

Optimal Usage of Artificial Intelligence in Public Relations in Odisha

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Abstract

This research explores the transformative role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Public Relations (PR) within the regional context of Odisha, India. While global adoption of AI in communication is accelerating, Odisha presents a distinct case due to its linguistic diversity, cultural richness, and urban-rural digital divide. Through qualitative interviews with 25 PR professionals across sectors, this study identifies how AI tools are being utilized, what barriers exist, and how ethical, localized, and hybrid strategies can bridge the gap. Findings suggest that while AI enhances efficiency and strategic targeting, its effectiveness is limited by a lack of cultural sensitivity, Odia language integration, and infrastructure disparities. Recommendations include developing regional AI tools, training communicators in ethical AI use, and fostering public-private collaborations for inclusive digital communication.

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence is revolutionizing industries globally, with Public Relations emerging as a significant beneficiary of AI tools like chatbots, sentiment analysis software, and AI-generated content platforms. In India, while metropolitan PR firms rapidly adopt such innovations, regional implementation remains inconsistent and under-researched.

Odisha, with its strong cultural identity and Odia-speaking population, offers a unique case for analyzing AI's applicability in PR. Effective PR in the region depends heavily on emotional appeal, linguistic precision, and cultural symbolism. Existing AI platforms—largely trained on English and Hindi datasets—struggle to accommodate these nuances, potentially alienating audiences or miscommunicating intentions.

This study aims to evaluate how AI is currently used in Odisha's PR sector, what challenges hinder its optimal usage, and how a balanced, culturally-aware approach can enhance communication outcomes.

Methodology

A qualitative, exploratory research design was adopted to gain in-depth insights from PR professionals with practical AI experience. The primary data source was semi-structured interviews conducted with 25 professionals from government bodies, NGOs, private corporations, media houses, and event firms across Odisha.

The interview guide included 25 questions divided into themes such as: AI tool usage, cultural fit, ethical concerns, and crisis management. Thematic analysis was applied to transcribe responses using Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework. Secondary data from journals, industry reports, and digital communication whitepapers supported triangulation and validation.

Sample Distribution:

- Government PR: 6 respondents
 - NGOs: 4
 - Media/Broadcasting: 4
 - Private Corporates: 6
 - Events/Entertainment: 3
 - Academia: 2
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Key Findings

1. Operational Efficiency

88% of participants reported that AI tools like ChatGPT, Canva AI, and sentiment analysis dashboards significantly reduced manual effort in content generation, media tracking, and audience profiling. These tools streamlined PR workflows and increased output speed.

“AI helps us schedule posts and monitor responses in real time, which was very manual earlier,” shared a media relations officer from Bhubaneswar.

2. Cultural and Linguistic Disconnect

92% of respondents highlighted that AI tools lack cultural understanding and Odia language support. Automated content often misses festival references, symbolic idioms, or emotional nuances that resonate with local audiences.

“AI outputs are too generic. They don't ‘sound Odia,’ even when translated,” noted a government PR specialist.

This limits AI's utility in rural and semi-urban campaigns where cultural symbolism drives public trust.

3. Emotional Limitations

AI-generated content was found to lack empathy and tone sensitivity—critical in managing crises or sensitive communication. 84% respondents emphasized the need for human intervention to contextualize messages.

4. Urban-Rural Digital Divide

AI use was significantly higher in urban centers like Bhubaneswar and Cuttack. In rural districts, digital infrastructure, tool access, and AI literacy remain major obstacles. This divide limits the scalability of AI-powered PR strategies across Odisha.

5. Ethical and Privacy Concerns

Many professionals expressed concerns around AI's handling of data privacy, misinformation risks, and lack of transparency in AI-generated messaging. These issues are amplified in rural Odisha, where digital literacy is lower.

Case Study Snapshot: Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC)

BMC integrated AI tools for real-time complaint resolution and civic engagement via social media. Key results included:

- **Resolution time** dropped from 48 hours to 12 hours.
- **Citizen engagement** on Twitter increased by 166%.
- **Sentiment analysis accuracy** improved to 80%.

However, challenges persisted in Odia language processing and staff adaptation to AI tools. BMC mitigated these by implementing manual reviews and digital training sessions.

Lesson: AI enhances delivery but cannot replace contextual understanding essential in government communication.

Discussion

The findings confirm that AI can significantly elevate PR effectiveness by automating repetitive tasks, enabling personalization, and providing real-time feedback. However, these advantages are tempered by cultural, linguistic, and ethical constraints.

While global literature supports AI's potential in PR, most models are built for homogenous, digitally advanced markets. Odisha's diversity demands that AI be customized for regional languages, sentiments, and communication styles. The study reinforces the importance of hybrid communication models where AI supports—but does not replace—human creativity, empathy, and ethical judgment.

Recommendations

1. Hybrid PR Models

Develop frameworks where AI manages routine tasks (scheduling, analytics), while human professionals ensure emotional depth, cultural relevance, and ethical clarity.

2. Localized AI Development

Invest in AI platforms that:

- Understand Odia grammar and idioms

- Integrate local festivals and traditions in messaging
- Use regional dialects for rural outreach

3. Capacity Building

- Conduct AI literacy workshops for PR professionals.
- Integrate AI tools in PR and mass communication curricula across Odisha's universities.
- Create mentorship networks for early adopters to support late-stage PR teams.

4. Ethical Safeguards

- Mandate transparency in AI-generated messaging.
- Enforce data privacy and consent frameworks, especially when communicating with rural or vulnerable populations.
- Establish ethical review boards within agencies to vet sensitive AI communication.

5. Infrastructure & Inclusion

- Expand digital infrastructure in rural Odisha to ensure equitable access.
 - Offer subsidized AI toolkits for grassroots organizations and public service bodies.
 - Promote public-private partnerships for developing multilingual, culturally aware chatbots and sentiment tools.
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Conclusion

AI offers a powerful toolkit for enhancing Public Relations, but its benefits in Odisha are contingent on thoughtful, localized, and ethical implementation. While urban PR professionals have embraced AI for efficiency and analytics, emotional authenticity and cultural fluency remain irreplaceably human traits in communication.

Odisha's rich traditions of storytelling, linguistic pride, and community interaction cannot be automated—but they can be amplified through responsible AI use. A culturally sensitive hybrid approach, rooted in regional realities, will allow AI to complement rather than compete with the human heart of PR.

As Odisha navigates its digital future, integrating AI in a way that honors its heritage may set an example for inclusive innovation across India's regional landscapes.
