# IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON INDIAN POLITICS

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*Abstract*

Indian politics has experienced radical changes over past few years due to influence of social media. Social media is most accessible platform to bring the people closer in terms of communication among masses over a short period of time. Due to emergence of innovative technologies across every section of the globe, it is very easy to approach and target a large population by a single click on device. Most of the Indian political parties are using the services from digital marketing agencies in order to build their identity, to promote themselves, to make a buzz among people and to reach out to our youth for their political agenda, other related events and activities. As per a number of reports, it has been observed that a major part of budget is set for political campaign on social media during every election. Politicians are now able to continuously manifest and exhibit their message through endless commercials and scale their activities, services and communications by viewing direct responses on Twitter, Facebook, Youtube, Instagram and many more applications. Therefore, social media has a huge impact on spreading political awareness in Indian society.

**Keywords**: Social media, Indian politics, Communication, Political campaign, Digital marketing

## 1. Introduction

There are a variety of tools available today for use of political communication. These tools are generally used by the people for entertainment or networking purposes. These tools can consist of blogs, social networking sites, news sites, video streaming and group sites. These tools can be used by have great political applicability. These tools can be used to generate public attention and also to act as points of salience. The internet is generally open systems and are accessible all public. The internet today has no dependency on computers as the internet can be accessed through mobiles. Every tool present on the web today has a specific use and can be used to target niche audiences. Over the past few years, social media has reported a tremendous growth of number of users and has become effective tool of communication. For making a public image of any political party, it is very crucial to keep everyone updated about their activities and being in spotlight. Social media has emerged as a digital platform of voiced opinions that has changed the picture of Indian politics.According to Hong and Nadler (2011), politicians in modern democracies across the world have eagerly adopted social media for engaging their constituents, entering into direct dialogs with citizens and enabling vivid political discussions. Twitter, Facebook, and others provide ideal platforms for users to spread not only information in general but also political opinions

through their networks (Stieglitz and Dang-Xuan, 2014).According to Social media statistics, it has been reported that Facebook has 1.86 billion monthly active users, Twitter has 319 millions, whereas, Instagram has more than one million advertises (Chris Snider, 2017). A considerable growth has been reported in the research field related to effect of social media on political activities all over the world. Therefore, it is always crucial to know the impact of social and digital media on political processes and this review paper is designed for further critical analysis of the same.

## 2. Impact of Social Media on Indian Politics

As reported in number of research articles, social media is an important tool for wide spread communication for almost all the political parties in India. Baran (1999) reported that media coverage of political candidates and campaigns tends to reconfirm support among already committed voters and solidify support among those leaning toward particular candidates. Further, Kaur and Kaur (2013) explained that every political party use social media to interact with the people and building reputation among population by making the people aware about their policies and other political agenda. The relation between social media and political parties were also told. They also talked about Karnataka election of 2013, Lok Sabha election 2014 and major role of internet. The paper concluded that due to social media youth now aware about social issues and talk about political issues.Ahmed, Jaidka and Cho observed that social media especially Twitter played important role for winning party in election 2014. They concluded that political parties use social media for free advertise their policies and campaign and also important tool to impress people.

Narasimhamurthy(2014) explained rise of social media in election compaign. He stated that television and online newspaper most important source of information about political parties and their policies. It was inquired that 84 percent people use internet in India. It was concluded that social media pillors like Twitter, Google, You Tube and Facebook played very significant role in election of 2014. These tools and applications arevery frequently used to take support and more participation of youth in policies of Indian political parties.

Stoffer (2014) reported that political parties in India were more tech savvy as it was the only way to reach out eloquent youths. Among major political parties in India, BJP has the biggest charisma in social media. BJP started using the social media even before 2009 general election, which it lost. But later on, it has dig deeper into social media. Several senior leaders like SushmaSwaraj, Rajnath Singh, ArunJaitley, Narendra Modi and many were on social networking sites. Narendra Modi as the BJP's prime ministerial candidate for the 2014 general election has his own team for his social media management.

Dipanwita Roy (2015) highlighted role of media in democracy. The researcher called social media as new electronic weapon. It was also stated that Arvind Kejriwal accepted the same medium for election

that Barack Obama used.A few of the social media campaign used by different parties in India are AamAadmi Party in the year 2013, Indian National Congress and BhartiyaJanta Party in the year 2014. Social media has played a considerable new role in Indian democracy. With the changing politics of India political parties and politicians have found a new ways of reaching out to a younger and aspiration population (Meti*et al*., 2015).

The emergence of social media platforms has also given a new impetus to the idea of participatory democracy and has opened new avenues through which people can engage with their governments and other political parties regarding various regional and national issues. Governments in various states can also respond, act and engage with people through various social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Youtube, Instagram and other micro-blogging sites. Social media has been comprehended as a communication platform where its users collect and disseminate information of their choice. It is believed that social media catalyses the process of public empowerment by opening up avenues for masses to freely articulate, share their experiences and to raise concerns creating the possibility of their further enrichment. After examining all the elements (media, content and audience) within the communication process in relation to the political content, one can safely assert that if not a change, the new media has certainly brought an extension with its characteristics to the existing patterns of the political campaign. The public sphere of the masses has marked a beginning in India with an increasing political awareness, particularly among the youth populace(Rahul K, 2016).

Political parties perform key tasks in a democratic society, such as aggregating and articulating needs and problems as identified by members and supporters, socialising and educating voters and people of the country in the functioning of the political and electoral system and the generation of general political values, balancing opposing demands and converting them into general policies, activating and mobilizing large population into participating in political decisions and transforming their opinions into viable policy options and further channelling public opinion from citizens to government.

Rodrigues and Niemann (2017) examine the effectiveness of social media as a platform for continuous dialogue with citizens in modern politics and its implications for mainstream media in India. Using Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Clean India campaign as a case study, we have presented an analysis of 13 months of Twitter data. Research shows that Modi has continued his political agendabuilding strategy via social media using Twitter and other platforms such as Facebook, various government ministry websites, YouTube, and the largely government-funded Indian public service broadcasters. A network analysis of Modi's Twitter accounts shows that, when required, Modi used celebrities' names and popularity on Twitter to promote his schemes such as the Clean India, Digital India, and Make in India campaigns by posting selfies with movie and sports stars, foreign dignitaries, or enlisting them to participate in his campaigns. Every time Modi added a 140-character message on

Twitter about a launch of an event or congratulating a celebrity's efforts in the Clean India effort, mainstream media reported it as a news story.

## 3. Conclusion

According to Moti*et al* (2015), modern political parties have utilized the social media to enhance their political strategies and gain public support. The political parties have also joined the 'cyber world' mainly to multiply political transactions and engineer the support of various sources. Presently, emphasis is laid on the setting of ever lasting relationship between political parties and people. Social media practice is one of several forms of political communication and needs to be examined from the point of view of 'social engineering'. In this age of paradigm shift, new media practices*i.e.* social media are required to focus the attention of the people on variouspolitical and electoral processes. Therefore, it is undeniable that Indian politics is very much affected and benefitted by social media.

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