

Role of Media Management and social media in Election Campaign in India: A Case Study of 2019 General Election

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Abstract

The social media behemoths Facebook, Twitter, Google, and YouTube have become significant players in the national elections and state assembly elections in India. Social media has grown in importance as a campaigning tool in the Indian electoral system. These new media platforms are believed to play a key role in luring voters, particularly the new generation of young adults. Political parties and candidates can more quickly and efficiently reach a huge number of voters thanks to social media. Social media, as opposed to traditional media, enables politicians to actively communicate with potential voters. Social media enables political parties and candidates to communicate their values, objectives, and accomplishments with voters directly, giving them a sense of increased involvement in the election.

Candidates may more easily track participation on social media and provide their supporters with a behind-the-scenes look at their campaign. The gathering of news that is most pertinent to important target audiences is also made easier by these new media platforms. Research is crucial because social media usage is on the rise and has been proved to be significant. The current study focuses on the usage and growth of social media in the political sphere and how it affects public participation in politics and society at large. The study will first look at the growth of social media as a voter outreach tool.

Keywords: social media, political behaviour, political participation, election campaign, Facebook, twitter

Introduction

Social media are become a crucial component of political communication during elections in recent years. Communication has changed with the advent of the Internet, moving from social media to chat rooms and instant messaging. In terms of Internet communication, social media are the newest and fastest-growing phenomenon. All political parties and candidates in India's 2019 general election made great use of social media to turn out the vote. Researchers in political communication paid close attention to social media's recent exponential growth and popularity.

The relevance of social media as a platform for political engagement in all of its forms has rapidly increased. Social media sites like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube offer fresh ways to encourage public participation in politics, where elections and campaigning are crucial. Social media allows politicians and political parties to interact personally with their prospective voters (Biswas 2014, p. 128). Without the intermediary function of the media, it enables politicians to communicate more quickly and to reach citizens in a more focused way. Online engagement produces responses, feedback, discussions, and debates as well as support and involvement for offline activities. As messages uploaded to personal networks are shared, they are duplicated and can reach new audiences.

More than any other time in history, the 20th century saw the convergence of new means of communication in the area of mass communication. Electricity, the telephone, the automobile, and the aeroplane increased people's access to the outside world while also altering our society. The availability of the Internet as a publicly accessible global system of interconnected networks has allowed regular people to experience an improved quality, range, and choice of entertainment and information content. As new modes of communication have emerged one after another. Democracies, cultures, and economies all around the world are being built and sustained in large part because to new kinds of communication media.

In the current environment, social media is important for elections. There is a lot of room for improvement because these are currently used by a large number of individuals and are quite popular. The majority of young government employees and officials use social media. The availability of smartphones contributes to positive social media usage. In terms of cell phone usage, India is a global leader. This will facilitate large-scale interaction between people for a variety of subjects. The development of communication technology nowadays has accelerated its rapid dissemination to all of us.

Social media exists to bring together individuals from various locations. The distance between people is no longer an issue when communicating with one another. The youth used social media as a forum to talk about good governance. The traditional media used to be the only outlet for people to raise awareness about elections, but today's situation has changed, and social media is playing a significant role in persuading people to actively participate in voting.

Social media gives people the knowledge they need to make informed socioeconomic and political decisions. Women, young people, and marginalised groups are given a voice in these new media forms, along with their ideas. Compared to traditional mass media, these new modes of communication provide additional possibilities. Many of those come from new media, which is a very accessible and open medium. The new media offers an infinite selection of information. One of today's most active phenomenon, the internet, has shown to be. New means of communication and information flow based on the internet have contributed significantly to the development of democratic society. The goal of the current study is to understand how this web-based information affects the Indian electoral process.

India is now holding elections that set a number of records. Not only are millions of young people voting for the first time, but political parties and candidates are spending more on their campaigns than ever before, traditional mass media outlets are competing to be the most original, and social media is playing a major role in the election process for the first time ever. India has experienced tremendous Internet adoption during the past ten years.

Significance of Social Media in Indian Politics

Politicians' primary goal in the upcoming Lok Sabha election is social election rather than actual election. Political commentators agree that social media has altered the way people think, write, and react, but many also contend that it has affected how people vote. More and more politicians are realising the significance of social media as an election tool because the majority of political parties are aware of the public's pulse and impulse on social media timelines. As a result, for the general election, internet techniques have taken centre stage in organising political rallies, and party manifestos are no longer kept a secret by a small group of people but are instead made public, if not crowd sourced, to voters in general (Carney 2022, p. 13).

The social media revolution in politics is real, palpable, and accelerating as a result of social media's rising growth and widespread use in India. Social media must bring together people from various locations, despite their greater distances. India has the biggest percentage of users with access to the internet, and people there believe that online sources of news are more trustworthy and credible than traditional ones. In terms of global social network usage, India is placed third. In Indian politics and elections, social media is crucial. Social media has evolved into a forum for young people to discuss good governance.

Currently, it encourages active voting involvement among the populace. It enables political parties and candidates to efficiently and quickly reach a huge number of people. The significance of social media for the 16th Parliament's general elections, political parties, and candidates can help make sense of social media's traits, power, and popularity. Social media is a powerful publicity tool for politicians. They are trying to draw people to their party candidates by focusing on them. The BJP party's volunteers converse with regular people to better understand their mindsets and attitudes, which has allowed them to employ electronic media to great effect.

Connecting individuals through social media and encouraging conversation and sharing is one thing. But it takes on greater significance when it enables campaigners to understand the electorate, target a particular group, combine demographics, leverage mobile support, and encourage participation. When some of these people participate actively in political discussions, they are an excellent resource for spreading the news and swaying public opinion. Over time, this trend will continue as younger and more Indians join social media.

The use of digital media to reach out to and entice potential voters is one of the key ways that the 17th Lok Sabha election, currently taking place, is different from all prior elections in the history of independent India. In order to assess your political preference and

win your support, political parties are keeping track of your digital footprint to learn more about you, your likes and dislikes, what you buy, and other information.

Use of Social Media in Political Campaign

Social media are websites where users can freely connect with one another while exchanging and debating information about one another and their lives utilising a multimedia combination of written words, visual images, audio, and video. On these websites, people and organisations produce content, exchange it, and have one-on-one conversations. Social media users can be found on a variety of platforms, such as blogs, microblogs, forums, message boards, wikis, virtual worlds, asocial bookmarking, tagging, and news. We have seen the global adoption of social media skyrocket in recent years.

New types of social engagement, dialogue, exchange, and collaboration are being fostered today by social media like Facebook, Twitter, and other social networking sites. Users of social media can share their broader interests while exchanging ideas, posting updates and comments, or taking part in activities and events. Nowadays, a wide range of user communities use social media for a wide variety of purposes. Social media is making it harder to distinguish between work and play. Additionally, people can now live in a media world long after their working day is ended thanks to the online tracking and broadcast of news and opinions over social media.

Politicians and political parties depend on social media platforms to mobilise voters, foster engagement, and maintain an ongoing, open discourse. The most important benefit of social media is that it enables highly motivated individuals to more easily create an environment in which the moderately motivated individuals can be effective without having to become activists themselves, which creates an environment ideal for politicians to take advantage of. The political system and campaign strategies are starting to change as a result of the emergence of social media and its public and political effect. Social media and the Internet are now being used by politicians, which has opened up a new space for grassroots politics.

Voters no longer rely their decisions exclusively on the information provided by traditional media; instead, they use their computers and mobile devices to research extra information and, in some circumstances, further activist tactics. Additionally, several studies have discovered a favourable correlation between a person's voting behaviour and their use of social media and the media in general. In essence, people are more likely to vote if they rely on the media and social media for information. In the end, social media streamlines word-of-mouth and fosters collaboration in a practical and effective way, reaching those who are more likely to be encouraged to actively participate in politics, according to study (Jefferlot 2022 p. 145).

The benefit of this is that social media breaks down the wall between professionals and consumers, allowing the latter to directly contribute to the work of the former. Politicians, political parties, and voters all use social media as a means of disclosure- they post photographs, personal information, and leave public messages to their friends in a cyber

space. By the removal of pre-existing obstacles, relationships between supporters or voters and politicians who use social media to connect with their constituency are enhanced.

Social media's development and rise to fame are not without cost, though. Because of the effects of the digital explosion, people are not only able but also encouraged to share their personal information with the world without thinking about the long-term consequences (Neyazi 2021, p. 19). Later, the use of social media by citizens serves as a platform for civic and political education. Social media information services have been utilised widely to spread the word to voters, similar to how the Internet is used.

Media Management

Media management refers to the process of planning, organizing, and implementing various media strategies and tactics to achieve specific goals and objectives. This can include managing media relations, creating and distributing content, analyzing media coverage, and monitoring social media channels. Media management is typically undertaken by individuals or teams within organizations, such as public relations, marketing, or communications departments.

The goal is to manage a company's reputation and image by ensuring that the right messages are communicated through the appropriate media channels. Media management can also refer to the software and hardware tools used to organize, store, and edit media files, such as video, audio, and images. These tools are used by media professionals, such as editors, producers, and broadcasters, to create and manage media content for various platforms, including television, radio, and online media.

Theory of Media management

The term theory has a hazy definition in the field of mass communication. The term "theory" is widely used to refer to paradigms, conceptual frameworks, models, normative theories, and, of course, actual theories. Even though they illustrate quite dissimilar concepts. A theory, according to the standard definition in science, is a systematically related group of claims regarding the relationships or causes underlying observed events (Rudner, 1966). Theories are created by deriving conclusions from observations, and they are validated by conducting several experiments that are intended to test relevant ideas. The end consequence is frequently the formulation of generalisations that resemble laws regarding underlying causes and relationships. A theory's goal is to further scientific knowledge by providing a systemized framework that can both explain and predict phenomena (Hunt, 1991).

The foundation for continued research into areas that are less understood is established by accepted hypotheses, which form a part of our understanding. They assist us in predicting future effects of our current actions with a certain level of confidence since they are a statement of cause and effect. Sound ideas are useful for interpreting facts because they help explain what is happening and why. However useful, theories do have some drawbacks. First of all, because they are narrowly focused and very particular, they are unable to fully

explain all of the contributing aspects. Deterministic justifications are typically the product of this particular trait.

Second, they frequently rest on limited, erroneous presumptions. Theories seek to provide predictive models for future actions and outcomes, but they must deal with the difficulties posed by the unpredictable nature of social groupings and individuals.

The discipline of media management is unique in a number of respects, despite the fact that the majority of ideas and conceptual frameworks used in media management research have their roots in organisational studies. First, media companies produce information products rather than tangible ones, and there are important differences between the fundamental economic traits of information products and those of other kinds of tangible goods. These core economic traits are linked to significant variations in demand, production, market, and distribution factors, resulting in a highly distinct management environment from that of many other industries. The importance of information and media content in social, political, and economic processes is what makes media products have such a high social externality value.

Media management strategies have effects that go far beyond the strictly financial concerns of corporate investors because the media is one of the essential infrastructure industries in society. As a result, while organisational studies and media management research both focus on financial outcomes, the latter area also examines how organisational management affects media content and society. The field of media management can be distinguished from the field of organisational studies by this particular characteristic. Ferguson (1997) asserted that it will be challenging to make the case that media management is a field of study different from either organisational studies or mass communication until media management researchers produce new theories that go beyond economics and applied management.

The field of media management is far from being clearly defined or cohesive, despite the fact that it seeks to bridge the gap between general management theory and the peculiarities of the media sector (Küng, 2007). It is also understudied and undertheorized. Media-related disciplines including media economics, political economy, journalism, and communications have taken an approach to the study of media management that is not necessarily rooted in the study of organisations (Mierzejewska & Hollifield, 2006). Hence, it follows that the variety of theories applied in media management study is also wide-ranging.

Role of Media Management in 2019 General Election

Political parties are now considering social media for their marketing and advertising purposes in the current era of the electronic revolution, where social media has become the means and the goal of all communication. Political marketing is the "application of marketing ideas and techniques in political campaigns by different people and organisations," according to its definition. The procedures entail the evaluation, creation, implementation, and management of strategic campaigns by candidates, political parties, governments, lobbyists, and interest groups that aim to sway public opinion, advance their own ideologies, win

elections, and pass legislation and referenda in response to the needs and wants of chosen individuals and groups in society.

Political marketing is not just used in conventional marketing; it has also made a mark on online media. Candidates, public figures, and political parties can use social media to sway public opinion in the direction they want by creating political marketplaces using social media, which is a type of digital media. Social media is becoming a very effective medium for conveying ideas, opinions, and viewpoints. It also plays a significant role in shaping public opinion. Social media is an online application platform that promotes communication, teamwork, and information sharing.

Web 2.0 technologies offer users a web experience that reflects the buzz surrounding their participation in information sharing. The ability to share one's own experiences, offer feedback, and express one's views in a favourable, negative, or neutral manner is not restricted to just readers of the information written by the site owners. 150 million Indian voters who were also referred to as members of the "connected" generation were on social media during the 2009 general election. Since it was simple to communicate with this group of people, most political parties leaped at the chance to join social networking sites and try to sway them.

Political party activities and conversations during the 2019 Indian general elections were prevalent on social media. The main metrics to determine which politicians are famous and in style are volume chatter, retweets, and follows. Twitter emerged as the platform of choice for people to engage in and consume political material during the 2019 general election. Tweeter was used for user interaction with information, breaking news, influence on political dialogue, and media setting.

The historical usage and gratification study on the Internet and its interactive applications is congruent with political surveillance and information-seeking, convenience, entertainment, and social utility. For the 2019 general election, Twitter held its own "Tweeter Election". Up until the end of the general election, there were 56 million tweets about elections. The number of tweets sent on each voting day of the general elections in 2019 ranged from 5.4 lakhs to 8.2 lakhs. Social media was once thought of as a communication and video-sharing platform for amusement. Yet, social media platforms like Whatsapp, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, MySpace, and Google today have a significant impact on how management is perceived. The examples in front of us are the Arab springs and the Egyptian revolution. These revolutions' effects have had a significant impact on Indian politics today and sparked public participation. Its significance as a forum for political actions in all of their forms has dramatically increased. Social media sites like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube offer fresh ways to motivate people to participate in politics, where elections and campaigning are crucial.

Role of Social media in 2019 General Election

According to reports, social media was a major factor in the BJP's overwhelming victory in the 2019 election. The BJP benefited from the wise and successful use of social media in the 2019 Lok Sabha election. Some political party leaders opened social media accounts after seeing the platform's potential to draw voters. Since then, a number of political parties have maintained websites and social media pages to stay in touch with people. There are numerous WhatsApp and Facebook groups for different political parties. To influence public opinion and capture voters' attention, they establish and manage such groups. Social media is also being utilised to distribute fraudulent and contentious content (Vrughese 2022, p. 19).

WhatsApp groups to spread information on the BJP, Narendra Modi, and its development initiatives, policies, and accomplishments. Congress, the opposing party, had also been communicating with people using WhatsApp groups. Congress has launched the 'Digital Sathi' app, which used digital media to communicate directly with voters in polling booths. WhatsApp made an effort to halt the spread of false material, however this platform was heavily exploited during the 2019 election. As a result, numerous political parties ran WhatsApp groups to sway public opinion. WhatsApp elections refer to the widespread use of WhatsApp during the 2019 Lok Sabha election (Rao 2020, p. 19).

Given that it was the largest democratic election to date and that a substantial portion of it was conducted online, India's 2019 parliamentary election is being referred to as a social media election. Online voting increased significantly from years ago, but there were several other significant elections that took place before that: 190 million people between the ages of 18 and 23 gained the right to vote, and two out of three Indians are under the age of 35 (Aizaz 2022, p. 10).

With more than 363 million Internet users, India has the third-largest Internet user base in the world, with a substantial proportion of young people. Included in this are the more than 100 million users who are active on social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. It makes sense that social media sites, technological companies, e-commerce websites, and telecom providers would take advantage of this chance to network.

Social media platforms have been heavily used by political figures, candidates, journalists, and everyday people to find election-related news, engage in real-time conversation, and share their opinions. The Indian elections were spectacular in every way. Over the course of a month and a half, over 900 million voters cast ballots to choose 543 members of the Lok Sabha, the lower house of Parliament. The most recent general elections, which are planned to take place in seven phases between 11 April and 22 May 2019, are acknowledged as the largest festival of democracy in the world.

Conclusion

The 2019 Lok Sabha elections were very much about the war of narratives as they were about competition between two parties, the BJP and the congress. More than the message, the focus was on the messenger, that is, the social and mainstream media. All

parties used these platforms to carry their narratives to the people. While congress started to target the BJP with Chowkidar chor hai, in an apparent reference to the so called corruption in Rafael deal, the BJP hit back by asking its supporters to use the hashtag #MaiBhiChowkidar, means I am also against corruption. This was effectively take-up in Facebook, twitter and other social media platforms.

The hashtag wars became the symbol of real contest. And the party that focused on social media management, that is, the BJP, ultimately triumphed because it understood that people tend to spend more time on digital world and listen and believe more in what is communicated to them via social media rather than what is told to them by the people on the streets. This strategy worked well for them not only in 2019 but also in 2020 also when due to covid 19 pandemic even physical things went more and more digital.

When it comes to the Indian electoral process, social media is leading the way. Every significant political party in India has made social media a key component of their election campaigning. Campaigning through social media is increasingly unavoidable and vital in Indian elections, both in the Lok Sabha and the assembly. During the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, social media has become increasingly important for campaigning and communication in Indian elections. Another instance of politicians using social media in an unprecedented way to influence voters was during the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

During the Covid 19 pandemic phase, the assembly elections in numerous Indian states saw extensive usage of digital media by politicians to interact with people. Given that physical rallies were prohibited by the Indian Election Commission owing to the pandemic, social media was the only way for candidates to campaign and communicate with voters. This highlights the importance of social media. Political parties, particularly the BJP and Congress, used social media extensively to communicate with voters during the post-pandemic assembly elections in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh. The importance of social media will increase significantly during the approaching elections in India, which is likely a positive development for that nation's democracy. Social media platforms have improved communication in India by making it more accessible, democratic, and interesting.

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