Political Communication through Social Media: A Study of Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly Election 2017

ABSTRACT

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ABSTRACT:

Social Media has changed the way we find information, communicate, network, and shop. Now, it’s changing the way we elect our leaders. The creation and rise of social media is leading to a new change in how politicians are interacting with the public. In particular, social media are increasingly used in political context especially during election campaigns. Political parties have begun to use Facebook and Twitter pages for the purpose of entering into direct dialogs with citizens and encouraging more political discussions. Social Media and its highly visible environment provides candidates the ideal platform to promote themselves, articulate their policy goals and interact with their voters directly and without the filter of the mainstream media. Thus it gives an opportunity to distribute their political campaign to a larger audience as well as a platform for two-way communication and engagement with their supporters.

Social Media is emerging as a new phase of Indian political communication in recent times, which is quite obvious from the Facebook and Twitter pages of political parties like Bharatiya Janata Party, Indian National Congress etc. In the past few years, social media are increasingly used in election campaign. Facebook and Twitter have played a vital role in the past Loksabha election 2014, Delhi legislative assembly election 2015 or Bihar legislative assembly election 2015. Political Communication is a sub-field of Political Science and Communication, which deals with the production, dissemination, procession and effects of information, both through media and interpersonal approach, within a political context.

For the purpose of this study Researcher used the term of political communication based on the main social media platforms. Social media refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and/or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. Social media can distribute their content by special communication channels such as: social networks (Facebook, Twitter), media products community (Youtube, Flickr, Slideshare), blog services (Wordpress), link sharing services (Digg, Wykop), information creation community (Wikipedia) or virtual community (Second Life).
This research work has contains five chapters. The summary of these chapters are as follows-

CHAPTER: 1.

This chapter gives brief idea of what is communication and political communication. The chapter also explains how the social media has brought changes in various countries. It also briefly describes the role of social media in US and Indian election. Without describing gradual development of social media it will be difficult to understand its present nature and forms. Thus, the researcher has also described the history of social media and tries to explain how it has become more and more people centric. Thus, this chapter portray that Indian democracy has been changing itself according to need, time and space. Change in political communication is one of them. Since it is closely related to the inducement of the new age technology it can be said a paradigm shift in Politics. It gave more power to the people as well as the leader as it paved the way to quick and two way communication. At present almost all the country in the world where social media exist has recognized its power in almost every field. It has a great impact in US election recently and it will be very interesting to see how it is changing the very shape of India political communication system

CHAPTER: 2.

This chapter has been divided into two parts. The first part deals with the review of the literature relevant to this research work. The second part deals with the theoretical and conceptual framework so as to bring clarity and standardization.

The review indicates that research and analysis has been initiated in this field. However, these works lacks in-depth examination into political communication and social media. These reviews also show that there is complete lack of work in Indian context. Thus this research work tries to fulfill this gap.

The second part deals with the theoretical and conceptual framework. Some of the important theories mentioned are Rhetoric theory of Communication, Aristotle Model of Communication, Digital rhetoric. The important concepts which have been explained in the research are political communication, political party, parliament, election etc.
At last but not least Social media which is most important aspect of this research work has been explained in detail. This part deals with the definitions of social media, types of social media etc.

CHAPTER: 3.

This chapter is the backbone of the entire research work. The chapter deals mainly with the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, area of the study, delimitations, relevance of the study, time period and methodology. Here the reasons behind selecting the popular social media tools and the political parties have also been discussed in details. The chapter also explains the why the selected methodology is more suitable for this research work.

This Chapter deals with methodology of research work. is based on Content Analysis. Here Content Analysis work incorporates Facebook posts, Tweets, frequency of content, types of content, language of content, engaging, reaction and so forth which appears in Facebook and Tweeter. Qualitative work includes strategies, ideologies, perception and views, which is reflected in social media i.e. Facebook and Tweeter. However, both qualitative and quantitative research cannot be sharply distinguished and recognized from each other.

Further the chapter describes about the data collection. Data has been collected from both the sources – primary and secondary. But this research mainly focuses on primary data. However, to describe conceptual, theoretical and factual information secondary sources has also been consulted; for example- books, journals, newspaper, reports, and various internet resources. For primary sources, data has been collected from Facebook and Tweeter page of four major political parties selected for this study. For the content analysis, Facebook and Tweeter posts which include text, picture, video, audio, the language has been analyzed.
CHAPTER: 4.

This is the most important chapter of this research work. This chapter analyzes the data that collected from official Facebook and Twitter pages of political parties. All Facebook and Tweeter data of political parties has been collected daily during the time period of research that is January 04, 2017 to March 11, 2017. Out of these 4 political parties, Bahujan Samaj Party does not have any verified social media account. Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati clarified that the party has no official Twitter and Facebook account or any website, and anyone operating it was unauthorised.\(^1\) So researcher taking its value as null. Now researcher has studied only three political parties. Data has been analyzed from verified pages of different political parties.

**For Facebook data the verified page of**

- Bhartiya Janata Party- Uttar Pradesh – BJP4UP
- Samajwadi Party- SamajwadiParty
- Indian National Congress- INCUttarPradesh

**For the Twitter data-**

- BhartiyaJanata Party (Uttar Pradesh) - BJP4UP
- Samajwadi Party- Samajwadi Party
- Indian National Congress- INCUttarPradesh

To simplify the huge amount of data researcher has made some unit of analysis. For content analysis, researcher selected 15 parameters for Facebook and Twitter of political parties. For Comparative content analysis researcher selected 15 parameters for Facebook and Twitter each.

Thus this chapter analyzed huge amount of data. Researcher has deeply and minutely analyzed of every content that clearly represent in unit of analysis. To understand the complex data of facebook and twitter the graphs have been used. After doing content analysis, researcher found that BJP is far ahead from all political parties.
in all sense whether it’s a matter of posting numbers of content or consistency of content.

CHAPTER: 5.

This chapter concludes the entire research work. Here chapter wise conclusion has been given before giving a general conclusion. This also explains that how social media has shaped Indian political communication and victory in elections. This describes the use of different vocabulary, image building by the party and manipulation of the facts etc.

This, chapter also deals with the future of social media in Indian politics, it use and misuse and suggests some guidelines for better management of social media both by the political parties and the general users who participates in the communication.