

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR LEGAL RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS



Open Access, Refereed Journal Multi-Disciplinary
Peer Reviewed

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ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN ELECTION CAMPAIGN MANAGEMENT

AUTHORED BY - SAMRIDDHI
Student Amity Law School, Noida

Abstract

Political campaigning has been transformed by the rise of social media platforms, especially in the context of Indian elections. This study investigates how social media campaigns affect the dynamics of elections and their wider effects on the democratic process in India. This study investigates how political parties and candidates use social media to interact with voters, spread campaign messages, and rally support via a thorough examination of current electoral patterns and case studies. Additionally, it explores how social media affects voter behaviour, the sharing of information, and political debate, taking into account both the advantages and disadvantages of this new paradigm. The study also looks into how internet groups and influencers affect public opinion and election results. Additionally, it discusses how social media campaigns affect election integrity, transparency, accountability and election monitoring¹.

Social media makes it easier for political parties and candidates to quickly and efficiently contact a large number of people. Politicians differ from traditional media in that they may use social media to actively communicate with prospective voters. Voters are more engaged in a campaign when political parties and candidates use social media to communicate their objectives, successes, and points of view with the general public. Based on the uses and gratification theory, the current study examines the development and application of social media as a platform for political campaigning during election season.

Keywords: Social Media Platform, Election Campaigning, Uses and Gratification Theory, India, Election Integrity, Transparency, Accountability and Election Monitoring

¹ Joyojeet Pal and Shakuntala Banaji, "Social Media and Elections in India" 77 Journal of Asian Studies 341 (2018)..

Introduction

The impact of social media on political campaigning in India has increased recently, resulting in a notable change in the electoral landscape. The broad use of digital technologies and the rise of social networking sites as important forums for political conversation have been the main drivers of this change. Social media's reach and instantaneous nature have allowed political parties and their leaders to interact with people more effectively. They have done this by using viral content and targeted advertising to sway public opinion. Social media campaigns have raised questions about the health of democracy and election integrity, even as they have increased voter involvement and participation. Social media's extraordinary progress in Indian politics has seen a rise in the country's popularity and utilisation of these platforms.² Political parties and leaders have emerged on social networking sites as a result of this expansion, signalling a move away from conventional campaign tactics and towards more digital ones. Political parties now need to make the most of social media campaigns in order to contact and influence voters. These platforms are used for voter outreach and mobilisation. Frequently used in conjunction with viral content to amplify political narratives and ideologies are targeted advertising and micro-targeting strategies³.

This change signals the beginning of a new phase in election warfare, one that is marked by the growth of grassroots movements and online political involvement, but also by the use of social media as a weapon to disseminate propaganda and false information. As a result, there have been significant effects on democratic processes and electoral processes, with threats to election integrity posed by digital disinformation efforts against increased voter engagement. These developments highlight the necessity of taking proactive steps to manage the intricacies of social media's influence on Indian politics in order to maintain accountability, transparency, and democratic principles. With the introduction of social media platforms, political campaigning in India has experienced a dramatic change in the last few years and whether the Russian people will continue to support his apparent re-election campaign, even though he may already be started one of the never-ending conflicts. While martial law remains in place, it is unclear whether Ukraine's scheduled 2024 presidential

² Rajat Sethi and Shubhrastha, *The Last Battle of Saraighat: The Story of the BJP's Rise in the North-east* (Penguin Random House, Gurgaon, 2017)

³ Monica Chadha and Praveen Bhat, "Social Media and Politics in India: A Study of Twitter Use by Politicians" *14 Journal of Information Technology & Politics* 141 (2017)

election will go place, even though incumbent Volodymyr Zelensky has declared his intention to compete for re- election and is still quite popular. Elsewhere, significant political succession plans are also underway Opinion surveys predict that the opposition Labour Party will prevail in the next national election. Under pressure, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has committed to holding the election in 2024.

The Conservative Party has more than 14 years left in office, but its economic prospects are dismal. The internet is now used as an essential part of modern political campaign along with the new developed technology; it has changed the whole world. Nowadays in the process of globalization more or less all people just place their questions on the search engine Google and find their answer. The revolution of information and communication technology and innovation of internet has changed our life style and we can't stay away from these technologies. In fact we cannot continue in day today life without these technologies. The use of internet with a Smartphone and putting time on social sites by the people and political parties has changed the political environment in India. It is rightly mentioned by Rajdeep Sardesai, after the election the present Prime Minister of India Mr. Narendra Modi had a surprising 1.5 million 'likes' on his Facebook page, he was in second place only to United States America (USA) President Barak Obama in terms of his fan following. According to Facebook spokesperson only one political leader who is from India had the highest mounting page than any other politician of the world; He is none other than Narendra Modi the present prime Minister of India. In Indian political system it is the social media which has been playing an important role in recent years. India is a democratic country where election campaigning is a fundamental part of the democratic government⁴.

So from time to time the political parties have been using different tools of Social media during election campaign. Internet is becoming a key tools or technique for the political parties which they have been using tools such Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Orkut,etc. during election campaigning. Yes it is right to say that there are so many social sites at present where almost all people are using. These tools have broken down the gap between the politician and voters, voters can easily relate with their local candidates. As the process of globalization moving faster with the application of new technologies, the political parties of the world also have to move or to change their techniques to cope up with the new generation voters. The new

⁴ Rajdeep Sardesai, 2014: *The Election That Changed India* 235 (Thomson Press India Ltd., New Delhi, 2014).

inventions and with the new information and communication technologies have made the political parties to make a new techniques to their election campaigning. Present Chief Minister Mr. Arvind Kejriwal rightly told to Rajdeep Sardesai that they found social media a comparatively inexpensive and useful way to take their message forward⁵.

In Social Media there are exceptional types of application where people can interact very quickly in the online and the offline chatting, uploading poster, videos, various comments, agenda of the political parties etc. In order to understand social media we therefore need to know the various tools of social media which can be used as platforms for election campaign by the political parties in India:

Facebook:

Mark Zuckerberg is the founder of Facebook who founded it in 2004 and it is an application which is very much popular in the world. Facebook is very much popular in all over the world and it is a free social networking website which allows each and every people to register themselves. It is also well-known to all that after registration as a user he or she can create his own profile and from that he or she can upload photos, video and send messages to any one he wishes to send. Again being a Facebook account holder he or she can keep in touch to his or her family members very easily even his colleagues also.

The site which is available in 37 different languages includes public features such as:

Marketplace- as Facebook has its different members in their marketplace through which one can post, read, and responds to specific advertisements.

- Groups- as it has various members in the groups but those who have same interest with other groups or members can interact each other with their own interest.
- Events- here the platform allows members to make public an event, invite guests and follow who plans to attend.
- Pages- here member can create public page and that page can promote with their specific topic as they wish⁶.
- Presence technology- through this technology member can watch which contracts are online and which contracts are in chat.

⁵ Rajdeep Sardesai, 2014: *The Election That Changed India* 235 (Thomson Press India Ltd., New Delhi, 2014).

⁶ <https://www.webwise.ie/parents/explained-what-is-twitter-2/> (last visited on Oct. 15, 2019).

Twitter:

Twitter is also a social networking site which was in the beginning an American social networking site which is also called as micro blogging site. Twitter launched in 2006. It is very simple to use and one can join with a free account and then send messages on a daily basis.⁵ Being an account holder of twitter one can post and interact and send messages to anybody he likes, it is known as tweets. Earlier one can send messages with only 140 characters but it has changed in November 7, 2017 and now one can send messages with 280 characters. It is also important that 280 characters for all languages except Chinese, Japanese and Korean.

Whatsapp:

It is a messenger application for Smartphone. It can be used with the help of internet and then sent messages, videos, images, audio etc. it is almost similar to text message service. Whatsapp founded in 2009 by previous yahoo employers and now owned by Facebook. It is now one of the most popular apps all over the world. It can be also used in your Desktop. Instagram: It's a place where you can post a photo and share with a few words with some funny comments. In Instagram where you can find the easiest way for post a photo. Google+: It is a latest one compare to other social networking sites. Google+ or Google plus is a social network from Google. When it was on track to test in June 2011 there was very lesser number of users. It is also similar to other social networks users where one can share messages, and links with everyone whoever he or she wants⁷. It is also require a register account to open or join such as you accessing Gmail. This gives you a similar type of facilities but it gives you more flexibility than other site like twitter. It is also gives you similar types of groups as you can find in your Facebook account.

LinkedIn:

It's moreover social networking site designed especially for business community. Those who have an account on Facebook or Twitter they can create a professional account on LinkedIn. In an account you can find various information of a person's such as experiences, education, skills, awards, projects, etc. A person also can join in a LinkedIn group of his her own interest. LinkedIn groups of his or her interest. LinkedIn groups help us to connect with professionals having the same set of skills or interests. As it is a professional networking platform, it is very nice place to search for jobs too.⁸

⁷ <https://www.webwise.ie/parents/explained-what-is-twitter-2/> (last visited on Oct. 15, 2019).

Pinterest:

One of the most important field of social media is 'Pinterest' where one can take different types of visuals from online 'Pinboard' it has its own social block making sites. In this field one cannot share to any other without prior information as it has its own or special block:

- A pin is that when someone shares something on Pinterest there is a bookmark and that bookmark is called a pin.
- If an individual share other pin on Pinterest than that is a Repin.

WeChat:

WeChat is very popular in China and it's basically called a Chinas Version of Facebook. Users can just do anything including play games, order food, take appointment of Doctor, read the news, send money to people, and make a video call and more.

YouTube:

YouTube is a social media site where one can watch all the videos which is available in its and can share it, like it, comment it whenever he or she wish to share, watch, like or comment etc. even one can upload videos whatever it may be. By the use of personal computer or Smartphone, or Laptop one can download videos for his own interest.¹¹ The Headquarter of the YouTube is in San Bruno, California in United States of America. Three men who worked in PayPal earlier namely Chad Hurley, Steve Chen, and Jawed Karim created the service in February 2005. YouTube has been bought by Google in November 2006 and total amount was US1.65 billion. Now YouTube has become a subsidiary of Google which is working as subsidiaries.

Objective:

The Objective of this research paper are:-

- To analyse the popularity and role of social media in recent years in increasing the turnout of the voters.
- To find out whether role of social media like Facebook,twitter etc.has replace and minimise the role of traditional communication like radio, television,newspaper during the election campaigns in india.
- To study how the users of social media engaging with the political parties and politicians online.

- To evaluate the positive and negative impact of social media on Indian democracy.

Hypothesis:

- The tool of social media is used by political parties and politicians to reach out to the young generation.
- Social media is distorting the opinion of the electorate.

Methodology:

This work was empirical study based on both primary and secondary data. Primary method included interview of 50 eligible voters out of which 25 were in the age group of 18-35 and above 35 irrespective of caste, creed and gender. Sampling method was incidental-cum-purposive and sample size was 50. Secondary data collected from books, magazines, newspapers, blogs, website, and different internet portals based on content analysis.

Area of Study:

The area of study was East, West and Central of State. People from different age groups, professions, caste, religion were approached and we tried to find their opinion on role of social media in election campaign.

The Significance of Social Media in A Democratic Political System

Social media is a new concept which becomes more popular after evolution of internet technology and from then it is not stopping its development. It has created a new environment in every democratic political system. It has revolutionized the way of lifestyles of every people of a democratic country. It is rightly mentioned by Maya Dollarhide in article social media definition, “social media is computer based technology which facilitates the sharing of Idea, thoughts, and information through the building of virtual networks and communications. By design, social media is internet based and gives users quick electronic communication of content. Content includes personal information, ⁸documents, videos and photos. Users engage with social media via computer, Tablet or Smartphone via web-based software or web application, often utilizing it for messaging⁹.” Writer also asserts that at same point of time one can connect many people from all over the world and share information with anyone that

⁸ R. Kumar, “Social Media and Election Campaigns in India: A Study of the 2017 Uttar Pradesh Assembly Elections” 16 Journal of Political Marketing 29 (2017).

⁹ <https://heidicohen.com/social-media-definition> (last visited on Jan. 16, 2019)

is the special power and ability of social media. Therefore, it is very important to know about origin and development of social media as a concept and the significance of social media in democratic political system.

Evolution and Spread of Social Media:

It is easy to say who is pioneering of the computer or when the first email was sent but it is difficult to say who invented first Social media because it is not clear. If we are talking about technologies that can be classified as ‘social media’ the first honor goes to the pioneer of social media to Tom Truscott and Jim Ellis who invented the Usenet system in 1979, Usenets provides users to read and post messages to different categories, known as newsgroups. and if we are talking about who invented the term ‘social media’ than we found that so many organizations have been performing social media practices for decades in the form of community and content management. Therefore we have seen that the term become a noise word in the last 5 years. So who invented the term social media is a big question to answer. So it took a bit digging, but the best information can be find from a recent Fortune Post which gives honors to a mixture of the following:

- Daryl Berry a writer who claims that he had used the term social media in late 1994 when he was working on Matisse. There was a paper published in 1995 and the name of the paper is called ‘ Social Media Spaces’ where writer predicted the evolution of the web into a network engaged users,
- Now what is used actually it was used by Ted Leonsis who claims that he had created the term in 1990.
- There was a lady who was working on community building in a village. And from that she had been using the term social media and this credit goes to Tina Sharkey who owns the domain of social media.com since 1999. She claims that she coined the term social media.

Though we could not find the history of social media clearly but the future of social media is very certain in respect of its business as in industry 80% of all businesses will get 100 or more employees who will actively involved in that industry at the end of 2011 and this aspect of marketing is certain to keep growing, expanding, and progressing for many years to come¹⁰.

¹⁰ Allison N. Lewis, “Who Invented Social Media”, available at: <https://productplacepromotion.blogspot.com/2011/02/who-invented-social-media.html> (last visited on Aug. 17, 2018).

As a social animal, People always rely on communication to strengthen their relationship and people always concerned about their family, friends to communicate them who are living in long distance, when people tries to communicate with such conditions they creates new things in time to time. There were no such developments in earlier time but now in this world there are so many ways to communicate. So, we need to know the entire history of social media which has changed our way of living style. Avalaunce Media recently unveiled their Interactive Infographic entitled, “The Complete History of Social Media” by Drew Hendricks has mentioned in this article, ‘History of Social Media: Then and Now’ in this article writer mentioned all the important developments of social media in different times. All are as follows: Firstly, the written communication was the first methods of communication where people write letters for sending messages to one person to another person. The initial form of postal service was in 550 B.C., and which still has the importance¹¹. Then there was a new ways of communication invented that was Telegraph. Though the Telegraph messages were short but that was very important.

Functioning of Social Media in Present Scenario:

After inventions of blogging, social media has been trying to build up a new standing. From that time there are no stopping of social media, there are various new types of social sites became popular day by day. In this regard we can mention like MySpace, Whatsapp, Facebook 2004. YouTube 2005, Twitter 2006, Instagram, Google+, Orkut etc. all these are very popular around the world. So today there is variety of social networking sites available and we can't predict even where it will stop or what types of new social media will come. After all the inventions the whole process of communications has changed our life style and where we are living today that is dominated by these social media such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube, etc. Now, world would actually find it difficult to communicate without social media. Social media utilize cell phone and network based technologies to make greatly interactive platform through which persons and communities share, co- create, discuss and change user generated content. If we are talking about who invented social media than credit goes to Andre Gray in this digital age. Gray, who invented the Electronic Press Kit (EPK) on January 8th in 1995 which contains all the components which are available in today's social media except blogging. That is why whenever the world celebrates EPK day on January 8th

¹¹ Allison N. Lewis, “Who Invented Social Media”, available at: <https://productplacepromotion.blogspot.com/2011/02/who-invented-social-media.html> (last visited on Aug. 17, 2018).

each year, journalists always put their fingers Andre Grays without whom invention of the Electronic Press Kit (EPK) there would not be any Facebook, YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram and other popular social media¹².

Importance of the Study

Studying the impact of social media on election outcomes and campaign strategies is not merely an academic exercise but a critical inquiry with significant implications for the functioning of democracy. In the context of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, where the electorate is both vast and diverse, understanding the role of social media is essential for several reasons. Firstly, social media's ability to reach a wide audience quickly and efficiently makes it a powerful tool for political campaigns. The ability to micro-target voters based on their preferences and behaviours has revolutionized the way campaigns are conducted, allowing for more personalized and effective communication strategies (Howard & Hussain, 2013; Kreiss, 2016). The 2014 and 2019 Indian general elections already demonstrated the growing importance of social media in shaping public opinion and influencing voter turnout. The 2024 elections are expected to build on these trends, with social media playing an even more central role in the campaign strategies of political parties (Chakravartty & Roy, 2015). Secondly, the interactive nature of social media platforms means that voter engagement is no longer a passive process. Voters are now active participants in political discourse, with the ability to influence and be influenced by the content they encounter. This interactivity has profound implications for how political messages are crafted and disseminated, as campaigns must now account for the participatory role of voters in amplifying or countering political narratives (Tufekci, 2014; Bimber, 2014).

Democracy: Democracy is now the most popular form of the government, though it is old as the Greeks. The peculiar thing about democracy is that it is a form of state, form of government, a form of the state, and above all an ethical idea or a way of life.

The political parties of the countries that have representative democracies not only use big financiers but also the media to propagate their own agenda and interests during election campaign.

¹² <https://smallbiztrends.com/2013/05/the-complete-history-of-social-media-infographic.html> (last visited on Aug. 8, 2019).

Importance of the Election In Democracy:

- Elections provide a way for the citizens to choose their leaders.
- The citizens are free to contest elections either independently or by joining a party.
- Elections provide a medium to put check on the activities of the government, if the people are not satisfied with the performance of the government that easily show them the way out in the next election.
- During campaigning the parties present their thoughts, ideas and policies to the masses and in the process make them educated politically.

Election Campaign: Election campaigns are the means through which candidates and political parties try to reach and communicate with their voters, their election manifestos, objectives and programmes¹³. There are various factors that influence voting behaviour in India- caste, religion, language, region, personality, money, ideology. While formulating their election strategies the political parties always take into account the factors influencing behaviour.

Social Media: Social media are web-based communications that enable people to interact with each other by both sharing and consuming information.

Social Media is different from traditional media in the following ways:

- Social Media is far less expensive than traditional media.
- Social Media offers a level of flexibility that traditional media does not as it cannot be edited once published.
- Social Media is interactive as the audience can give feedback while traditional media leads to passive involvement.

Use of Social Media Platforms During Elections: With millions of people joining the conversation from all over the country, social media sites have also proved an effective way for politicians to reach out to their voters. Through the value of face-to-face interaction has not been lost, yet social media offers an inexpensive alternative to communicate a campaign message to the people¹⁴. In USA consequently, a media centered democracy has been created in which the vast majority of political activity is conducted with the media, including social media sites in mind.

¹³ A. Singh, "Role of Social Media in Indian Elections: A Study of the 2019 Lok Sabha Elections" 78 *Journal of Asian Studies* 1 (2019).

¹⁴ R. Kumar, "Social Media and Election Campaigns in India: A Study of the 2017 Uttar Pradesh Assembly Elections" 16 *Journal of Political Marketing* 29 (2017).

There are various social media sites which are used by the politicians in different ways:-

- **Facebook-** Today every political parties have the Facebook pages and as such as the many followers. People post their their likes and comment which makes it easiersfor the politician to known the opinions of the people.
- **Twitter-** Twitter is the another form of platform used by the politicians. Every leader has a number of followers on the twitter. Every politicians have the the number of the followers on the twitter. More the follower it is easier for the leaders to publicise the leader's agenda. Twitter war between leaders is also a vry common phenomenon which does involve public to a great extent.
- **Youtube-** Youtube specially during election is to upload videos that might influence people.
- **Snapchat-** It uses filters and add 10 sec. Videos ads which cater to political campaigns.
- **Tumblr, Pinterest, Instagram** etc. As media platforms are more popular in foreign countries.

Election Communication Strategy:

A strategy for communicating with the public during elections involves using a varitey of media. To sway people's opinions, it fabricates a picture of a political candidate, party, or, issue. A political communications strategy is a technique that aids in spreading your message to the general audience. It is technique of disseminating a message through various platforms. Election communication strategies re often used to promote a particular candidate or a party¹⁵. Still, they can also be used to raise awareness about an issue or to build support for a piece of legislation.

Electioneering process through Social Media

Global Scenario, National Scenario - Use of social media for political campaign involves political communication at different level both national and international levels. Politicians generally highlights issue concerning the whole ntion, while at regional and state level they are move inclined towards caste and regional levels issues.

Global Scenario: The 2008 US presidential election has changed the way political campaign utilies the internet, especially social media. President Obama has been called, "First social

¹⁵ Election Commission of India, Social Media Guidelines for 2019 Lok Sabha Elections (2019).

media president". Obama websites was very interactive and it allowed his constituents the power to navigate and gave a sense of involvement. Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton too embraced social media in 2016 Presidential election in America. The online interest in Trump was three times higher than Clinton, according to Google's Trends analysis. Nigeria and Ghana also witnessed a massive use of social networking like Facebook, Twitter and Blogs during elections held in 2011 and 2016 respectively.

National Scenario:

India's 2014 General Election: The 2014 Parliamentary general election in India saw politicians leveraging social media to reach out to the constituents like never before. Earlier, those who were not in favour, later realised the importance of social media tools as the politically transformative communication technologies of modern media. An interesting report published in April 2013 by the Internet and the Mobile Association of India and a Mumbai based company Knowledge Foundation, held that Facebook users had a tremendous impact on the results of the polls held in 160 out of India's 543 Lok Sabha seats¹⁶.

As per the study of Indian online pages site 2014, 50% of the population is in the below 25 age group and 65% below 35 age group. This population is either studying in college, working in various companies, such as IT companies, BPOs, Research Centres and various other sectors are entrepreneurs. Their busy schedule has distanced them from television and radio especially in case of acquiring and information. Today's youth is tech-savvy and thus have been connected to one or the other electronic devices.

Narendra Modi and his party BJP have utilized all the social media platforms for creating a desired image for the Party. Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Blogs were effectively used to highlight issues which immediately resonate with young and urban voters during the campaign. Social Media platforms helped Modi connect with the masses and established the two-way communication. Modi being an excellent orator, has scores of similar speeches since then. He attributed slow economic growth, high inflation rate and lack of new jobs to the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance Government's bad policies. After the election were announced, his marketing team bombarded voters with print, television and Radio advertisements with the same themes. It reached voters through text messages and Modi's recorded voice seeking voters

¹⁶ J. Pal, "Social Media and Politics in India: A Study of Facebook Use by Politicians" 15 Journal of Information Technology & Politics 115 (2018).

himself. It is also trapped social media platforms such as Facebook, Youtube, and twitter- Modi has about 4 millions followers on twitter account to magnify the impact of the advertising and branding campaign. Narendra Modi had left no room for a negative content by stocking all search engine with excessive positive content with the help of accurate positioning with excessive contents sharing. Slogons like "Abki Baar Modi Sarkar", "Acche Din Anne Bale Hai" were filled on special media sites. Blogs on various issues, occasion, and events, situation and topics were published on regular basis to create the desired image in the mind of masses.

The Congress party started with organised and planed social media operations in mid 2013 after realising that in the race to win over citizens in India, Narendra Modi led the BJP is miles ahead of them. Following the postulate of never too late party, it joined the social media bandwagon by launching a Facebook Page, a Twitter handle renewed its website, Youtube channel, announced to start a volunteer's platform called, Khidkee used whatsapp and Line extensions. The party understood the potential of the art of the storytelling with pictures, to a target audiences which is addicted to this platform. Apart from the above mentioned social media entities, Congress also nurtures a habitate for a vast network of the people working at the grassroots."Khidkee" is a party owned platform aimed to brige the gap between people working at various and to keep channels of communication open for all.

Aam Aadmi Party founded in 2013 is called to be a creation of social Media. Their popularity has surprised all including the two major rival parties--- Congress and BJP. AAP is very active on the social media channels. BJP and AAP fight it out against each other on social media.

Impact of social Media on Democracy: One of the positive effects that social media has on politics is that social media provides an opportunity for voters to interact more easily with candidate and access to interact more easily with the candidates and gives access to every minute details about election campaign, which was not possible before the evolution of social media. Before social media evolved people had to physically attend a live event to meet a politician or candidate, which was difficult and also, everyone was not able to attend political rallies¹⁷. Social media proves to be useful by providing direct contact with voters, two ways communication, economical advertisements, nature of public opinion, fast and speedy form of communication etc, during an electoral campaign.

¹⁷ N. Rao, "Social Media and Politics in India: A Study of Twitter Use by Women Politicians" 15 *Journal of Information Technology & Politics* 15 (2018).

Despite the fact that there are various positive impacts of the use of social media on electoral campaign, there are also certain negative sides of the use of social media. Political campaigns are influenced by every story which is spread around social media, whether true or not. It is very difficult to separate actual news from fake news. The constant stream of mems, links and rumours about politicians and candidate are a mixture of truth, lies, satire and speculations. There are some of the sites with political bias or those peddling various in sustained conspiracy theories. Sometimes political leaders strategically distort media posts to influences opinion of the voters. There are also chances of creating an artificial image of political leaders through social media. People in this case are unable to see the true picture. Social Media generally promotes personality driven, rather than the issue driven election campaign. There are various other way like content seeding, Search engine Optimization etc, by which parties and leaders strategically manipulate the content on social media in their favour.

Election Commission's instruction regarding use of Social Media in India: In order to supervise the entire procedure and machinery for election, the constitution provides for an independent body, namely, the Election commission. Seeing the greater use of social media by the political parties in India for election campaigns, Election Commission issued certain guidelines for the parties and candidates regarding use of social media while campaigning¹⁸. These instructions were given in order to bring transparency during elections.

Positive aspects of social media for Indian society.

1. Social media tools like Facebook, WhatsApp have become an inevitable part of our modern life. It helps us to connect with our friends in real time. Users can interact with anyone as they like to interact at any time.
2. Social media platform LinkedIn has become a most important mode of employment. As more than 89% recruitments take place by using LinkedIn and company websites.
3. Interestingly only 140 word tweets contains a world of information. Which informed us about the world and our interest. Now most of the citizens have this twitter accounts.
4. Using social media for business is extremely beneficial. With the help of this social media one can do online business. Now with the help of social media one can create potential customers and increase their business.
5. Low cost. It can be use very easily. It is affordable that's why now a day every family

¹⁸ P.Sen“Social Media and Politics in India: A Study of Twitter Use by Citizens” 15 Journal of Information Technology & Politics 131 (2018)..

has the mobile phone though they have no electricity.

Negative Impact of Social media in Indian society:

1. False information can affect the society a lot. It can lead a major violence in societies which is not good our society.
2. Facebook is becoming a fake-book as it is very easy to upload false news in Facebook. There are numereours of instances of fake news which has been uploaded 50 in the social media platform and which motivated people towards their objectives it may be political, business oriented, social cause etc.
3. Government is not taking necessary step regarding such social sites for betterment of the society. It is also important that sometime it is very hard to find the source of the fake news which has the bad effect in our society.
4. Still in India many area is not covered by the internet facilities as it is meaningless without internet. There are so many places which are even very hard to find a network.

Major inputs from guidelines:-

- Candidates are required to provide information about their social media accounts in the affidavit that they file at time of filing nominations.
- Every registered party and candidate proposing to issue advertisement on social media, will have for Pre-certification before putting it online.
- The provisions of model code of conduct and related instrustions of the commission issued from time to time shall also apply to the contemn being posted ion the internet including social media wensites, by candidates and political parties,
- In case the content is posted online by a third person who is neither the candidate nor a party, the commission would consult the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology.

Recommendations:

- People should develop analytical thinking towards the news posted on social media. They should not get influenced by every news. People should not support any politicians or candidate blindly, rather they should rationally judge posts appering on social media sites and then analyse true from fake.
- People should not share messages and posts without checking their relevance.

- Political parties and political leaders should not spread rumors or fake news or try to manipulate the content available on the social media intentionally for their personal benefit.
- There should be access to internet and good connections even in rural areas if social media has to be promoted as a more effective tool for Electoral Campaign.
- Interaction is also crucial for politicians to keep in touch with supporters, it can be done through different social media platforms.
- Sometimes discussions on social media posts can be negative and it is important to bring a halt when it is becoming counter-institutive. Also, it is wise not feed the trolls or fake elements.
- Finally social media post containing electoral matters must be authorised. Candidates should check with their party to ensure that social media posts are compliant to integral guidelines that might exist.

