

## **The Role of Modern Media in Indian Political Campaigns**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Human history has progressed from the Stone Age to the Metal Age, and we are now in the Digital Age, with the most promising tool-social media. It reflects the real world. The currency of democracy is public opinion. Social media platforms are increasingly becoming the primary forum for public discourse and mobilisation of public opinion, a tool through which people can discuss issues of daily life as well as national importance. Today, social media is more than just a place to connect with friends and family. Instead, it has evolved into an influential space for political activity and the creation of a new political dialogue.

In today's world, new media, particularly social media, have emerged as essential tools for human life in terms of information and communication. Discuss a topic to bring people together. Using social media at any time, day or night, is all that is required for anyone to do whatever they want. In addition, everyone, including politicians, now uses new media like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to spread their agenda in addition to other methods. Even though the way people talk has changed, society today is becoming more social and interactive. In contrast to the past, people now share information with one another via social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, email, YouTube, and WhatsApp, among others. Online media have been used for political deliberation because politicians can virtually connect with citizens, regardless of where they live, and pursue information exchange and discussion.

**Key words:** India, New Media, Social Media, Citizen, Political, Campaign.

## **FULL PAPER**

**Introduction:** The ways in which people influence decision-making have changed in contemporary democracy, with political stalwarts expanding their agenda to reach as many people as possible. Elections are regarded as integral to the principles of strengthening democracy and adopting new strategies emerging in the dynamic international form by major democracies around the world. On a broader scale, elections are seen as a means of propagating the political beliefs that govern them, in addition to serving as a medium for selecting leadership. Through the election campaign, exposure is spread to a variety of portfolios through information-sharing channels, typically print media or broadcast media like radio and television. As the era of globalization progresses, people all over the world are being connected and influenced by a mass flow of information and data transmission that transcends physical borders. Society is blessed with Social Media, a platform that can be accessed from anywhere and is capable of transmitting ideas, knowledge, and beliefs beyond the limitations of traditional sources in order to facilitate the extensive flow of information. The habits of Instagramming and Facebook posting, as well as WhatsApp news chains, have revolutionized the reach, accessibility, and speed of speech and provided new opportunities for political campaigns to effectively communicate their agenda. To address a wide stream of information, the human cerebrum has its own requirements, with online entertainment barraging our faculties, intruding on each moment of our day with updates and tweets, considerations for the afternoon and thoughtless babble. The fallacy in authentic reporting and political advertising prevents the primary goal of social media campaigns from being achieved by avoiding serious threats.

**Objective of the Paper:** The paper aims to evaluate the shortcomings of social media and offer comprehensive strategies for facilitating public choices through social media, as neglecting its shortcomings will be fatal to principled democracy.

1. To engage a diverse audience, including young voters, through various media channels.
2. To disseminate party agendas, policies, and candidates' profiles.

3. To Shape public opinion, counter opposition narratives, and build strong personal brands.
4. To Encourage supporters to participate actively in the campaign and Monitor media responses and adapt strategies in real-time.
5. To Ensure adherence to election laws and ethical standards and Secure electoral victories by convincing a majority of voters.

One of the fundamental tenets of democratic societies is the holding of free and fair elections. Every political system uses the election as a symbol of democracy, and the election is a part of the political process in democracy. According to the principle of political representation, election is a method of empowering citizens to choose representatives and adopt important decisions in their interest. Election is the formal process of selecting a person for public office or accepting or rejecting a political proposition by voting. In order to guarantee political equality, every democracy requires integrity that promotes social and individual security. Discretionary trustworthiness not just gives a lift to social combination and maintains law and order, however routinely booked races with all inclusive and rise to testimonial reinforce the political standards whereupon the state rests. People's political aspirations are shaped by the choices they can make in elections, which, in turn, influence the political beliefs of staunch supporters. As a result, election campaigns encourage such decision-making for popular governance. An organized effort to influence a specific group's decision-making process is known as a political campaign. It frequently refers to the selection process for representatives or referendums in democracies.

**Media's role:** In a democracy, where people's choices have a long-term impact on their way of life and the direction the country takes, elections are fundamental to the democratic spirit. It has always been acknowledged that the media plays a crucial role in that it serves as a platform for the communication and sharing of ideas, a hub for opposing viewpoints, and a significant factor in shaping or influencing public opinion.

- People now have unprecedented access to election-related information thanks to the internet, which has also made it possible for them to voice their opinions, interact with candidates, and actively participate in electoral campaigns. As a result, they can make well-informed decisions about how to exercise their right to vote in elections. By

providing access to trustworthy information and communication platforms via the Internet, this has revolutionized elections, which are essential to the development and consolidation of a democratic culture.

- As the world has come together to witness the ever-increasing era of globalization, the flow of ideas between states has become increasingly important for the dissemination of new ideas and information in world politics.
- As checks and balances, it has also made it possible for large-scale mobilization during political upheaval and whenever ideals are thought to be being manipulated.

The mass media in India consists of a number of distinct forms of communication: Papers, TV, radio, film, magazines. Print media began in 1780, radio broadcasting began in 1927, and the screening of Auguste and Louis Lumière motion pictures in Bombay in July 1895 are among the world's oldest and largest media. Indian media has been active since the late 18th century. James Augustus Hicky started the first newspaper, Bengal Gazette, in 1780. In India, these were the initial tentative steps of journalism. The Madras Courier, published by government printer Richard Johnson in 1785, was Southern India's first newspaper. The Hindu was established in 1878 and played a crucial role in promoting Indian independence from the colonial yoke. This newspaper is currently among the top five nationally and has the highest circulation in South India.

Despite the fact that it began in the late 20th century when Door darshan came into existence, television broadcasting has since emerged. With the introduction of brands like Reliance, Tata Sky, and others, the visual media industry was transformed. The journalism style in India changed as a result of private television news channels. The development of nationwide satellite television in India picked up steam after the nation implemented the privatization policy. In addition, CNN introduced international satellite television to India through its 1991 coverage of the Gulf War. Richard Li launched Star Plus, the first satellite channel to broadcast to the Indian subcontinent, in August 1991.

Doordarshan and a few international news channels, such as BBC or CNN, were the only options available to viewers for televised news. Zee Television launched the news channel Zee News in 1995 to compete in the race to provide more news and information. Since their inception in 1995, 24-hour news channels have become increasingly popular. Freedom is necessary for the media to function in any society or democracy. Even before the Great

Asoka established the Indian empire, the media in India was free and independent for the majority of its history. This independence was based on righteousness, openness, morality, and spirituality. Democracies all over the world have moved beyond the conventional ways of running their governments and have been constantly improving and adjusting to the new approaches. This has been made possible by social media-based awareness and public activism. Platforms like YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, which not only serve as entertainment platforms but also contributed to the realization that physical borders are the only ones that exist, now connect the entire world.

**Emergence of social media:** Internet and mobile phone-based tools for sharing and discussing information make up the majority of social media. It offers a platform for people to communicate through words, images, films, and music and combines technology, telecommunications, and social interaction. Applications accessible over the Internet that function as a global network and enable users to create, edit, share, and reach enormous quantities of data, information, and concepts are referred to as social media. A multi-leveled approach to data transmission is provided by these apps; Private networks that are open to particular groups of people, typically those with known connections; and Public networks, which serve as publishing and content-creation platforms and provide worldwide public access to information about a variety of events and developments.

Online platforms like WhatsApp, which offer protections for the transmitted data and enable end-to-end encryption, have emerged as a significant advance in information communication. Image hosting platforms, news aggregators, blogs, photo and video sharing services, social media, wikis, cyber lockers, and even platforms for online games are among the many possible intermediate platforms.

In addition to bolstering their existing beliefs, social media users benefit from the information they gather in order to develop new perspectives. Additionally, users' buried opinions are brought to light by social media. They are compelled to act on their dormant or inactive opinions as a result. Social media plays a crucial role during and between elections due to its ability to influence voters' collective consciousness.

As a result, the cost of communicating with voters is effectively reduced because the internet serves as a platform for political parties to present their agenda to voters and to garner a larger support base for their causes. Given the availability of free blog and video-sharing

platforms, such lower costs are only possible due to the accessibility of social media over broadcast media. Social media helps independent candidates and small political parties with few resources grow their support base and connect with voters.

A 2015 poll conducted by Ipsos Mori and King's College, London found that the majority of people believe that social media platforms are giving people who wouldn't normally participate in political debate a voice.<sup>1</sup> However, there is criticism of every viewpoint, and there is complexity on every platform. The general public has less faith in social media, despite the fact that the media gives people a voice in politics. Only a small percentage of respondents in the aforementioned survey were found to have more faith in political information found on social media platforms than in print media.

**India election campaigning:** Elections in India actually began with the Act of 1919, but their origins can be traced back to the Act of 1861. To find out what the people want, elections must be held. In the landmark *People's Union for Civil Liberties v. Union of India* case, the Hon'ble Supreme Court established the fundamental principles of an election campaign as follows:

*"A free and fair election would also guarantee the growth of a healthy democracy in the country, given that democracy is the fundamental feature of our constitutional structure. There can be no doubt about this. In order for democracy to continue, only the best men should be chosen as people's representatives for effective government. The best way to accomplish this is for men with high moral and ethical standards to win elections"*.

The term "Election" is defined as follows in the 1951 Representation of the People Act: As a result, it is evident that the term "Election" refers to an act of choosing. "Election means an election to fill a seat or seats in either House of Parliament or in the House or either House of the Legislature of a State."

It should be noted that the term "Elections" encompasses the entire election process, beginning with the issuance of a notification and ending with the declaration of a candidate's election. In the case of *N.P. Ponnuswami v. Returning Officer, Namakkal Constituency*<sup>2</sup>, the Supreme Court was asked about the meaning of the word "Election." The court agreed with

<sup>1</sup> Morris D, Shapiro I, John D (1927) *The Political Writings*. Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company Inc.

<sup>2</sup> 1952 AIR 64, 1952 SCR 218

the opinion of the learned judges of the Madras High Court in A.V. Srinivasalu Reddy And Anr.

According to S. Kuppuswami Goundar v.<sup>3</sup>, the term "Election" can be used to describe the entire process of electing an "elected member" regardless of whether a poll is required. In addition, the Supreme Court:

“The word election has been used in the broad sense in the Constitution, that is, to refer to the entire process of electing a candidate to the legislature.”

In the field of election law, this case is regarded as a turning point. The same court has consistently applied its ratio in several decisions. In Mohinder Singh Gill v. Chief Election Commissioner,<sup>4</sup> Justice Krishna Iyer J. made the following observations in the majority decision: "The rainbow of operations covered by the compendious term election thus begins with the initial notification and ends with the declaration of a candidate's return," As a result, it is evident that the term "election" is used in India in a broad sense. For example, the Constitution of India uses the term "election" to refer to the entire process of selecting a representative, from the issuance of a notification announcing an election to the announcement of the results. It's hard to imagine how an Indian election would go if the country's vibrant media weren't heavily involved. India's media has been a force multiplier in the delivery of free and fair elections every time over the past 68 years. The Election Commission of India anticipates media support for effective information dissemination, effective enforcement, and the development of an informed electorate. At the same time, elections are held according to rules, instructions, and laws. Some of these rules have to do with how the media is used, especially when political parties and candidates are running for office. The process by which candidates and political parties prepare and present their ideas and positions on issues to voters prior to election day is known as an election campaign. The dates of an official election campaign period, which typically last a month or more prior to election day, are frequently specified by law.

**Digital Marketing for Political Campaigns in India:** India is the second-largest internet-using nation after China, with over 560 million users. By 2023, the number of Indians using the internet is likely to reach 650 million. Another reason politicians should focus on digital

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<sup>3</sup> A.V. Srinivasalu Reddy And Anr. According to S. Kuppuswami Goundar v.,

<sup>4</sup> Mohinder Singh Gill v. Chief Election Commissioner,



marketing for elections and political campaign management is the widespread use of smartphones.<sup>5</sup>

### **Why should politicians focus on digital marketing and analytics?**

- There are 450 million smartphone users,
- 336 million Facebook users,
- 17 million Twitter users,
- 100 million Instagram users, and
- 308 million YouTube users.

### **Favourite Digital Marketing Techniques and Platforms for Political Campaign Management**

**Website:** The large number of voters who use Google to look up candidate names is the website's main benefit. Traffic from the search engine can be diverted through the website. The candidate's views on emerging political development and event gallery can be fully disclosed to voters. We can likewise follow guests' data like area, age, orientation, and different subtleties.

**The Internet:** Politicians ought to be present on all of the well-known social media platforms. They are required to post regular updates on social media about their activities, perspectives, and opposition to rivals. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram are the most widely used social media platforms in India. Even though WhatsApp is not considered a social media platform, it is supporting social media strategy by sharing content with groups of party supporters.

**Data analysis:** The management of political campaigns can benefit from a variety of analytics.

- a) Search Analytics,
- b) Web Analytics,
- c) Social Media Analytics,
- d) SMS and Mobile Analytics, and
- e) Paid Campaign Analytics

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<sup>5</sup> <https://kalyanchandra.com/digital-marketing-for-political-campaigns-in-india>



Big Data and Analytics provide crucial insights into the workings of campaigns and voter responses to candidate positions on a variety of issues. We are able to obtain comprehensive data regarding various audience age, location, browser, and content engagement rates.

**Paid Campaigns: The following networks allow for the creation of paid campaigns:**

- a) Google Display Campaigns;
- b) YouTube Campaigns;
- c) Facebook Campaigns;
- d) Instagram Campaigns;
- e) Mobile App Campaigns;
- f) Location-Based Targeting (Geo-Fencing);
- g) Remarketing and/or Retargeting;
- h) Email Campaigns;
- i) SMS Campaigns;
- j) Publishing advertisements in particular news portals or apps

**Social media companies and the election commission: steps taken to make the elections in 2019 safer:** Additionally, three nodal officers had been appointed by the commission to ensure the safety of social media during elections. After receiving approval from the director-general of media, their job was to immediately investigate cases of code violations and send letters to the businesses urging them to take the necessary steps. The Internet and Mobile Association of India and the social media companies Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Google had presented the voluntary code of ethics for the general election in 2019 to the chief election commissioner in March. During the elections, the businesses appointed dedicated teams to swiftly address violations and agreed to establish a high-priority dedicated reporting mechanism for the ECI. The objective of the code of ethics was to stop political advertisements that were offensive or inappropriate.

**Social media companies have taken the following measures to make elections safer:**

- The "Candidate Connect" feature that Facebook launched exclusively for India enables Lok Sabha candidates to record their election manifesto in the form of 20-second videos.

- Facebook planned to establish an operations center in Delhi, which would collaborate with the company's Menlo Park, Dublin, and Singapore offices to monitor election content.
- WhatsApp users can now report fake news and misleading content by calling a phone tip line.
- Twitter, a microblogging platform, expanded its Ads Transparency Centre (ATC) and political ads policy in India.

### **Conclusions:**

According to the most recent survey conducted by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, India has approximately 20 crore internet users and more than 18 crore mobile/cell phone internet users, the majority of whom are between the ages of 18 and 35. Between the ages of 18 and 23, there are approximately 10 crore people who are voting for the first time. Consequently, during elections, social media plays a crucial role in people's formation of opinions. People's political efficacy, political participation, and political knowledge are affected by their use of social media for political activities. These social media pages are used by political parties to communicate with the public and inform them of their welfare initiatives, as well as to compete with other parties. People are also able to share information, search, and become more aware in a novel way thanks to social media. As a result, people in both urban and rural areas are becoming more aware of the election, the development of the nation, and a variety of other issues. As a result, increasing the percentage of people voting in elections is having a significant and beneficial effect.

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