

Social Media Relevance in Political Management in India

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ABSTRACT

*In the present digitalized era every sphere of life is affected by high use of social media which has become a vital medium of communication and political management is no exception in this regard. Political parties are also exploiting the social media means in impacting the voters and in creation of their political image and marketing. India's 2014 general election has witnessed the extensive use of this social media platform as a means of disseminating effective communication and information. **Methodology:** in this research the author has reviewed the literature related with the social media use in political management. **Findings:** Social media in recent days has become a vital medium for political mobilization, creating political awareness in social media users, influencing expected voters, using virtual platforms on social media in the form of Tweeter, You Tube, What App, Facebook and many more. This also proving to be cost efficient and helping politicians in the time saving and schedule management during the busy schedule especially at the time of elections. **Implications:** Emergence of social media as an important tool for political management and influencing youth and voters, opening various job opportunities for the youth by handling of social media accounts of politicians and political parties and assuming role of political marketers. The findings are valuable to political parties and academicians. The study can be used by them. **Originality:** This research work is purely the author's work and all the references are duly cited by the author.*

Keywords: Social Media, Political Management, Political Marketing, Political parties

INTRODUCTION:

In recent times social media has occupied a vital place in the political circles. In the general elections of 2009 in India, social media was occupied by so called connected generation of about one hundred fifty million voters. Connecting with these voters was very easy by using social media. Hence, it was time for adopting social media means in order to influencing such voters by the political parties. This trend of using social media means for influencing voters increased manifold in the general elections of 2014. Numbers of followers on tweeter and quantity of retweets on the tweets of politicians were largely measurable factors in identifying the publicity and trending levels of politicians. (Swamy, R, 2014). In this research the author aims to study literature related with the social media use in political management.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Effective in influencing youth:

An online marketing firm conducted a survey and found that nearly 33.33% of first time electors got affected by political messages sent on different platforms of social media by political parties and politicians in the general election. The report by ADG online states that, there was more political activities in 2019 general elections on social media platforms than that of 2014 elections. 30% of first time one fifty million electors got influenced and involved via different social media channels, 50% of these first time electors got political messages via social media and 20% remaining knew the circumstances and happening in the country. The report elaborated that youth are hugely influenced by messages on social media, out of the electors influenced by social media, more than 50% consisting of having lower than 25 years of age. (Metkar, A. B. & Aade, A., 2020)

There were more than 4 million followers of Indian Prime minister, Narendra Modi on tweeter, there were two million persons in his circle on Google + and he got 14 million likes on Facebook, made him the most cherished

Indian Politician on social media. The fan followers of main political leaders have increased with the commencement of online campaigning during elections. (Safiullah, M., Pathak, P., Singh, S., & Anshul, A., 2017) More and more youth are attracted towards social media and twitter has emerged one important tool of political marketing and political information and communication. Political campaigning strategies adopted by contestants and political parties changes according to their requirements. (Williams, C. & Gulati, G., 2008)

In the US election in 2016, presidential candidate Donald Trump followed a marketing strategy carrying sentimental and rational appeal, social media dominant communications. He received heavy likes created large retweets and recorded a high increase in the number of followers. (Cornfield, M., 2017)

Huge spending by individuals as well as by political parties on social media:

Akanksha Nagar's web news declares that expenditure on political advertising on social media has already increased 15 to 20%. The online ads spending by political parties would increase by 20% in the upcoming assembly elections in the year 2022. While Himanshu Arya, founder and CEO, Grapes claimed political marketing spending will grow 40 to 50%. The political campaigns on online platforms have revolutionized due to the combination of social media tools and data analytics. Political parties in some bigger states have set up online infrastructure in the form of keeping a data base of mobile phone users or generating new Whats App groups. (Nagar, 2021)

Prashant Pandey, CEO and MD of Entertainment Network India, Ltd, claimed the political advertisement spending increases manifold every time because prices drives up by 50% to even 100 %, due to engagement of political parties in the counter advertising in response to the ads placed by opponents. (Dsouza, 2019)

Politicians and political parties are spending more and more gradually increasing social media expenditures because of the fact regarding the output they are getting in the form of votes in the elections. Those politicians who were more engaged on the social media got higher vote share in majority political parties. (Effing, R., Van Hillegersberg, J., & Huibers, T., 2011).

Previously conducted studies asserted about tweets to political parties and to contestants showed a structures relation with successive votes on Election day, (Jungherr, A., October 2013), (Effing, R., Van Hillegersberg, J., & Huibers, T., 2011).

Twitter predicted about the winning of labor party. Twitter made prediction that labor party will gain majority seats in hung election of parliament. This was found true. (Burnap, P., Gibson, R., Sloan, L., Southern, R., & Williams, M., 2016)

Drastic changes in political battleground scenario:

The general elections of 2014 had seen drastic change in the political strategy. The major focus of political parties for campaigning shifted to online campaigning methodologies. The political parties as well as individual politicians extensively used the social media. In other words, the social media platforms were virtual battlegrounds by the political powers. The political parties either at national level or in Maharashtra knew the online media power, hence they all heavily used the online platforms. The older methods of message sending, recordings of calls, large gatherings of public and huge assembly of people waiting for politicians to arrive and address rallies were not observed in so much extent. Indeed, larger part of political activities were on social media and online platforms were used in reaching to the electors which was never seen earlier. Many politicians who were earlier not active on social media have become active users in order to keeping in touch with electors and being updated about the opponents strategies. Thus social media has brought revolutionary change in political management system. According to the survey report more than 40 % young population between ages of 18 to 24 years, were themselves up to date about political happenings in country via minimum one social media tool. (Metkar, A. B. & Aade, A., 2020)

During general elections of 2014, Tweeter set up its own tweeter election in which totally 56 million tweets related to election were made. Every poll day observed about 5.4 lakhs tweets to 8.2 lakhs tweets. (Verma, A., 2015)

The social media usage is not just limited to use by corporate firms for maintaining and carrying out public relations activities, this concept of social media has also transformed as a vital and useful tool for conducting political marketing and advertising during the elections. This has evolved as an efficient platform for expressing and sharing of information and opinions at global level like Presidential election of US in 2008, (Smith, A., 2009), general election of New Zealand in 2011, (Cameron, M. P., Barrett, P., & Stewardson, B., 2016), Korean election of 2010, (Kim, D., May, 2011), and in Swedish elections of 2010, (Larsson, A. O. & Moe, H., 2012)

CONCLUSION:

Social media in recent days has become a vital medium for political mobilization, creating political awareness in social media users, influencing expected voters, using virtual platforms on social media in the form of Tweeter, You Tube, What App, Facebook and many more. Social media is effective in influencing the youth. Individual politicians as well as political parties are spending more on political marketing. Social media has brought about drastic changes in the campaigning strategies of the politicians and political parties. This also proving to be cost efficient and helping politicians in the time saving and schedule management during the busy schedule especially at the time of elections.

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