

A Study Of Social Media Impact On Political Dynamics In India

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Abstract

Today the use of social media has great importance due to the growth of internet-accessing population, as well as the increasing demand for instant communication. The importance that social media has gained today is the consequence of years of technological innovation and development and the generation of new age communication methods over online platforms. India is poised for rapid advancement into a new phase of political mobilization through social media into different forms of new age political campaign and activity. India is world number two in terms of internet usage just after China. This paper will shed light on the social media usage pattern for political mobilization.

Key words: 1.Social Media, 2.Political mobilization, 3.Internet, 4.Political party.

Objective

The objective of the study is to show social media usage pattern for political mobilization by political parties in India.

Methodology

Methodology applied in the study is dependent on secondary information taken from the internet and few literature has been reviewed to prepare the paper.

Introduction

(Garrett, 2019)Social media's influence on and contribution to political campaigns is a phenomenon that cannot be ignored in the 21st Century. Social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter play an important role in shaping the destiny of political parties. Omnipresence of social media demonstrate the idea that the political inclination of a citizen may be altered through social media interaction and debates. The political landscape of India has changed over the last few decades. The World Wide Web and particularly the social media platforms have played a significant role in such paradigm shifts.

(Bhat, 2019)It is not strange in today's world and generation that the political parties have their own pages and handles on social media, which is aggressively used to communicate publicity. Online life influences

governance issues at a very fast pace, whether it is genuine news or gossip, it is shared instantly. Social media platforms not only act as a form for political discussion and debate, but it also conducts surveys and publishes poll outcomes instantly which further fuels political debates. The poll outcomes do impact elections irrespective of its correctness. Having understood the time influence of social media it will not be wrong to mention how online platforms help citizens to interact with political leaders, thus bridging the gap between the server and the served.

(Fountain, 2017) Political participation is a vital element of democracy. With the advent of new forms of technology, like social media, citizens having easy access to political news and information. Thereby increasing the probability | chance of more participation in democracy. With the incessant political discussions and debates on Facebook or Twitter people's political views are shared which in turn impact the political ideas of others, thereby creating a public opinion which may be hard to ignore. The voter turnout also increases due to the overload of information that social media provides to its stakeholders. The paradigm shift in the society can be attributed to its ease of use and convenience. Young citizens today use social media which influence their political participation and thereby impacting their voter participation. Thus social media has a large role to play in impacting our political system.

(Shackle, 2018) During elections in India, social media platforms like Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter and Instagram have a radical effect on public opinion and discourse. The prevalence of social media has a transformative impact on Indian democracy. The number of internet user in India has exceeded half a billion people, pegged at 566 million driven by rural internet growth and usage. "Facebook has partnered with telecom providers around the world to offer cheap basic package, whereby user can access a version of internet that includes only Facebook and Facebook owned Whatsapp giving both platforms an enormous reach".

In-fact in 2018, State election in Karnataka, BJP and Congress party has set up over fifty thousand Whatsapp groups between them to spread their message to voters. The power of social media is huge. It has the power to strengthen democracy in India, It can be a platform where political campaigns can be elevated, where Women, religious minorities and marginalized sections of the society can voice their opinion and participate in political debate.

Social media can catapult a person to fame just like it did for Narendra Modi and Donald Trump. Narendra Modi is the World's third most popular politician on Twitter, after Barak Obama (108 million followers) and Donald Trump (64 million follower) with a staggering follower count of 50 million. (Asian News International, 2019) Modi started using Twitter in 2009 when he was Chief Minister of Gujarat and his popularity grew when he assumed the office of Prime Minister in 2014. He is the most followed Indian on Twitter. Social media's overreaching power and influence is incomparable. An easy to access social media through cheap smartphones and even cheaper internet have allowed previously excluded individuals to participate in public debate and discussions forcing the elites to take notice. For the first time, the culture of interaction between dynastic politicians and the general public has changed. Voters today are challenging politicians and questioning their past performance and credibility as future representative.

The Indian political ecosystem has witnessed a sea change in the political dynamics due to social media. Politician have become polite and closer to their potential voters, visiting the houses of the poor, eating with them, hugging them, taking selfies etc. is a process post social media prevalence in India.

Conclusion

Social media has thus majorly aided in political mobilization in India. (Prakash, 2019)The 2019 Indian general election was a grand spectacle with 900 million eligible electors, out of which 67% cast their vote over and month and half. It is a largest festival of democracy in the World. The need to address a large number of voters across divides necessitates the development of new communication platforms for a more effectual political platform. In India, the numbers of users for most social media platforms is within the top 10 in the world. The influence of such intensive communication through social media is not only a tool but has become a weapon in today's political game, especially because of its enormity which is well defined in the framework of the Indian election.

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