



The Better India was awarded for the 'Best use of Internet for Social and Economic Development' at the 9th India Digital Awards, held by the Internet And Mobile Association of India (IAMAI).



The Wire has won a spate of awards for its journalism in the last quarter. **The Wire's** video team was adjudged the 'Video Content Creator of the

Year (News)' at The Stream Con Asia prize in March.

The Wire's founding editor Siddharth Varadarajan won the Lokmanya Tilak Award for Excellence in Journalism in January from the Kesari Maratha Trust.



The Wire's Sukanya Shantha received the Namdeo Dhasal Golpitha Award for her reports on the Bhima-Koregaon violence in February 2019.

The IFFCO IIMC Alumni award was bestowed on Rajasthan correspondent Shruti Jain in February for her reports on illegalities in the SBI's lending and insurance schemes for farmers.



IndiaSpend has partnered with The Pulitzer Centre to produce Disha Shetty's series on climate-change hotspots. Ms Shetty is a

Columbia Journalism School-IndiaSpend reporting fellow covering climate change. (<https://bit.ly/2Z16BOq>)



IndiaSpend's FactChecker. in has been re-certified as a signatory to the International Fact-checking Code Network (IFCN). It certifies that the entity exhibits "non-partisanship and fairness, transparency of sources, funding and methodology; and a commitment to open and honest corrections".



Max Maharashtra has launched a TV programme 'De Tali' (please hyperlink to this

<https://bit.ly/2uXt54X>), presented by transgender anchor Madhuri Sharma, which takes a deep dive into issues facing the transgender community in India.

The Indian general elections of 2019 - for 543 seats, with 900mn voters, 1mn polling stations and more than 8,000 candidates - is the biggest democratic exercise in the world. With such huge numbers and diversity, the media plays a critical role in decoding the parties, their practices and the issues.

IPSMF grantees cover the festival of democracy – the 2019 General Elections

Covering an Indian general election is one of the high-points of a news entity's existence. There is no other event that matches the planning, the resources and the emotions all thrown into one.

Not surprisingly the Foundation's grantees have put their shoulders to the wheel, and are in most cases leading the coverage.

We bring to you a snapshot of the Foundation's grantees in

1. deep ground-reporting
2. analysing the government's performance
3. innovations in coverage.

1. Deep ground-reporting



One thread that is common to the grantees is the strong accent on reporting from ground-zero and eschewing the growing trend of resorting to armchair journalism.

The Wire's election coverage is centred on a major video series, *Sadak-Se-Sansad*, which takes its readers on a road trip out of its newsroom and into 50 key constituencies across the length of India.

Khabar Lahariya points its lens on political trends in the hinterland, through

The Wire's team has travelled through 17 states (reporting from two constituencies in each) to hear from citizens about their lives, struggles. Together, these 120 videos will form a portrait of India in early 2019 – a picture that will have both immediate interest and historical value. (<https://bit.ly/2D4oUsx>)



a news and opinion show *Chunavi Bukhaar* (<http://bit.ly/2IuD61Q>). Another show *Savdhaan* looks at how changing technology impacts elections and voting behaviours. KL also looks at how traditional coverage of elections actually pushes the voices and role of women into the margins; and strives to bring their issues to the fore.

The Caravan concentrates on the electorally critical states of UP, Telangana, Bihar, Odisha and Gujarat with an accent on opposition politics, particularly the emerging Bahujan politics and regional leadership.

Malayalam digital news portal **Dool News** has begun an election analysis column *Priya Voterrmare* (Dear Voters) (<http://bit.ly/2ItWaNx>) which will look at deep-coverage of all 20 constituencies of Kerala including conducting straw polls to test the political winds.

Max Maharashtra, an online Marathi news portal, plans on on-ground reporting from important states like UP. (<http://bit.ly/2ItSUBG>)



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With a whopping 45 mn new voters scheduled to enter the electorate in the North-Eastern States, other than deep-reporting, **EastMojo** is also reaching out to campuses to cover the pulse of the younger audience and new voters.

Economic & Political Weekly (EPW) is among the few publications that has covered all 17 general elections in independent India. It plans on a deep-dive into their vast archives and contextualize current debates through an archival lens, to produce at least 18 incisive **features** on topics such as economy of elections, role of caste, social capital and functioning of democracy, industrial lobbies, and the peculiarities of dynastic politics, etc. (<http://bit.ly/2ltq7x3>)

2. Analysing government's performance



For any citizen, the decision on whom his or her vote should be going to is usually based on whether the party in power has delivered especially when measured against their

promises and the party manifesto. So it's no surprise to find that grantees have tried to delve deep into the performance of the present government and present a 'report card' to their readers.

In this content, **Khabar Lahariya** has launched a 'Sansad ka report card', which travels to remote villages in different constituencies and gets individual voters to grade their MPs on the basis of what they have delivered.

IndiaSpend has introduced '**DataBaaz**', India's first data & evidence-based video network with a focus on converting numbers and statistics into crisp short video stories for today's mobile generation. It tracks and evaluates promises made by the government. In collaboration with academia, it concentrates on date-based 'real stories' in the polls as on healthcare, jobs, farm distress and communal polarisation. (<http://bit.ly/2IspKD9>)

IndiaSpend is also doing 'Modi's Report Card' – a series evaluating the government's flagship schemes. An eleven-part series tracking employment in the informal sector, reported from the nationwide labour hubs – Indore, Jaipur, Perumbavoor and Ahmedabad has also commenced.



The Khabar Lahariya team conducting 'Meera Ki Chaupal' a bi-monthly *adda* that examines people's issues and concerns.

The Wire has also worked on a comprehensive, scrupulous but user-friendly presentation - '**Modi Marksheets**' – of how the BJP has delivered on each of the 150 promises made in its 2014 election manifesto. (<http://bit.ly/2luKDh8>)

The Caravan through the *Modi-meter* fact-checks every promise made by the ruling party in its 2014 manifesto – nearly 450 of them in 59 categories. These reports and investigations through a "National Report Card," will provide an overview of the key aspects such as culture and nationalism, education policy, state of employment, informal sector and women, the future of civil rights for sexual minorities, and the future of the agrarian struggle.

The News Minute takes a very close look at the elections and the issues from the five southern states of Andhra, Karnataka, Tamilnadu, Kerala and Telengana. It has already notched up exclusive interviews with newsmakers in the southern states like DMK chief M K Stalin, actor-turned-politician Kamal Haasan, Hyderabad's MP Asaduddin Owaisi, TDP leader Nara Lokesh and Janasena party's Pawan Kalyan.

3. Innovations in coverage



Some grantees have adopted innovative methods to measure and analyse electoral issues.

ThePrint turned its lens on how the rest of the media has chased poll stories and live-blogged it. The uniqueness of the exercise not only gained remarkable traction on social media but also made The Print's coverage stand out from the crowd.

The Wire is launching a custom-built app, to be hosted on its website, that allows readers to modify vote-shares and party alliances and model the new Parliament using the parties' vote-share in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls as the base.

EPW's special visual feature, a "Morality Map", charts various "moralities" based on which political parties campaign to garner votes. A 'debate kit' specific to Indian elections has been instituted – a one-page repository will highlight distinct aspects of electoral politics in each of the States and will be of relevance to readers beyond the current electoral and news cycles.



The EPW Digital Team.

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GRANTEE IMPACT

IPSMF's grantees are frontrunners not just in the readership numbers they clock but as importantly in their impact on the ground. We bring to you a few and select instances of the change they seek to make.

→ In December 2018, as a result of **Azhimukham's** 8-part investigative series on the corruption in KIRTADS, in Kozhikode, the issue was taken up in the Kerala assembly by former CM Oommen Chandy, along with several other opposition MLAs, who demanded a deep investigation into the malpractices. (<http://bit.ly/2JVdRru>)

→ **The Ken's** story on the aberrations in the placement-system in India's B-schools created conversations and debate among readers and institutions. 700+ students across 100+ educational institutes globally read the story. (<https://bit.ly/2uf2LmF>)

→ Vallabhbhai Vasrambhai Marvaniya, a 97-year-old pioneering 'carrot farmer' from Gujarat, was accorded the Padma Shri after his story of grit and determination against odds, was published on **The Better India**. (<https://bit.ly/2I9eRa5>)

→ After **Down To Earth's** (DTE) story on how the government's prohibition on the export of 'red sanders' was actually encouraging illegal trade, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) relaxed the rules for its export. (<https://bit.ly/2DbKoUx>)



→ After **The Ken's** story in January on how patients and advocacy groups in India are importing cheap cancer-medicines from Bangladesh because of the huge cost of patented medicines in India, the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) invoked its 'extraordinary powers' to bring 42 non-scheduled anti-cancer drugs under price control in March. (<https://bit.ly/2VCrs8H>)

→ **Khabar Lahariya** covered "rumours" of a woman about to commit sati in Bundelkhand which drew large crowds in support. The video-report, which went viral, exhibited that such social evils had support in certain sections even today and technology in the wrong hands had the potential to amplify these events and endanger lives. (<https://bit.ly/2Uk0BNI>)

→ **Down To Earth's** story on 'nitrogen-pollution' was widely circulated and read at the recently concluded United Nations Environment Assembly 4 (UNEA4) in Nairobi, Kenya. India spearheaded the effort which resulted in a historic resolution on nitrogen pollution. (<https://bit.ly/2GhzLBI>)

→ **Dool News** broke the story of Kotta Abdul Rahman, who posing as a qualified medical practitioner, and protected by vested groups, was duping and exploiting cancer patients and their families for years. The story not only exposed the fraud but forced authorities to clamp down on his deception. (<https://bit.ly/2G6GfC4>)

TIMELINE OF GRANTS

BOARD MEETINGS	GRANTEES
FY 2018-19: 4 Meetings	<i>Azhimukham, East Mojo, Imphal Free Press, Janjwar, Max Maharashtra, Media Vigil, Saptahik Sadhana, Sikkim Chronicle, Suno India, The Bastion, The Lede and The Print (Hindi and Science).</i> Grant renewals: <i>Dool News, IndiaSpend, Swarajya, The Better India, The News Minute and Think Pragati.</i>
FY 2017-18: 8 Meetings	<i>Alt News, Dool News, Down To Earth, Khabar Lahariya, Samachara, Satyagrah, Swarajya, The Caravan, The Wire (Urdu & Marathi), Think Pragati and The Print.</i> Grant renewals: <i>The Better India, The Ken, The News Minute and The Wire (English).</i>
FY 2016-17: 7 Meetings	<i>Economic and Political Weekly, Gaon Connection, Live Law, The Better India, The Ken, The News Minute, The Wire (Hindi) and WTD News.</i>
FY 2015-16: 5 Meetings	<i>CGNetSwara, IndiaSpend and The Wire (English).</i>
Total Commitment – INR 44.4 Cr	



OUR NEW GRANTEES: BOOTS ON THE GROUND

The Lede

www.thelede.co.in



The Lede, founded in March 2016 by Chennai-based journalist

Sandhya Ravishankar, had struggled to stay afloat due to lack of funding. Resurrected in March 2018, the Lede provides ground-reported, high-impact stories from south India. Sandhya won the Ramnath Goenka Award for environmental reporting in 2018 for stories on illegal beach-sand mining in Tamilnadu.

Suno India

www.sunoindia.in



Suno India, launched in July 2018, is a podcast-only platform, that is

dedicated to audio journalism on issues of public importance. The founders - Padma Priya, Rakesh Kamal and TarunNirwan - bring a combination of skills in journalism, advocacy and technology. The programmes are aimed at informing as well as challenging listeners without being preachy.

Janjwar

www.janjwar.com



Janjwar is a Hindi-news

portal that started out as a blog by journalist Ajay Prakash in 2007. It was turned into a full-fledged news-site in 2012. Janjwar aims to cover issues and events in the states of UP, Bihar, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Haryana and Delhi. It especially focusses on people's movements and struggles, and the marginalised - Dalits, farmers and students.

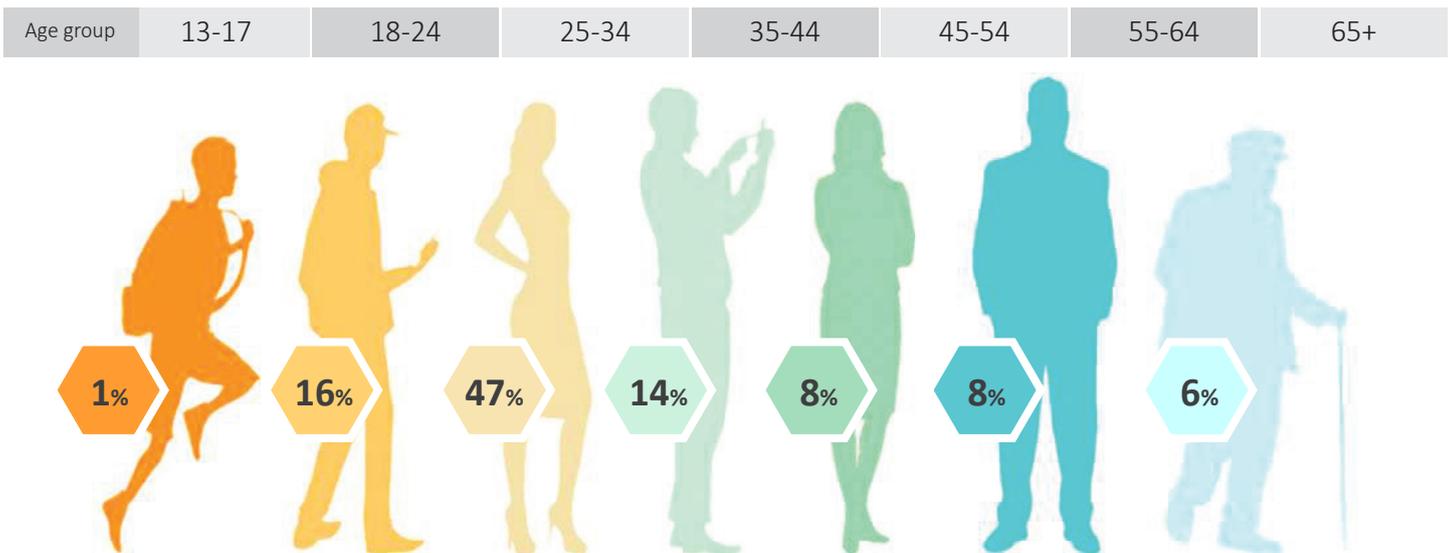
The Bastion

www.thebastion.in

THE BASTION

The Bastion conceptualised and started by three students - Sourya Reddy, Chirag Chinnappa and Swagam Dasgupta - was incubated at the Ashoka University, near Delhi. The Bastion strives to leverage research and academia to put out data and evidence-based stories. They focus on stories on education and the environment.

22 Grantees **61m** Monthly Unique Visitors **77%** between ages 18-44 **33%** are Women



Innovations in coverage...

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Think Pragati has used the fast-growing medium of podcasts to address issues with an edgy and provocative take. For instance, the 69th edition of the Pragati Podcast looks at the issues of "Why do we elect criminals?" ([see https://bit.ly/2InbLOT](https://bit.ly/2InbLOT))

Sadhana Weekly has adopted a unique way to educate its voters by providing a 'mantra' for the voter from Gandhian and social activist Baba Amte who had written a series of articles for Sadhana in 1967 titled Mati Jagvil Tyala Mat. Based on this, Sadhana is publishing a 'Five point formula for voters' - which provides a template for the voter to make an informed choice of their representative.

ThePrint has launched a pioneering web app My543 (<https://bit.ly/2UVswEk>) which seeks to monitor and analyse the performance of all elected MPs. A reader can select any of the 543 constituencies of relevance to him and examine an MP's performance, use of MPLADS funds, etc. It features videos of work accomplished by MPs and invites voters, opponents and incumbents to contribute to the conversation.



The proliferation of **misinformation and fake news** is expectedly playing a very damaging role, particularly at such a sensitive and critical juncture as the Lok Sabha polls.

Alt News' launch of an app is thus very appropriate. It lets users fact-check a specific piece of news or information. The app will provide an automated and almost instant response if the information is already fact-checked. Otherwise, it will go into a pool to be fact-checked and will provide the response as soon as it is fact-checked. This functionality is being built into their WhatsApp, Twitter and Facebook Messenger platforms. ●