational structure and its functions, it is observed that Government PR campaign needs to be done with high responsibility keeping in mind the interest of people and society. Any PR activity of IPRD or other department of Government of Bihar can't be successful with the participation of masses and social audit by the independent agency. In this regard the motto of PR campaign and its scope can be studied and its loopholes (missing links) can be rectified based on the scientific research. Systematic approach is essential for developing a way out from the crises faced in any PR campaign. In the recent decades the evolution of IT based Public Relation has made the things easier for disseminating the information among the target audience. But at the same time, it has also given imposed new challenges before the Government PR. Keeping in mind the ultra-advanced IT age and latest innovation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) we have to develop new research tools as well as techniques to enable the Government PR department to fulfill its roles and responsibilities with efficacy. Since the Government PR is focused towards the society, hence a study of PR department and social workers is required to meet the challenges in the age of IT & AI.

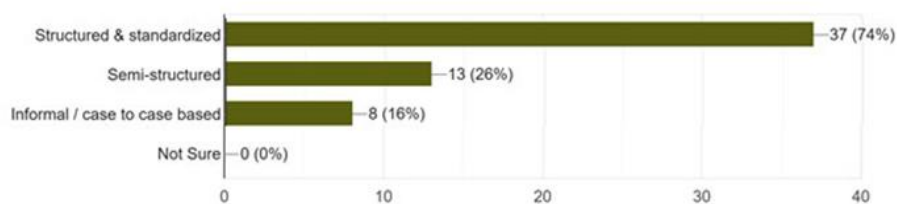
5. DATA COLLECTION METHOD

In any exploratory research design analyzing the social experiences are very important and they can be documented by conducting systematic survey. Dr. Usha Rao has narrated the method, “Experience survey means the survey of people who have practical experience with problem to be studied. Main aim of such a survey is to obtain insight into the relationships between variables and new ideas relating to the research problem.”¹⁴ In such surveys utmost care need to be taken to gather the data from the relevant section of the society. In this study the PR officer or other top-level officials in PR department who deal with the campaign their experience can be documented for the social impact of the research problem. Also, the selection of the respondents across the different section of the society needs to be done carefully. Dr. Rao has observed that, “Since the aim of the experience survey is to obtain insights into the nature of the problem and useful leads to the possible hypotheses and since the experience survey or is looking for provocative ideas and useful insights, the respondents are to be carefully selected, they should be chosen on the basis of the likelihood that they will be able to contribute such ideas and insights.”¹⁵ In this study both scheduled questionnaire and open interviews technique has been used. Five PR professionals have been interviewed through questionnaire and survey of common people has been done through set questions. Media content analysis has been carried out by the organisations including governments to for improving and reforming PR systems. Government sector PR can also be studied on these lines.

Qualitative and Quantitative approaches towards public relations are very much important. It has been observed by Gael F. Walkar that “Although much content analysis is quantitative and focuses on discovering and analyzing facts, when the concept of intent is introduced, this methodology can also provide insights into the reasons behind the facts.”¹⁶ With the help of in-house publications, outdoor advertising, social media platforms, media and other PR tools the government of Bihar has tried to make a positive image. In spite of their sincere efforts somehow the content lack to deal in their performance. The study helped to understand major problems of the PR tools and its impact among the target people. An analytical study can lead to the shortcomings of PR campaigns and suggest a better way towards the efficacy of the publicity strategy used by the government of Bihar.

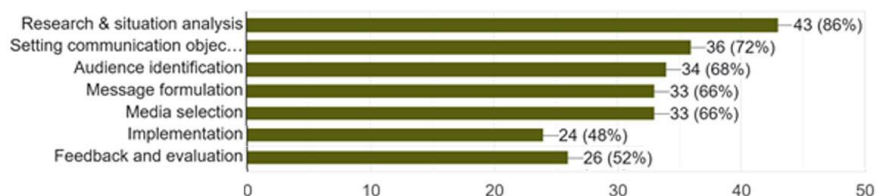
Section A: PR Process at PR Department - (Objective: To understand the stages and practices in the PR process)

Ques 01: How would you describe the Public Relations process followed by your department?
(Kindly click the options that Apply)

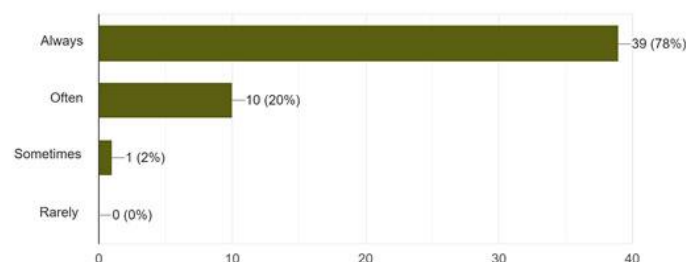


Ques 02: Which among the following are the stages followed prior to the launch of any PR campaign ? (Kindly click the options that Apply)

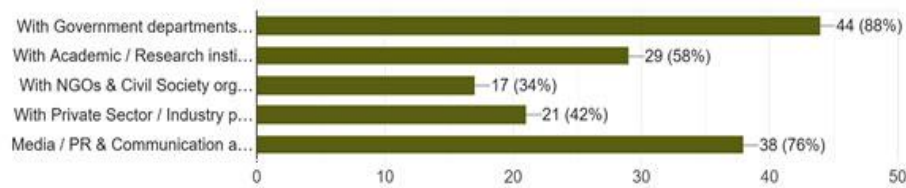
50 responses



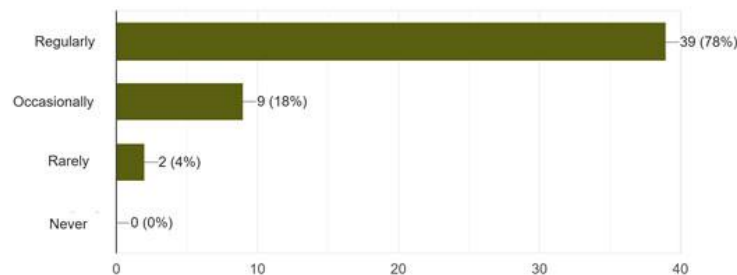
Ques 03: To what extent does the PR Department collaborate with other departments during PR campaigns? (Kindly click the options that Apply)



Ques 04: The PR department does collaboration with whom among the following? (Kindly click the options that Apply)

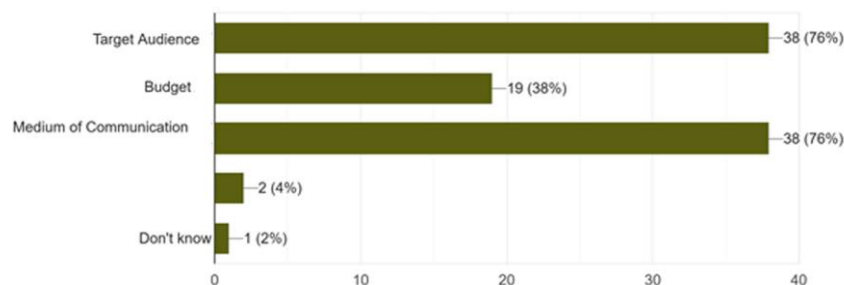


Ques 05: How frequently are feedback and public opinions incorporated into PR campaign planning? (Kindly click the options that Apply)

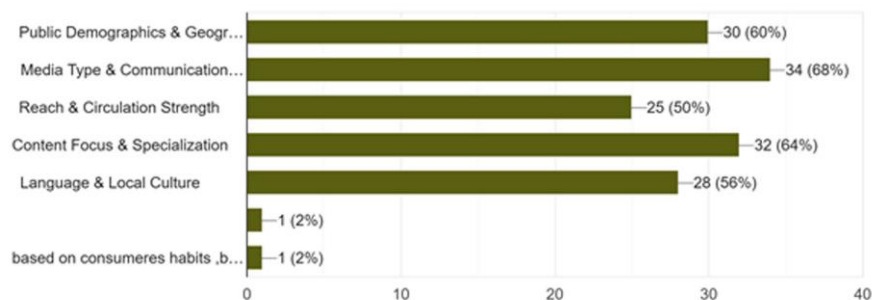


Section B: PR Tools and Communication Channels (Objective: To identify the tools and media used by PR Department)

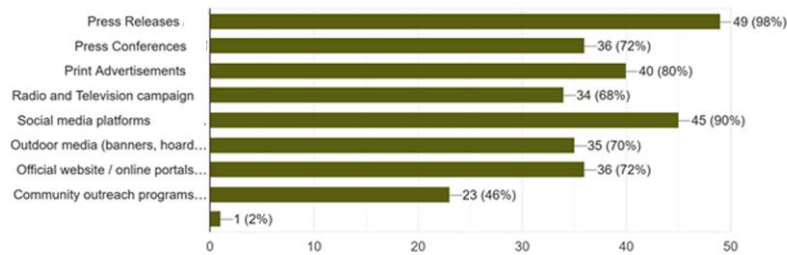
Ques 01: How PR Department does segmentation of Mass Media for specific campaigns of the Bihar Government? (Kindly click the options that Apply)



Ques 02: What are the basis of Media Segmentation? (Kindly click the options that Apply)

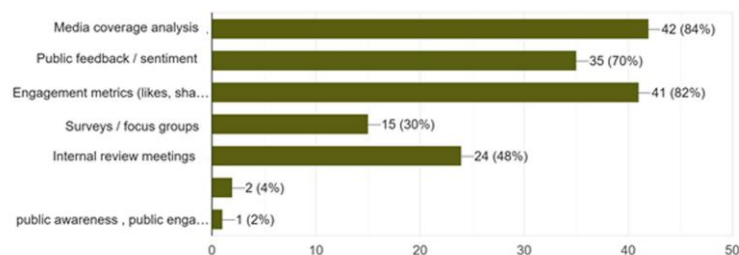


Ques 03: Which communication tools does PR Department most frequently use? (Kindly click the options that Apply)

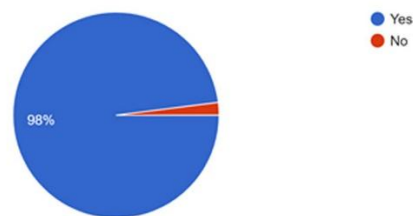


Section C: Impact and Evaluation (Objective: To understand how success is measured)

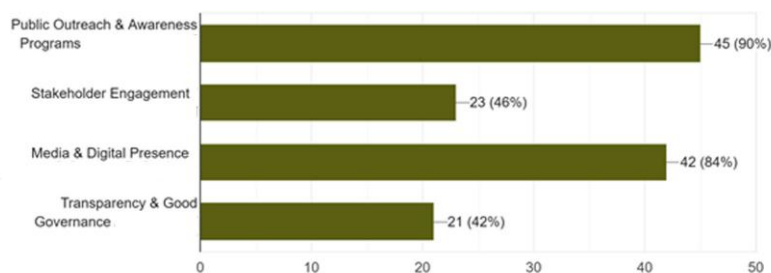
Ques 01: How does PR Department assess the success of PR campaigns? (Kindly click the options that Apply)



Ques 02: Do you think that Effective PR efforts are translated into Positive Image Building for the Government of Bihar?

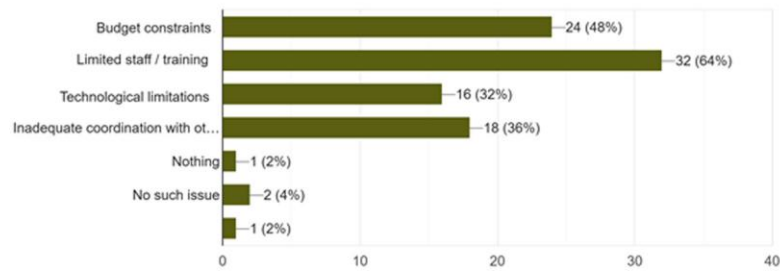


Ques 03: What your department does to extend further PR effort for the Positive Image Building of the Government. (This question is related to Ques No. 02)

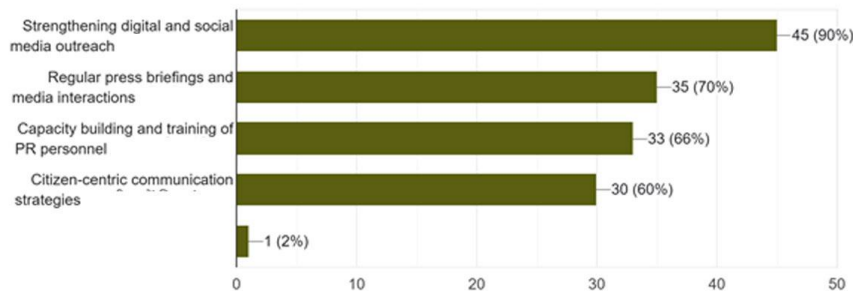


Section D: Challenges and Future Scope (Objective: To identify limitations and improvement areas)

Ques 01: What are the main issues faced in executing PR campaigns? (Kindly click the options that Apply)

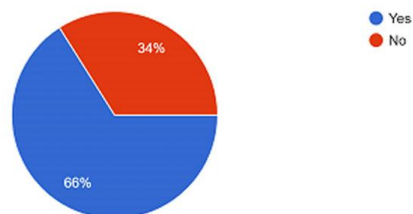


Ques 02: Which are the following strategies can be employed to strengthen Department's PR process? (Kindly click the options that Apply)

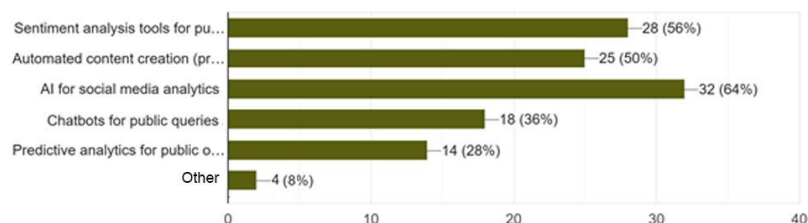


Section E: Impact of Digital and AI-Based Technologies

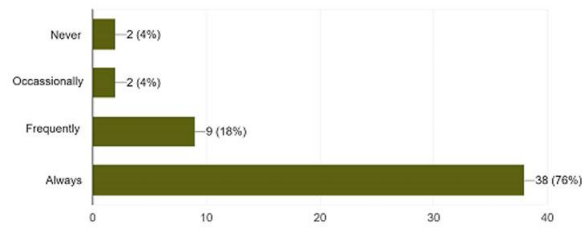
Ques 01: Does your organization have specific guidelines or policies for using digital and AI tools in communication?



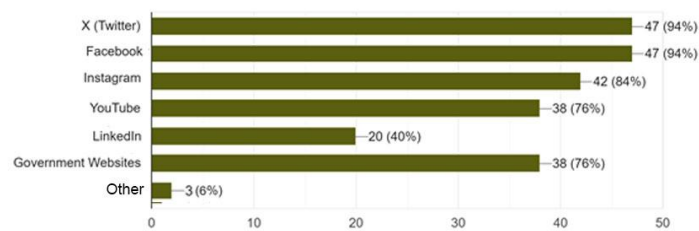
Ques 02: What are the AI tools that PR Department use for PR campaigns ? (Kindly click the options that Apply)



Ques 03: How frequently does your organization use digital platforms (social media, websites, online press releases) for public communication? (Kindly click the options that Apply)



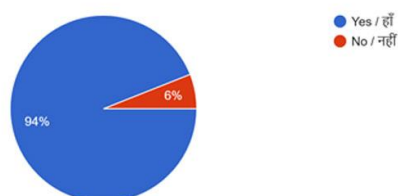
Ques 04: Which digital platforms are most commonly used for government PR in your department? (Kindly click the options that Apply)



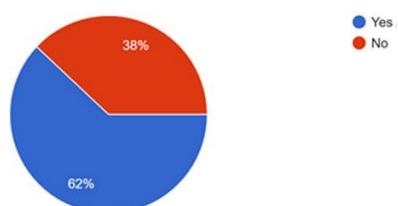
Ques 05: Does Digital Media significantly contribute in improving Public Engagement with your department's communication?



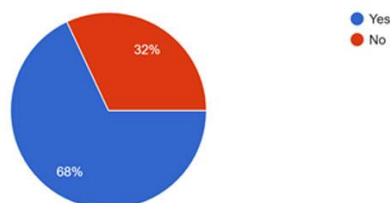
Ques 06: Does "AI technologies have improved the efficiency of government PR operations?"



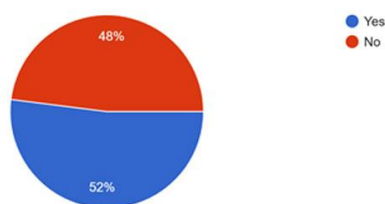
Ques 07: Does misinformation or "Fake News" on digital platforms affected your PR work?



Ques 08: Are you concerned about ethical issues (e.g., bias in AI, transparency, manipulation of public opinion) in using AI for PR?



Ques 09: The existing training programmes are sufficient for the PR professionals working in your department for Digital and AI-based PR tasks ?



6. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Success of any PR activity or campaign is directly linked to its reach to the targeted audience (people) and its impact. However, it is very tough to measure the impact of the PR campaign, Publicity campaign or any publicity stunt. The people of the state of Bihar has access of at least one or two mediums of communication but whether the government publicity advertisement or campaign has left any impact on them can't be generalized. Of course, the government's people focused PR campaign left impressions in the mind of people that's why they attract and give attention towards such policies. Government too releases the data time-to-time about the total number of people availing the schemes and getting benefitted through the same. But it doesn't mean that the particular scheme or project got people's attention only due to the PR or extensive advertisement other factors specifically mouth-to-mouth publicity also play a major role in the success of any project or scheme. People in district headquarters and town (urban) area get to know about the government projects or welfare schemes quite easily. In contrary the people in villages are mostly less literate and their financial condition is not much better to have a mobile with internet. Also, the mobile network and internet speed mostly remain down in remote villages. So, the information access is a bit tough and also the villagers not remain much interested towards publicity material of the government. In addition to usual publicity material of government about the policies, schemes and steps taken for the common people, in case of natural calamity, hazard, accidents and other crisis the government and its departments issues necessary guidelines for the people. For instance, at the time of monsoon especially flood, extreme hot or extreme cold seasons the disaster management department of the government releases the advertisements / publicity material for the awareness of common people. Some of the guidelines (instructions) issued by the government through the advertisement are quite handy for the safeguard of the people that need to reach the maximum number of people. The technical barrier spoils the planning of the government and sometimes the publicity strategy also fails. In order to enhance the efficiency of publicity campaign of the government the role of PR professionals become very important. The impact of the PR campaign can be increased with the help of PR department and officials, and it can enhance the trust of people over the government. The timely dissemination of the information can also be beneficial for the common masses and safeguard them from crisis as well. Measuring the impact of PR campaign in the statistical number or figure is usually done by the PR departments or related agencies of the government. But the actual impact statistics can be measured by going among the masses and knowing about their views about the particular PR campaign and its impact in their lives.

7. CONCLUSION

Public Relations (PR) is a vast topic (area) having a wide array of facets and applications. After the study on theme of Public Relations and its utility particularly in government sector, it is pointed that PR is fundamentally a science utilized for extensive social engineering for achieving its goal whether it is done for government (public) sector or private entities. When talked about the wider publicity of the welfare schemes of the government, the PR campaigns need to play an important role for propagating the benefits of the schemes to the beneficiaries of the society / state. With the arrival of latest technologies, digital platforms including Artificial Intelligence (AI) the PR strategies have drastically transformed. The government agencies / departments keep on evolving themselves to catch the global PR practices and contemporary tools for its campaigns. However, the study suggests that there is a persistent need of development to meet the expectations of the society including the last man in the queue to get the desired result of any PR campaign designed around a scheme (project) or other goals. It would be interesting to arrive at a conclusion based on this study as the PR sector has witnessed many changes in the recent years and more-and-more changes are definitely going to happen in the coming time. While the

PR sector is undergoing several changes, there is always a challenge before the PR units of the government to fulfill its responsibilities. Government PR is mainly focused towards 'good governance' and welfare of the public through its schemes and create awareness among the people. This study on the IPRD and other departments of Bihar government has that public welfare must be the prime goal of these departments that can be ensured with social audit as on required at regular intervals. There is also a high need of training and orientation for the officers, officials and staff working in the PR units of various departments to walk neck-to-neck with global PR standard. Post liberalization, in the past decades several changes has happened in PR field and its relevance in almost every organization be it private or public has been proved. At the same time a competitive environment for PR units have also came into existence that is quite interesting as well as challenging. Looking at the competitive arena of the PR field, this study suggests that there is a need to reform its style of working and present the government's message as per the suitability of common people.

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