

Impact of social media on Indian Politics

Ramdas Nehulkar

Assistant Professor

Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth Pune

Department of Mass Communication

Abstract

In comparison to new media, social media's influence in political campaigns has increased tremendously. Social networks play an increasingly important role in electoral politics in India. For this credit goes to internet, each person with marginal views can see that he's not alone. And when these people find one another via social media, they can do things - create memes, publications and entire online worlds that bolster their worldview, and then break into the mainstream. Without social media, social, ethical, environmental and political ills would have minimal visibility. Increased visibility of issues has shifted the balance of power from the hands of a few to the masses.

Introduction :

Social media is any website that allows social interaction. Social media is growing rapidly throughout the world. More adults and teenagers are joining sites such as Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter to interact with

friends, family, and strangers. The introduction of social media has changed the world in many ways. It affects each individual in different ways. Today it can be used as a very helpful tool in changing a person's life, but at the same time cause such conflicts which can negatively impact a person. While there are some negatives associated with social media, the positives in communication all around, has made the world stronger and a better place to live in.

Despite the positives, there are many negatives associated with social media. Using social media can make a person more vulnerable to predators and cyber bullying. In this age, "Cyber bullying is quite common, can occur to any young person online, and can cause profound psychosocial outcomes including depression, anxiety, severe isolation, and tragically suicide" Cyber bullying impacts society in a negative way because it is harming young teenagers' minds. Bullies, torment, threat, harass, and even

embarrass their victims by using different forms of social media. Using social media can also decrease privacy for an individual. People often give out their personal information not knowing who can see it. The abundance of technology and social media today has led to many positives and negatives

What Is New Media

New Media which includes different technologies. In the opinion of some specialists are considerate as new media both blogs, podcast, video games, virtual worlds, Wiki encyclopedia, and other mobile devices, interactive televisions, and even the web-sites and e-mail. Others² consider that blogs and virtual worlds must be included in the category of social media because they are encouraging appearance of virtual communities and social networks. In spite of the differences, some research workers³ identified two common characteristics for majority of definitions. These are: - spreading the information to a number of receivers which is theoretical infinite, in customized ways, depending on specification for endorsed categories; - tenure of an equal control about information both of transmitters and receivers. Other definitions are even more vaguely, considering that new media are represented by all the texts, sounds, images and graphic forms transformed by the computer.

The impact of new media on society

Two-way communication, ease of access to information continuous learning, convergence, aggregation of content remix culture and the transition from products to services possible. Aggregation of content leads to variety and choice, community, social collectivity and cooperation. Remix and digitization helps close the gap between user and producer, which in turn builds community, variety and choice. Ease of access and dissemination of information leads to continuous learning; social collectivity and cooperation; remix culture; and the closing of the gap between user and producer.

Nowadays, the TV viewers can attend the favorite TV transmissions on the screen of the computer. The PC is exceeding by far the native function and now it plays the role of television and multimedia center. It is used in the same time for downloading the TV transmissions from the Internet and to program the digital registration of high definitions and also to see the programs. In a converged media world, consumers use Apple iPods to make their own music playlists. Personal video recorders allow them to customize television schedules. These consumers⁸ pull stock-market updates, text messages, wallpaper, ring-tones, and short-form video into their mobile phones. They come together in online communities, gen-

erate their own content, mix it, and share it on a growing number of social networks. In this new-media culture, people no longer passively consume media (and thus advertising, its main revenue

Concept of Social Media

Social media are computer-mediated tools that allow people, companies and other organizations to create, share, or exchange information, career interests, ideas, and pictures/videos in virtual communities and networks. The variety of stand-alone and built-in social media services currently available introduces challenges of definition; however, there are some common features: (1) social media are Web 2.0 Internet-based applications, (2) user-generated content (UGC) such as text, digital photo or digital video posts are the lifeblood of the social media organism, (3) users create their own profiles for the website onramp, which is designed and maintained by the social media organization, and (4) social media facilitate the development of online social networks by connecting a user's profile with those of other individuals and/or groups.

Social media depend on mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals, communities and organizations can share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content. They introduce substantial and pervasive changes to communica-

tion between businesses, organizations, communities, and individuals. These changes are the focus of the emerging field of techno self studies. Social media differ from traditional paper-based or industrial media in many ways, including quality, reach, frequency, usability, immediacy, and permanence. Social media operate in a dialogic transmission system (many sources to many receivers). This is in contrast to traditional media that operates under a monologist transmission model (one source to many receivers), such as a paper newspaper which is delivered to many subscribers. Some of the most popular social media websites are Face book , WhatsApp, Tumblr, Instagram, Twitter, Baidu Tieba and Snapchat..There was a consensus that Twitter and the social platform were game-changers for the media ecosystem. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's tweet, that broke the news of American President Barack Osama being invited on what would be a historic visit during the January 26 Republic Day celebration in 2015, was the latest instance of social media crossing onto the realm of journalism. Sands, whose newspaper recovered from an existential crisis after readership plummeted a few years back, said her organization was now on multiple platforms. "But the paper is the mother ship", she said, subtly pointing to conversations on social media platforms that were largely about what people had read in the papers or watched on TV. Sands also

flagged other pitfalls and concerns of social media, invoking instances such as inappropriate tweeting; lines between fact and fiction being blurred and privacy threats. "Newspapers may not be there 20 years from now, but journalism will remain. Think of it more on the lines of the steam engine (which has been replaced by modern locomotives)," she said.

Reportage, the panelists recognized, was one of the most prominent of roles social media had undertaken - recalling cases when news was broken by eyewitnesses before any media organization could confirm. From among the audience, veteran editor Vinod Mehta - who recently opened his Twitter account -- spoke about being a victim of relentless abuse on the platform. Stanton responded by saying they wanted Twitter to be a safe place, and had tools to block abuse. But, slightly defensively, she pointed out that abuse existed in the physical world as well. If there was a running theme, it was - for the panelists and audience - the recognition that Twitter has changed the way in which we use and consume information. How the big media responds will determine its future.

World's largest selling English language newspaper: Times of India, has unleashed a new trend in the news and media industry by forcing their journalists to become social. The management has linked the target

variable pay (TVP) of their journalists and content developer's salaries with the amount of social share they are performing. Medianama has access to emails, which clearly states that every journalist working with Times of India must:

Share at least three WhatsApp messages with their stories

Share at least three 'online-first' stories within their social circle

Share at least three Tweets with their stories in them

Failure to do so shall result in reduced incentives, hence reduced salaries.

Bodhisattva Gangly, who is the Executive Editor of The Economic Times, had sent one such email earlier in the month to all employees of the media conglomerate. Times of India has officially refused to either confirm or deny any such diktat. Writing Is Not Enough; Share it As Well . With this new protocol of Times of India, news and publishing industry may witness a new trend of 'forcing' the journalist/writer to become socially active, and share their creations with their online connections. For enforcing the social sharing aspect, Times of India has actually created slabs based on which their journalist's salaries would depend. For example, sharing 'online-first' articles will carry a 'weight age' of 25%, while Tweeting at least three stories every day carry another 25% weight. Even comments posted by article writers have been

included in this first of its kind diktat for journalists, as it carries 5% 'weight'. Besides, the journalist has to provide at least one comment per story

Impact on Indian politics and election

A Newspaper Report Published in period of elections in India in 2015 says :

The three American social media giants - Face book, Twitter and Google - have emerged as a major player in the ongoing general elections in India, with political parties and candidates competing with each other in breaking the news, spreading their message through these outlets in addition to those via the traditional media. While the impact of these social media on the elections could be known only after May 16 when the results are declared or could be a matter of another academic research, all the three major players have seen substantial increase in their India traffic and usage. For instance, Face book has now 100 million users in India - its largest outside the US - while that of Twitter has more than doubled since January this year.

After the 7th round of polling, there were 49 million Indian elections-related conversations on Twitter - more than double the 20 million Indian election-related conversations on Twitter for all of 2013. In 2009, Shaha Throop was the only Indian politician

to have a Twitter account and had 6,000 followers.

Five years later there is hardly any major political leader who does not have an account on the micro-blogging site. Mr. Throop is now the second most popular politician on Twitter with 2.16 +million followers, after Narendra Modi, the BJP's prime ministerial candidate with 3.89 million followers. Mr. Modi now also has nearly 14 million fans of Face book.

Barrack Osama is the only other politician to have more Face book fans than Mr. Mode. With political parties, leaders and candidates putting their advertisement on social media to reach out to their voters, all the three major players are reported to have made substantial addition to their revenue.

Though none of the companies are willing to discuss the advertisement revenue this election cycle, all of them have put in several months of tireless efforts and diverted substantial amount of their resources in the elections, many of them working thousands of miles away from India. Face book started working on the Indian elections towards the end of last year, says Katie Harpeth, Manager for Policy at Face book, adding that the company started doing a series of things beginning March this year when the elections were announced. This includes launch of

election tracker so that people can see in real time. Candidates are now using Face book and Twitter for breaking news. "We are really seeing the entire country discuss the issues (related to elections)," Herbart told PTI in a recent interview. "Face book is really the key place of the conversation that is happening," she said.

Adam Sharp, Head of Government and Nonprofits at Twitter, who has been involved in participating in elections in various countries of the world, said Twitter is a powerful way to return to retail politics. He conceded that elections have helped Twitter expand in India. The victory of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in February 2015 wasn't just the most telling litmus test of anti-incumbency in India's capital, it also played out as a compelling example of engagement and persuasion via social media. Much of the election - or should we say the battle of perceptions - was fought on Face book and Twitter.

Delhi had 13 million registered voters this election, out of whom 12.15 million were online. This made digital platforms the largest canvassing tool for parties and the most effective engagement tool for party workers. What's more, it didn't eat into their campaign budgets like traditional media did. This is unprecedented in Indian state elections and is certainly a game-changer.

The average voter, rooting for free-

dom of expression offline, has tasted democratization of expression through Face book, Twitter and blogs - even trolls. The canvassing loudspeakers, battling it out at high decibel levels in each Delhi mohalla, were hijacked, this time by hash tag wars fought by party followers on social media platforms. And most seasoned political contenders, including the chief ministerial candidates, were all active on social media, in varying degrees. The political start-up AAP combined its street power with seamless social-media campaigning.

AAP 's Use of Social Media

During the Delhi elections in 2015, the power of social media was clearly felt. AAP used the modern way of campaigning and reached out to public. They were using the tool in a way no one has ever thought of. Most of their leaders made their presence felt on Face book and Twitter. From Arvind Kejriwal to their grassroots workers, everyone leveraged social media to ensure that they are reaching out to larger audience. All this while, the BJP was trying to win the hearts of people by using the conventional way, the more familiar way of campaigning by going door to door and conducting rallies. Election results turned out to be the game changer and it also made sure that the social media will continue to play a vital role in the coming years of Indian politics.

Use of Social Media in Politics

Since that time, use of social media in politics has significantly increased. There are various ways by which people connect, by commenting, creating memes and even trolling. Their news feed is the space which they own and feel more comfortable. They don't have to move out of their room to follow a certain political face or to be a part of campaign. The dependency over print media and electronic media has reduced as people can now be a part of news, express their views with others on this platform. Videos and pictures of sting operation are shared on Face book, YouTube and other platforms showing the truth without any moderation. The common man participation in politics has increased. The recent use of social media websites by Indian government has been much talked about. Mr. Suresh Prabhu, along with his team, very efficiently used Twitter for helping out the Indian Rail passengers in need. From sending food to school children by taking action on a tweet to helping women who tweeted that she is in distress due to harassment faced in her train journey, he has done everything right so far. Ministry of Railway's heartiest efforts were truly a sweet surprise for the people who got assistance when they needed it the most. HRD Minister Sushma Swaraj has also been quite active on twitter and she also made her presence felt by promptly assisting on request over her twitter handle.

Conclusion

Social media has influenced politics and it has also increased interest of people in politics. The political parties have now taken social media as one of the most important channels for their public relations activities and almost every party has its official pages on Face book and twitter where they post political updates, press releases and news about their campaigns. In recent times, social media has been a integral part of politics and its growth seems to be continuous. In India political social media management will grow innovative and wide within a short span of time, and days are not far when social media response and engagement will decide the future of any political party. Any political party or person who tries to stay away from social media or considers it dinkier will soon find it difficult to survive in changing environment of Indian politics.
