Impact of Social Media for The Victory of BJP in 2019 Lok Sabha Election

Priyanka Gogoi
Research Scholar,
Dept. of Political Science,
Gauhati University,
Assam, India

Abstract

Social media was mobilised for creating a parliamentary majority for Narendra Modi, who dominated this terrain, mastered the use of different platforms such as comments sections on news portals, Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp, to access and enrol different social groups into a winning coalition behind his claims to a developmental sovereignty ratified by the people. BJP took social media to bypass elite media and to establish unmediated relations with the population to compose a specific people. The party"s well-publicised love for social media was also a part of their political makeover in 2019 Lok Sabha Election. Social media has played a vital role in 2019 Lok Sabha election for the victory of BJP and the party has used social media to increase its online presence and through the social media it tried to increase its transparency, answered both positive and negative responses and built their brand. Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and Whatsapp are the standard tools of social media which they have used . BJP used the social media specially to attract the youth voters. Social media trapped the youth power and played a very important part in the entire election process of 2019 for the victory of BJP. They coordinated their strategies on Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp and other platforms. Social media provides a platform for continuous interrogation of the claims of leader and their supporters, allowing for attempts at undermining the ruling leader-people configuration. Rather than produce anything as stable as hegemony, social media in India is a vehicle for a politics of continuous contention between varieties of populism, and a *contested* terrain. This study will analyse how BJP has used social media as a factor to attract the people specially the youth powers. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also prefixed his name with the word "chowkider" on Twitter which created a popular response for BJP before the election.

Keywords: Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, BJP, Loksabha, Election, Youtube, Tools, Youth, Voters, Social Media, Chowkider.

Introduction

Social media plays a vital role in a democracy which inform the public about various political issues and act as a watchdog against abuses of power. During election campaigns the media provides information and analysis about the political parties" programs, policies, candidates and performance. Social media is playing a considerable new role in Indian democracy. With the changing political scenario of India, political parties and politicians have found new ways of reaching out to a younger and aspiration population. Indian Politics has observed a whirl of change over the period of time and its dependency over social media to connect with people experiencing the fellow democracies and its effect. Over its diversified nature, 40% of the total populations constitute of Indian youth and concerning to the popular culture, Indian political parties are holding to internet and social media to connect with youth for their agenda and political events. Social media was used as a tool in 2019 Lok Sabha election .This time it could become a weapon for the victory of BJP and India"s 2019 general election was widely anticipated to be the "WhatsApp elections" [1] .

Social media has become a platform of voiced opinions and charges and even though politicians for their campaigns still use posters, cut-outs, fliers and graffiti for their rally. As per various surveys and reports, after 2014 elections, 2-5% of budget is set for every elections" political campaign on social media (which is roughly around 400-500 crores for major leading national parties) [2].The social media has practically buried the physical and social gaps. It is also considered as horizontal media of communication. It provides the benefits of participatory democracy and

development in modern society. 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 are required to focus the attention of the people on electioneering process with special reference to Parliamentary Election of 2019[3].

Objective of this Study

1. To exemplify the impact of social media for the victory of BJP in 2019 Lok Sabha Election.
2. To analyse the vote share for BJP in 2019 general election by using various datas.

Aim of the Study

This study is basically aimed to find out the role of the social media for the victory of BJP in 2019 Lok Sabha Election. It will analyse how BJP has used social media like Facebook,Whatsapp,twitter and youtube as a major tool to attract the voters, specially the youth voters and first time voters. This paper primarily focuses on different degrees of vote share in favour of BJP among the regular users, sometime users and non users of social media. It will analyse how social media plays a vital role for the popularity of a political party.

Discussion

While television is believed to have played a major role in moulding public opinion during elections in India for the last two decades and perhaps continues to do so, the surge in internet penetration and the arrival and growth of different kinds of new digital technologies and online social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram etc. have challenged its dominance somewhat. Moreover, the exponential rise in usage of social media (as these various platforms are collectively known) in the last decade has changed the way election campaigns are being run not just in India but across the democratic world, with leaders, parties and candidates going all out in using this rapidly growing medium to gain direct access to voters and influence their opinions. Social media today is no longer just an innocent space to connect with friends and family. Instead, it has metamorphosed into becoming an influential space for political activity and discourse often leading to heated and polarized conversations [4].

In Indian politics, social media was first used as a tool for campaigning five years ago during the 2014 Lok Sabha election, where Narendra Modi led- Bharatiya Janata Party dominated the conversation and aced the social media game. The emergence of various social media platforms has certainly made it easier for politicians to connect with the people.

This paper has analysed the relation between the media and populism by challenging the binary of elite and popular media, because populism today involves precisely the breakdown of such distinctions. It analyse how the use of social media allowed the Modi campaign to access and enrol different social groups into a winning coalition behind his claims to a developmental sovereignty ratified by the people. It also suggest that while initially the social media terrain was clearly dominated by Modi and the BJP, parties previously sceptical of the uses of social media have now established substantial presence on these platforms. In India today, a form of competitive electoral populism is at play, in which all parties are populist, and offer varying but overlapping populist agendas based on different conceptions of the leader and the people, and social media is a constitutive feature of the terrain for these contests. It examines the strategies of other parties, and of emerging subaltern politics, of using social media to voice criticisms of Modi and offer alternative leader-people relations, partly by using social media as a „counter- archive", for example practices of using Modi„s previous speeches and tweets to criticise his current policies, or fact-checking his claims. It also suggest that a democratization of social media is currently underway, and new modes of questioning, satirizing and criticizing Modi are constantly emerging. These practices of critiquing and disseminating such critiques suggest the outlines of possible „counter- people" available for enrolment in populism„s future forms. It conclude with remarks about the connection between activated citizens on social media, and the fragility of hegemony in the domain of politics more generally[5].

Vote share BJP and other parties in 2019 Lok Sabha Election and the user of the social media are presented in the following pie diagrams:


In this diagram the vote share for BJP is 37% and other party is 63%.

Shrinkhla Ek Shodhparak Vaicharik Patrika
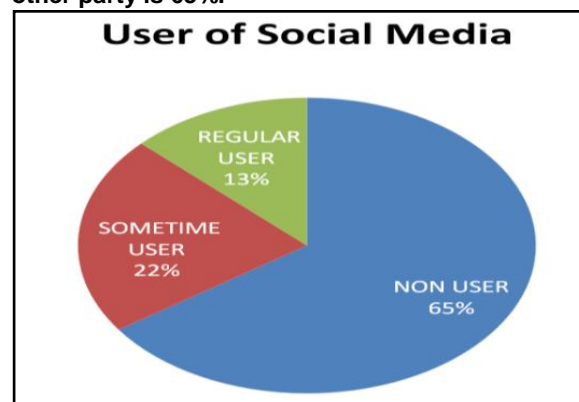
This diagram shows that the regular user of social media is 13% and sometime user of social media is 22% and 65% people have never used social media.

The following graph will present the comparison between vote share for BJP in 2019 Lok Sabha Election and various type of social media users.

Graph: Percentage distribution of vote share for BJP in 2019 by various type of social media users.
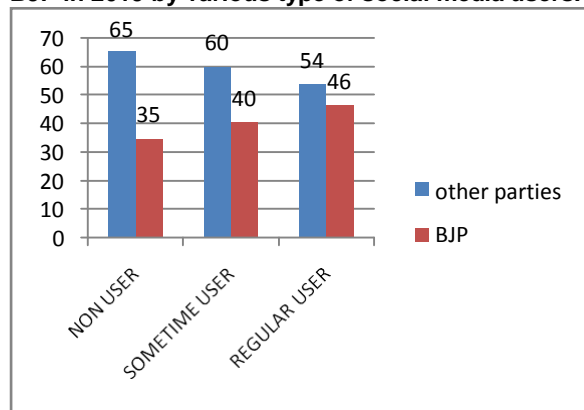
This graph has presented that with the increase in the use of social media, the voting share in favour of BJP is rising in which non user is 35%,sometime user is 40% and regular user is 46% and it indicate that as the degrees of social media users increases ,the vote share for BJP also increases. On the contrary the vote share for other parties decreases from 65% to 60%,then to 54%.So,here we can trace a gradual increase of vote share in favour of BJP in 2019 Lok Sabha election as the using of social media gradually increases.

Methodology

This study is based on a mixed methodology which combines both qualitative and quantitive methods. The analysis that has been presented in this report is based on nationwide surveys conducted in April–May 2019 by the Lokniti programme of Centre for the Study of Developing Societies. The fieldwork for the 2019 survey was conducted in 26 States – Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal. A total of 24,236 voters were interviewed in 211 parliamentary constituencies.

Conclusion

Social media has played a vital role in 2019 Lok Sabha election for the victory of BJP and the party has used social media to increase its online presence and through the social media it tried to increase its transparency, answered both positive and negative responses and built their brand. Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and Whatsapp are the standard tools of social media used by the party. BJP used the social media specially to attract the youth voters. Social media trapped the youth power and played a very important part in the entire election process of 2019 for the victory of BJP. The use of social media for political activities influences people‟s political efficacy, political knowledge, and political participation. Social media users may discover political activities in social media and by this way intensify their political knowledge, increase their political efficiency and improve their political involvement. Moreover, the social media usage for political activities was influenced by frequency of general social media use. Overall, the 2019 Indian election indicates that, although access to the affordances of social media technologies provided by a growth in internet penetration enhanced the ability of citizens to participate in the BJP‟s online electoral activities to some degree, this ability was constrained by the party‟s need to ensure that the online campaign was conducted in line with its communicative goals.

Endnotes

1. Sinha, Subir, Fragile Hegemony: Modi, Social Media and Competitive Electoral Populism in India1 Department of Development Studies School of Oriental and African Studies, London, UK http://eprints.soas.ac.uk/24533/ under CC-BY-NC-ND 4.0 International Licence. https://thecompanion.in/2019-lok-sabha- elections-and-social-media/
2. ibid, (https://thecompanion.in/2019-lok-sabha-elections-and-social-media/)
3. ibid, (https://thecompanion.in/2019-lok-sabha-elections-and-social-media/)
4. Data published by:Lokniti – Centre for the Study of Developing Societies(CSDS),(2019), NewDelhi, www.lokniti.org. (P-8)
5. Ibid, www.lokniti.org.