

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON ELECTION SYSTEM IN INDIA**Niharika Tamrakar**niha2120@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The largest political change in Indian history occurred during the 2014 Assembly elections. The lone and entire person responsible for the downfall of the ruling party, the Congress, which had been in power for ten years, was "Mr. Narendra Modi.". For the first time in India, social media was used so drastically in the course of national elections. The research demonstrates that Mr. Narendra Modi is the most active and well-known user on Twitter. The essential component for Mr. Modi and his BJP party's triumph has been Twitter, along with the other well-known social networking websites and the exit polls from news outlets. The major goal of this paper is to apprehend the impact of social media on the Indian politics. Social media is the main useful resource for the information retrieval. Huge amounts of unstructured textual statistics amassed through social media can be converted and exhibited as user members of the family in real time using the text mining field. Social media could be used as a powerful tool for opinion leading, agenda-setting, and the moulding of public opinion due to its widespread use. The current study article examines the significance of social media usage and uptake in the Indian political sphere, as well as how it affects the general public's participation in politics. The study will look at the potential growth of social media as a voter-attraction tool. It will also analyse on how people's use of social media throughout the election campaign affects the outcome of the vote.

Keywords-social media, Election campaign, Indian politics, Twitter and Facebook.

INTRODUCTION

The answer to any question you might have today is on Google. By connecting people all over the world, the technological revolution that we refer to as the Internet has changed the world. Today, young people use a variety of social media platforms to communicate with friends, family, and co-workers, including Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, blogs, and LinkedIn. The quick development of social media shows that it has an impact on society and is essential to the

development of data and communication technology. India has surpassed Japan to become the third-best Internet user in the world, behind China and the United States, according to Com. Score record (The Hindu, 2013).

The Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) acknowledged that as of June 2014, there were more than 243 million internet users in India, which is a staggering 28% more than there were in June 2013 (Times of India, 2014).

Social media usage is incredibly complicated. Even if using social media presents a variety of difficulties, such as security, privacy, and accuracy, it also provides users with chances for sharing, cooperation, and involvement through the usage of social media. Understanding how and why these tools can and must be used in political committees is crucial. The importance of social media as a venue for distinct political activity has significantly increased. Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube are just a few examples of the social media platforms that offer new ways to urge citizens to get active in politics, where elections and campaigning for office play a key role. According to Eric Qualman of Socialnomics, the social media revolution is the biggest change since the industrial revolution (Mishra, 2017).

It is the best form of workout available online. Every major manufacturer in the world is active on social media. It has evolved into one of the most important selling points for business owners and the fastest way to promote a product. The definition of social media provided by Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein is "a group of Internet-based functions that construct on the ideological and technological foundations of Web two and that permit the introduction and alternate of user-generated content." (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2012).

As with traditional media like newspapers, radio, and television, social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and other social networks are now regarded as politically transformational communication technology. Politicians and elected officials are becoming more aware of the potential of social media for sharing political information and engaging with voters.

ELECTION SYSTEM IN INDIA

India is the largest democracy in the world and a secular republic. The present nation-state of India was founded on August 15, 1947. With a parliamentary style of government and a

constitutional democracy, India is committed to holding free and fair elections on a regular basis. Elections are important because they allow the electorate to choose their own lawmakers. People should possess the knowledge and wisdom needed to choose just the most qualified candidates. Elections offer citizens a way and a platform to choose the party they want to see in a position of authority. The management of the greatest event ever involves general elections in India, which elect representatives for the people. The various candidates' and political parties' election campaigns include public rallies, the distribution of flyers, a procession, door-to-door canvassing, and use of mass media advertising to attract people.

Social media was once thought of as a communication and video-sharing platform for amusement.

However, social media platforms like Whatsapp, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, MySpace, and Google today have a significant impact on how leadership is perceived. The examples that are 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. 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.

The social media revolution in Indian politics is real, palpable, and progressing quickly. It is common knowledge that social media was used to spread outrage over events like the massive protests against Anna Hazare's anti-corruption movement in 2012 and the Nirbhaya gang rape case. Recall that the Indian government's operations had halted, causing huge national and international headlines and involving the general public. Youth gravitate towards social media's voice. Youth took part in these elections and raised awareness of the value of voting in a representative democracy. Regular posting and tweeting could help voters connect with the wider world. On the political front, social media users that are active interact with one another.

Social media allows users the possibility to understand one another's mindsets and shape ideas by disseminating information and individual points of view. Particularly during the Lok Sabha election, Prime Minister Candidate Narendra Modi, Congressman Rahul Gandhi, and AAP

leader Arvind Kejriwal engaged in extensive social media campaigning. The BJP leaders keep them informed by using the internet to browse, publish status updates, and express personal opinions on global online platforms. By facilitating communication between constituents and their representatives as well as among themselves, social networking sites can also be utilised to increase political participation. The majority of social media users were between the ages of 21 and 35 (Pathak, 2015).

Because of social media, our Prime Minister Narendra Modi is also known as "Namo" and has earned the title of India's first social media prime minister. His party also uses social media platforms brilliantly by involving users in significant conversations. 'Ab ki bar Modi Sarkar' became a trending topic on Facebook and Twitter. The party volunteers engage in interaction with regular people to better grasp their worldview and attitude, which enables them to achieve great results (Kumar et al, 2015).

Narendra Modi had more than 16 million Facebook likes at the time of his inauguration as prime minister. He is the second-most-internet-active politician in the world, and he had the sixth-highest number of followers on Twitter among all world leaders.

With 282 seats out of the 543 seats in parliament, Modi's BJP won, marking the largest victory for any party in India in the previous 40 years. The BJP successfully won the election among India's youthful voters by using social media to influence a large number of them. Utilising the influence of social media was necessary to attract young voters. The BJP used social media platforms to crowdsource its manifesto, which was one of the more intriguing uses of social media in the electoral campaign. Last but not least, the BJP's use of social media during the election for the parliament was a major factor in the party's victory (Kaur & Verma, 2018).

SPENDING ON SOCIAL MEDIA BY INDIVIDUALS AND POLITICAL PARTIES

BJP and its affiliates accounted for more than 50% of the overall expenditure for the month of February, according to figures provided by the social media business. After regional parties, Congress and its allies placed in third place. In these calculations, affiliates include party members, ministers, MPs, MLAs, and leaders of organisations, as well as outfits that overtly support a certain party and Facebook fan pages that do the same. According to BJP leaders active

in election-related PR, by the end of the campaign, social media would make up 20–25% of the party's overall ad budget.

In February, the BJP and its affiliates spent Rs 2.37 crore on Facebook advertisements. Regional parties spent roughly Rs 19.8 lakh, compared to Rs 10.6 lakh spent by Congress and its affiliates. Birju Janata Dal, Nationalist Congress Party, Telugu Desam Party, YSR Congress Party, and Shiv Sena were among the regional parties that spent the most money on social media to woo voters (Standard, 2022)

Figure I: Most popular political profiles on Twitter in India as of April 2020, by number of followers (in millions)

Political Leaders	Number of followers in millions
Narendra Modi	56.33
Amit Shah	19.7
Arvind Kejriwal	18.64
Rajnath Singh	16.83
Arun Jaitley	15.22
Rahul Gandhi	13.75

Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/report-content/statistic/827375>

From figure no I, we can conclude that social media sites like Twitter and Facebook are irreversibly changing the nature of political conversation throughout the globe as part of the ongoing digital revolution. This is especially true in democracies, where, while to varied degrees, freedoms of speech and expression are protected. Political leaders can directly, and independently of their office, reach out to individuals through social media platforms to spread their message at a size, speed, and low cost that makes them special. The microblogging service Twitter is a major player in this movement. A "fast, free, and fun" platform for safe and unrestricted expression is what it claims to be there to do.

Fig II: Most followed political parties on twitter as of April 2019

Political Party	Followers (in millions)
Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP)	11mn
Congress Party	5.1 mn
Aam Aadmi Party	4.8 mn
Samajwadi Party	1.6 mn

Trinamool Congress	0.19 mn

Source: India Today, 2019

From Figure II we can analyse that BJP has the most followers 11 million followed by the congress party (5.1 million.). On the other regional parties are by par not behind these two major national political parties. Aam Aadmi Party comparatively newer has gained popularity thanks to its social media presence in the anti-corruption movement led by Anna Hazare.

CONCLUSION

Social media plays a crucial role in the lives of this generation of young people in India, one of the most technologically advanced nations in the world with more than 65 percent of its population under 35. Social media plays a crucial role in a young person's life particularly in the minds of first-time voters. The article analyses popular social media platforms impact among the political parties and also political leaders.

The paper also discussed how various social networking sites are actually utilised by regular users and how this affects scientists' attempts to mine (data mine) the significant amount of unstructured data produced by user comments, as well as how to classify this mined information in order to clearly identify the real-time relationship between the customer parties.

A significant influence on trust has been identified as the social media information quality, which has received less attention in earlier research, particularly in the context of millennial voters. Second, this study discovered a strong indirect association between social media information characteristics and political engagement via social media reputation, political marketing initiatives, and trust. This study shows that the perception of the millennial generation's involvement in democratic parties is mostly shaped by social media reputation, political marketing efforts, and trust.

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