



The Changing Face: The Role of Social Media in Political Campaigning

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“The thing about social media is that it is anonymous, so it can be much more vitriolic and extreme than normal media and yet it is there for everyone to see. It is kind of like electronic graffiti. The political process is accelerated and intense in a way that I don’t believe it ever really has been before”

Tony Abbott

Abstract

The growth and improved usage of social media has replaced the way people interact and communicate daily. Social media allows all kinds of people like individuals, groups, or organizations to establish a social network system of friends and followers. In the field of politics, this is an attempt to find out the role of social media in election campaigning in India with special reference to General Elections 2014-2019. In a democratic country like India, social media has become an integral part of political communications during election campaigning. This new way of campaigning during elections plays an important role to attract voters. Social media has given new platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Google+, What Sapp, YouTube, Instagram, etc. to the political parties and the voters, these are becoming an easy tool for the political leaders to approach and communicate with their

voters. Social media permits candidates to share, post, comment, and their views during elections and making them more direct participation to their voters. These new tools or platforms seem a new area for research. Firstly, to find out the term of social media, secondly, the general meaning of political campaigning, thirdly, uses of social media in Indian election campaigning with reference to previous General Elections and lastly conclusions.

Keywords

Social media, election campaigning, political communications, Social Networks, voters, General Elections

Introduction

How people associate with each other and the method in which information is pooled and circulated has changed due to the advent of social media. Old-style media like Traditional media such as Electronic, print, radio, and television are not the same it's different from social media in two important ways (i) the volume of content that can be generated by news/opinion makers is much lower than the content created by the users themselves and (ii) its "viral" ability for the probable increasing spread of information by word of mouth and interspersing of the several social media platforms,

The electoral system in India has always been the foundation of the political system of every Democratic country. Every election, whether the parliamentary or assembly, stands unique because of the unstable political conditions of the country or the states where the Assembly elections are to be held. Accordingly, the attention, involvement, and choice of the individual voters tend to change. India is a democratic country where election Campaigning is an integral part of it and from time to time the Political Parties have been using different tools for their campaigning. Previously the Traditional Media has been playing an important role in the election and now the evolution advancement of new technologies and the internet has changed the complete world and the election is no exemption to it. The new technology and the internet have changed the political conditions and atmosphere in India. Social media has had a transformative influence on our democracy. This is mainly because of the internet and the availability of cheap Smartphones in the market. Earlier there were no such tools of social media like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, What Sapp, YouTube, Orkut, and Google+, etc. but now the Political Parties have been using such tools during Election. These tools have broken down the gap between the politician and

the voters, voters can simply interact with their leaders of various political parties. The leaders of the political parties have been using tools of social media to cope up with the new young voters. India is a country that has many states and few metropolitan cities many rural areas the metropolitan city like Delhi which is the capital of India and all the state capital cities where it has seen that social media has made an impact in the last General election 2014-2019 Although BJP PARTY and Narendra Modi had used social media effectively during the last elections and INC PARTY later they Realized that how to use social media in political campaign It was the Aam Aadmi Party during the 2013-2015 Delhi Assembly Elections that demonstrated how social media could affect an electorate, and influence elections.

Research Questions:

1. How was social media been utilized in previous political campaigns, specifically the 2014-2019 Indian General Elections campaign?
2. Did the utilization of social media affect the outcome of the 2014-2019 General elections? If which social media platforms were the most useful?
3. How is the use of social media changed in subsequent political campaigns? And How did Social Media Impact India's 2019 General Election?
4. Have there been any negative effects or new problems created because of social media?
5. What are the political challenges of social media campaigns to the political parties Leaders and voters?
6. What is the predicted future of social media use in political campaigns, particularly in the upcoming 2024 General Election Campaigns?

Objectives:

- 1) To know and understand the general meaning and the term of social media in Election.
- 2) To aware and understand the general meaning of political campaigns.
- 3) To know the role of social media in Elections in India with special reference to General Elections 2014-2019

4) Conclusions.

Significance of the Study

Additionally, the study will investigate the impact that social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp have had on political campaigns, as well as the consequences that this has had for the democratic system in India. In addition to this, it will identify difficulties and misuses of new media, such as disinformation, false news, and manipulation of public opinion, which are essential for the development of measures to minimize these issues.

In order to provide a historical context for the contemporary media environment, a comparative examination of the role that new media has played in various periods of the period (1990-2019) will highlight evolving patterns and techniques in political campaigns. The results will have repercussions for the formulation of policies, especially with regard to the regulation of information that is distributed via digital media during elections and the protection of the democratic process from its manipulation by digital means.

In order to assist political parties, candidates, and policymakers in preparing for the ever-evolving digital era, future forecasting will serve as a basis for projecting future trends in political campaigns. In conclusion, this study is essential for gaining a full knowledge of the role that new media plays in political campaigning in India. It provides insights that are essential for both academic's and practical application in the area of political communication and media studies.

This study is significant to the following participants:

Voters- This study seeks to know the significance, relevance, influence, and challenges of social media as a tool for electoral campaigns in the hopes of delivering narratives, proofs, and indications for the voters. The information can serve as a provision for the voters who depend too much on social media in collecting information. This should deliver an election education to provide the voters reliable information in the pursuit of democracy.

Indian People- This study pursues to inform the Indian people about the negative side of social media which involves misrepresentation and pulling down other candidates using fraud information. To inform the people

that they have the right to get reliable information as election should be fair and clean to sustain democracy. This should provide election tutoring to pursue real democracy being the final source of power in such a form of government.

Legislative Body- This study seeks to impact legislator's policymakers about the challenges of social media as a tool for the electoral campaign. This may lead to formation of laws to prevent the reoccurrence of the current challenges of using social media as a tool for electoral campaigns that are practiced by the voters.

School of Political Science - This study pursues to provide additional data, evidence, and information on the significance, impact, and challenges of social media as a tool of the electoral campaign, which can be utilized for upcoming Conferences discussions and engagements in the department.

Future Researchers- Significantly This study assists as a guide and reference for future research scholars who wanted to study a similar field of study.

Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study significantly more focuses on the political relevance, impact, and challenges of present social media as a tool for democratic election campaigns. The study will be conducted in general elections 2014-2019. The respondents must be at least eighteen years old and above who have an active Facebook, Instagram, what sap, or Twitter account, and have actively participated in the 2014-2019 general elections. The participant of this study is should be a bow eighteen years old compose of the growing numbers of social media consumers. Only the data collection for the study is focused on the 2014-2019 general elections.

Definition of Terms

Social Media- refers to the social networking sites namely Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Google+, and what sap are utilized during the 2014-2019 general election campaign.

Voters- refers to the Electoral voters who are enrolled in the election Commission of India that aged 18 years old and above and have participated in the last 2014-2019 general election.

Electoral Campaign- refers to the 2014-2019 general election campaign

Political Relevance- refers to the significance and connectedness of social media towards the electoral campaign

Political Impact- refers to the change of the respondent's views about the candidates or the candidates' platform because of something you saw on social media.

Political Challenges- refers to social media allowing the public to connect with each other for them to spread both real and fraud information to either pull down other candidates or to establish their image and look better than the other candidates

Research Methodology

Data collection will be both from primary sources and secondary sources like Interviews journals, books, research papers, newspapers, and websites, etc.

Research Design

This research is a basic qualitative approach to describe the political relevance, political impact, and challenges of social media as an instrument for an electoral campaign. In this study, the use of basic qualitative research aims to understand the voter's experiences, aims to know how they construct their views, and aims to understand what meaning they recognize their experiences.

Qualitative studies take the constructivism worldview where the researchers attempt to understand the world in which they work and live in. An individual develops personal meanings of their experiences and these meanings are diverse and multiple, leading the researchers to look for the difficulty of views.

Given such worldview, the researchers would attempt to know and interpret the complication of the experiences of the electoral voters of this country. Through the get announcements from the respondents, there would be a construction of a new set of views and knowledge. These new knowledges are extracting from the respondents.

Review of Related Literature

This review of literature presents the related literature gathered by the researchers. The following sections on Development of Agenda-setting Theory, The Rise of Social Media, Challenges of Social Media to Election, Social Media in General elections India and Relevance and Influence effect of Social Media to Election goals to help purpose of providing enough and suitable background needed for the better understanding of the research study.

1.6 The digital Media role in Political Campaign

Political campaign

A political campaign refers to a deliberate and organized endeavour to influence the voting public's choice of one candidate over another for a public office. Campaigns are conducted in all democratic systems, including certain single-party regimes, wherein political parties, their leaders, and a wide array of candidates for various public positions contend for governance or participation in a governing body of their country. These campaigns are essential as they ultimately determine a nation's political agenda and its domestic and international behaviour. Proficient campaign techniques can inspire support and enhance voter participation, ultimately exerting a significant impact on the election's result. Political advertisements serve to communicate the message, policies, and personalities of the candidates, enabling voters to make well-informed decisions. Political campaigns must

possess the ability to adjust to the always evolving political environment, encompassing the comprehension of voter anxieties, adopting novel communication technology, and devising inventive campaign tactics.

Gaining a thorough understanding of the audience and properly targeting campaign ideas to them is critical for the development of effective campaigns. Examining voter demographics, issues, and policy preferences is part of this process. Comprehending the distinct attributes and strategies employed in national, local, and issue-based political campaigns is essential due to their differences.

National campaigns are commonly employed to mobilize a substantial number of individuals, as they often determine the governance and management of the nation. To effectively target a diverse audience, it is imperative to possess ample financial resources, a well-structured administrative framework, and effective strategies for media dissemination. These campaigns can encompass a wide range of topics, including social justice, environmental issues, national security, and economic policy.

Over the course of the last twenty years, there has been a substantial shift in the function that digital media plays in political campaigns in India, notably in the state of Telangana. When the 1990s rolled around, conventional media was the dominant force in the political environment, while digital media was still in its beginning stages. On the other hand, the introduction of digital platforms in the 2000s served as a supplement to conventional media by offering political parties and candidates an extra platform on which they could spread information. Emergence of social media platforms occurred, although the political influence of these platforms was still very minor.

With the widespread use of smartphones and the internet leading to a substantial growth in the usage of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp, the effect of digital media on political campaigns had grown more evident by the 2010s. Additionally, the use of social media platforms had increased significantly. One of the most significant events that occurred in 2014 was the establishment of Telangana, and digital media played an essential part in the push for statehood.

Following the year 2014, political parties made substantial use of digital media for campaigning purposes. This included both targeted advertising and social media outreach, as well as digital rallies. The use of data analytics to target voters, the proliferation of political material on social media, and the significance of digital platforms in changing public opinion all contributed to the fact that by the year 2019, digital media has become an essential component of political campaigning in India. The political parties in Telangana actively participated in digital campaigning, making use of local languages and information that was customized to concerns that were specific to the area.

To guarantee personal engagement and grassroots mobilization, local campaigns, particularly those that concentrate on specific geographical areas or communities, need personalized techniques. This is especially true for campaigns that are regional in nature. The traditional approach of connecting with voters, door-to-door canvassing, enables candidates to build a personal connection with their constituency and is thus considered to be an effective strategy. Through the provision of a more personalized approach that cultivates a feeling of being heard and appreciated among voters, this strategy has the potential to improve campaign methods such as social media and direct mail.

The campaign media system has been substantially modified as a result of technological improvements, which has led to major changes in the manner in which politicians run their campaigns, journalists report on them, and voters interact with the process. At this point in time, campaigns are significantly dependent on social media platforms for active involvement and collaboration in the development, diffusion, and exchange of material. Candidates use complex media strategies that combine a wide variety of cutting-edge technologies with more conventional methods of media management.

The majority of voters consider new media to be their primary sources of information, and they participate actively in political campaigns via the use of digital platforms. Nevertheless, the results may not be the best possible ones in every circumstance. It is possible for the media to have a negative impact on the career of a politician if they are deployed against them, but if the media has a great appreciation for that figure, it may rocket that politician's career to new heights. The opinions that people have about politicians, news items, reactions to news articles, elections, and referendum campaigns are also influenced by the media.

The primary responsibility of the media is to provide accurate information to the general public about critical issues that have an effect on them, regardless of whether these issues are of a local, national, or worldwide nature. In recent years, the internet has eclipsed newspapers as the preferred source of political news for a significant number of persons. However, owing to legal duties, television news must adhere to fairness and balance in order to maintain its credibility. It is believed that television firms would broadcast the facts in a way that is neutral, and representatives from all of the key political parties will have the chance to share their perspectives on important subjects.

An ever-increasing number of individuals all around the globe are resorting to internet channels, particularly social media, in order to keep themselves informed. One of the reasons why erroneous information might be found on the internet is because people have the power to post stuff without any limitations. The internet, on the other hand, has made it possible for individuals to have access to a bigger quantity of information that is easily available. As a result, social media has become a popular public platform for discussing and often engaged in heated debates over political and social issues.

Conclusion

The development of social media gives voices to voiceless and broken common people which is neglected in the mainstream and typecast media. The major growth of social media is due to the youth as they commit most of their time to social media, and everyone including Political parties is very well aware of the fact and tries to impact the young generation. In the 2019 General election country had 130 million people first-time voters, out of which more than 15 million electorates between 18 to 19 of age. The Political parties with the help of social media were able to get information regarding voters likes and dislikes; and after manipulate them, especially the Swing Voters, whose views can be changed by manipulating information. The political parties and candidates started using Social Media for communication and campaigning purposes to attract the voters, which in turn saved their time, economy, and resources, giving them larger viewers for interaction. Political campaigns are not just limited to switches and banners for politicians to reach their voters. The new political pitch is full of infomercials, advertisements, blog posts, and lakhs of tweets, Instagram posts, Facebook posts, etc. Politicians are now able to constantly demonstrate their message through endless commercials and device their communication by viewing direct responses to their actions on Facebook or Twitter or Instagram. Soon the stage connecting professionals will also be used by the parties to spread themselves. Social media creates a groundbreaking political discussion. The power of political messaging is taken away from the mass media model and firmly placed into the peer-to-peer, public discourse. The institution of social media has allowed supreme empowerment and preparation of the 'aam aadmi' for expressing political thoughts. The optimistic development of social media growth has been that the youth is talking about political issues. Previously the political debates were reserved only to those who read newspapers, viewed news channels, or donated in discussions at nuked of a village or clubs. But now, social interaction has made the youth of India discuss political issues. The employment time to analyze and discuss politics. They now have their views on the events of political happenings and also influence administrative decision-making. Social media involvement in the Indian political space is truthful, noticeable, and fast-tracking. Though it may not carry in massive changes immediately, still it plays a dynamic role in spreading political consciousness in a developing country like India.

Few examples of effective Social Media campaigns by the Political parties in times of elections

1. Delhi-based Aam Aadmi Party 2013 and 2015 assembly election.
2. BJP Party and Indian National Congress in 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections

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