Active Citizenship And The Media

- Critical Analysis Of Citizen Participation In Order To Improve Democracy

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Abstract

The focus of the research paper is on tracing the patterns of participation of the citizens in the political discourse through generating or sharing satirical content of political hue. How the social network as media channel is being used by the citizens as a platform for the participation in the political sphere and how it helps in improving democracy has been discussed in the present paper. Furthermore how citizens in general contribute in the generation or sharing of satirical political content and set the tone of participation. The content efficacy, editing, modifications and its implications are some of the important aspects of the participation have also been dealt with. The tools used for satirical content generation and technical proficiency required for an active participation has also been discussed.

 The probe questions are-
• What triggers the citizen's engagement on social media and how it helps improve democracy?
• Are the citizen satirical-content producers, makers or creators?
• Is digital platform making the political participation real-time?
• Factors making content viral and engaging
• The effects and praxis of political Meme, Dub smash, Viral, Flash mob and other multimedia content.
• How digital activism and content generation by the citizen help improving democracy?

The present Research paper is an attempt to trace "contours of political participation through digitally assisted social software and how it eventfully improves and strengthens democracy." And at the same time try to figure out the configuration of what are the deep impulses that drive citizen to participate in political discourse by generating and sharing satirical content.

Keywords:
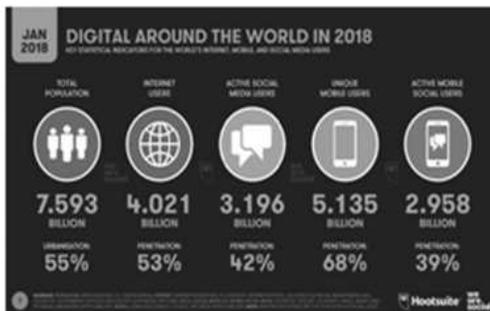 Social Network Sites, Viral, Flash mob, multimedia political content,

Political Satire, Meme, Social Media, etc.

Materials and Methods: -

The present research paper is basically an interpretative and content analytical study which is based on the secondary sources of information for systematization, analyses and conclusions. Relevant books, journals, newspapers, magazines, e-resources etc. have been used as secondary sources of data.

Introduction

There are over 195 million users on social media in India. There are over 1.2 billion registered users on Facebook globally, 84401 you tubes videos are accessed every single seconds in USA. There are 155 Million Monthly Active Users (MAUs) in India, of which 147 Millions

MAUs access Facebook via Mobile Phones and 73 Million users are active daily on Mobiles. Indian users can access Facebook in 12 languages and 670 Million users are connected to at least one News Publishers page.

This reflects the quality and quantity of being digital- the horizon of Digitality. As per the report released by We Are Social and Hootsuite the world wide accessibility to the Internet is reached to over 4 billion people across the globe. That means over half of the world's population is now online out of which over 3 billion people are active social media users.

The World Wide Web (www) is social media, which genesis- forums, blogs, social gaming, chat apps, business networks, photo-sharing platforms, microblogs, and last but not least social networks. It is the WEB 2.0 version of www technology provided real-time control.

The social nature of Web 2.0 is another major difference between it and the original, static Web. In it incorporated more collaborative and interactive features such as websites enable community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration. These features promoted more and more people signed in for Social Media Interactions and experiences.

Key Concepts & Terminologies
Democracy as a system of government with four key elements:
1. A political system for choosing and replacing the government through free and fair elections.
2. The active participation of the people, as citizens, in politics and civic

life.

3. Protection of the human rights of all citizens.

4. A rule of law, in which the laws and procedures apply equally to all citizens.

Satire is defined in the oxford dictionary as "The use of humour, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize people's stupidity or vices, particularly in the context of contemporary politics and other topical issues." In a sense, satire is sharp, vivid, colorful, deliberate and intense highlighter used to showcase political or allied topical folly within the political context.

Digitality mean the quality of being digital. "Digitality (also known as digitalism) is used to mean the condition of living in a digital culture, derived from Nicholas Negroponte's book Being Digital in analogy with modernity and post-modernity." Digitality inherently characterized by its strong networking technological backbone that provides opportunity to the people to be in continuous contact with other people through cell phones, and speedy access to the information through World Wide Web (WWW).

A communicator is a person who communicates with others and directly or indirectly engages in dialogue so as to influence or trigger thought reversal or agenda setting. Thus the focus in the present study is to observe, trace, understand and underlie the patterns of people's polit-

ical communication that happens on social media as a communication channel and the focal characteristic of message is of purely satirical hue. The unprecedented maturation in the social media platforms and the simplistic technological sophistication attracted, hooked and engaged billions of people across the globe, those share and express their personal feelings on almost every aspect of personal and social life that matters to them the most; including politics.

Dubsmash is a mobile application that combines or "smashes" videos you shoot with pre-recorded sounds known as dubs. The main goal behind the creation of this application is to replace standard video messages with more humorous Dubsmash videos. The Dubsmash app was designed and developed in Berlin by Mobile Motion GmbH. The application was released on two major mobile platforms in late 2014.

Viral message refer to marketing messages that are passed from person to person through their social networks. Communication of information in media that can be easily forwarded such as Internet videos, text messages (SMS) can effectively augment word of mouth transmission of the information throughout social networks.

A flash mob is a group of strangers who organize themselves, using electronic media such as cell phones or

the Internet, to gather together in a public place, behave in a predetermined manner for a predetermined amount of time, and then quickly disperse.

A multimedia campaign is a planned program that uses a variety of media forms to influence a target audience. The form of a media text refers to the style and structure with which a message is communicated-for example, through print, electronically or digitally Multimedia Campaign. A highly coordinated "Symphony" directed at target audience. Indented to increase awareness or influence behaviour. Can be commercial (built around a product) or non commercial (built around an idea or principle)
Citizen (noun) citizenry, commonality, community, community at large, country, general public, inhabitants, multitude, nation, national group, nationality, persons, populace, population, race, society, state. Here people is used in a very restricted sense with all it shades incorporated, a person who is participate in online political discourse mainly through the satirical content. The people are further categorized into mainstream, minority, women, and disadvantage groups as per the constitutional listing and recognition.

Literature Review

The multimedia gives free-

hand and multiple options of media channels to the campaigners who otherwise confined to rallies, outdoor banner displays, television interviews or advertisement, keystone speeches to address crowds and masses. It analyses the ways satirical contents can be used as communicative tools on social media to produce significant meaning and dominant political themes. The social media is used as a force and outreach multiplier to post sense of humour or humorous content to potential voters to establish a bond of connect through well orchestrated campaigns. An individual social media user can post the civic issues that matters the most to society. The humour is orchestrated louder to attract attention. The politicians are attraction seekers and it gives them edge over their rivals if they could manage to bubble up laughter that follow-throughs connecting with voters, same can be said about an individual people who like to bring into fore the issues those are not found place in the campaign. A long term association is what they untimely seek.

The following review of literature confirms that, different perspectives about the concept of political participation by the citizen on social media through satirical content and how content generation and simultaneously transmission has become prominent due to the tectonic shift in the political marketing space. It discusses specific and general outlines

of, how political participation driven by satirical content was developed and used to generate political support, issue sensitization and the effect of these strategies on the communication and trust-connect with the voters. The advent of innovative digital marketing strategies shaped the designs of structure, process and evolution, and what are the effects of different strategies in political participation have been narrated.

Ian Prince- Answering to a question in an interview- can you make fun of politics?, Ian Prince, editor of Newsround on BBC1 Television, quipped In Britain, it is almost a national duty to make fun of politics. Adults can laugh at political humour because they have more years of experience, and they understand that it's a way of analyzing politics. Humour or satire is added or the chief flavor in a news story to promote an interest in politics, rather than undermine the message. And thus it is turned out to be a powerful tool.

Jonathan Bright, Scott Hale, Bharath Ganesh, Andrew Bulovsky, Helen Margetts, Phil Howard measuring 'campaign effects' is quite difficult and empirical evidence on the effectiveness of political social media activity is thin is what argued in the research paper: Does Campaigning on Social Media Make a Difference? Evidence from candidate use of Twitter during the 2015 and 2017 UK

Elections However political campaign on social media networks during electoral campaign periods has become a core feature of contemporary political systems all around the world.

Yaojun Li And David Marsh discussed in the research paper published in British Journal of Political Science, various factors that affect political participation prominent amongst them are socio-demographic and cultural factors. In further probe tried to explore association between the types of political participation and two domains of political beliefs/actions: political trust and efficacy; and political contacting and voice. It has been argued that socio-demographic characteristics associated with the different forms of participation.

Political Campaign, Social Media & Satirical Content: It has been found that due to advent in the social network technology and internet services and their inherent characteristics, such as: on the move access, user friendly technology, content generation and sharing ease, real time accessibility that attracted millions and millions people to go for its subscription. They share the content as per their convenience and on the political issues that matters the most. It is thus the provision the move accessibility, made content generation to sharing absolutely fun game and the allied features triggers the people's engagement on social media.

Is digital platform making the political participation of citizen Real-time? The answer is yes. It is the real time accessibility and sharing as and when political events unfolds/happens. There are multiple channels by which citizen share the political content real time- Whatsapp, YouTube, Facebook, Sharechat, Twitter, etc. S/he can live broadcast or stream; can make content funny with the help of basic editing apps available on android or IOs platform so as to make it more presentable or with the preferred comments added into it with satirical hue. Gone are the days when one has to wait for the either TV-Radio or News Papers for the access of political happenings. It is due to digital social media platform access to the political events become real time. And the additional facility of editing the content comes with it makes citizen more participative in the political discourses. In that sense the digital platforms making politics Real-time.

Citizen and satirical-content- Do people produce or generate satirical content or they simply forwards/Shares what's land in their social network account. Since the social media provides features with editing facilities, it has been observed that yes citizen do generate satirical content
People Generated Satirical Political Content

with political hue. Though there is no exact dataset or the content volume studied that could comment or one can make statement on the relative percent of content generation verse the content sharing. As per their preference and choice of issues or the affiliation people do generate content. Malishka, RJ with Mumbai based FM Radio channel RED FM, has close to 4 Lakhs followers on Facebook and 1.5 Lakhs Tweeter followers a famous RJ along with her radio production house created parody song on the BMC (Brihan Mumbai Corporation) the way they maintain civic facility in the city especially the roads. The other screen grab is from the A TO Z AZAD VIRAL VIDEOS Published on Aug 2, 2018 the young YouTuber posted his critical views in satirical format on the contemporary political issues.

Participation: The Role of the Citizen in a Democracy

The key role of citizens in a democracy is to participate in public life. Democracy depends on citizen participation in varieties of ways- such as campaigning for a political party or candidate, standing as a candidate for political office, debating public issues, attending community meetings, petitioning the government, and even protesting. But participation must be peaceful, respectful of the law, and tolerant of the different views of other groups and individuals.

This is what citizen can do in an order to improve democracy. Citizens have an obligation to become informed about public issues, to watch carefully how their political leaders and representatives use their powers, and to express their own opinions and interests and based on that the political satirical contents are generated/created and shared on the social media platform.

Factor making content viral and engaging: Viral content is a post, image or video seen by a large number of people and continues to spread like wildfire, and with each person or view the reach widens or grows exponentially. Viral content can be anything, but it most often meets several of the following criteria: Creative Entertaining, Valuable, Thought-provoking, While most viral content that you see may fall into the categories of hilarious YouTube videos, cute baby panda pictures, or controversial articles, blog content can and does go viral almost as frequently. Blog posts are most likely to go viral when they are helpful and valuable to your audience.. Everybody like to get appreciate it is basic instinct. On every post on social media there is strong urged that there would be lots of Like and Share. Call it Appreciation or Accolades or Award, the basic instinct that drives the factor irresistibility in making content viral and if it is made engaging chances of its getting viral are more. As argued by Khoja in the

blog article, that if the content is hilarious and moreover if it is helpful and valuable to audience there is more chance of virality.

Political Meme, Dub smash, Viral, Flash mob and other multimedia Content: The political meme are very instrumental when it comes to satirical content generation. They are topical and it carries immense possibilities of content combination and permutation. The only limitation is the visualization, creativity and ideas of the creators. The Dub Smash are designed to record moments to songs, sounds, famous quotes, lines from movies, and even custom dub recordings and then lip sync to the selected dub. For instance, you can make funny faces, invent a new

Political commonplaces

craze, or shoot video of your favorite pet and churned out a crazy cat video that everyone enjoys! The dub smash is not mostly used for the political statement. It is more of a fun activity. The political Dubsmash are less is number but considering the potential it might pick up. It requires sharp skill to generate content that may be a discouraging factor when it comes to creating political undertone satirical content. In Image11 the Facebook subscriber posted a Dubsmash video of her own. She was lip-synching on a local song eulogizing the chief artictect of constitution Dr. B R Ambedkar. And in Image12 famous satirical poet, Sampat Saral's Dubai recorded performance was posted on Hamari Association YouTube Channel. The kind of views it got tell the tale of its virality. The content can be created with the help of Dubsmash, Flash mob or by other multimedia tools, after creation of the content what is most important the appropriate media channel used for its reach. Image13 & 14 both are political meme and it is most widespread phenomena when it comes to satire on social network site. Memes like satirical content currency unit. They are most useable form and are most topical.

Content Generations Tools and Techniques

In digital tools assisted political participation, the content is everything. And for content generation and creation software tools requires those enable to make engaging, unique content that delivers message to the target voters.
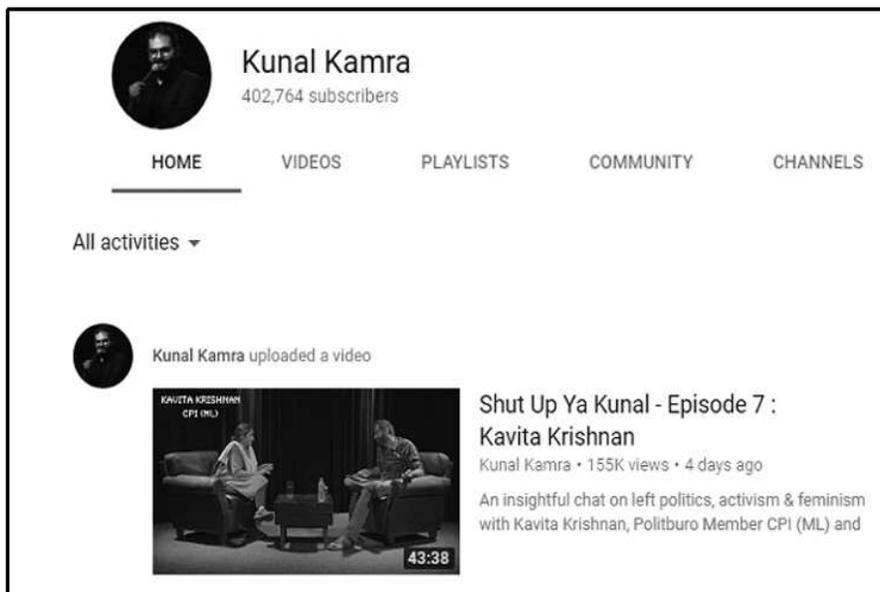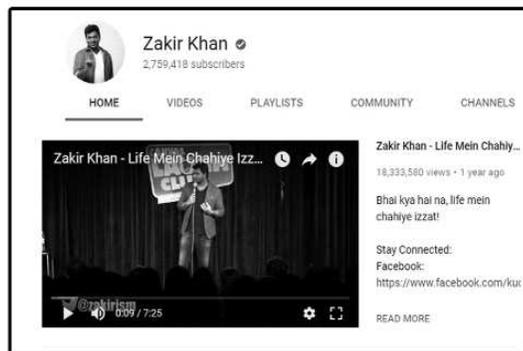
Following are the content creation tools.

1. Canva - Freemium content creation tool Canva is an affordable Photoshop alternative.
2. QuotesCover - Quote pictures are all over Instagram and Pinterest.
3. Giphy - Create your own amazing animated gifs or stickers for free with Giphy. 4. PlaceIt - 4. Need to insert your content into a photo? Use PlaceIt. Users can download a single small video or image for free.
5. Recite - Similar to QuoteCover, Recite allows you to turn any phrase into a quote.
6. Storify - Live blog events, curate hashtagged content, or tell your story in a more engaging manner with Storify
7. Visme - Easily create amazing presentations, reports, product presentations, or infographics with Visme.
8. Thinglink - Add rich media links to images with Thinglink, a freemium interactive solution.
9. Easel.ly - Easel.ly offers template-aided infographic creation for simple data visualization.

Then there are innumerable mobile photo and video editing applications that allows play trick with images and work magic with video feeds. By simply searching in the Google play store and find with search words like photo editor or video editors mobile application.

The message amplifier or content transmitters: Mostly on the social network the citizen are found to be transmitters of the content. There are very less people who actually contribute to the satirical content. So mostly on social media network channels the subscribers are mostly content transmitter. There is no empirical dataset or any study that suggest people are only forwarding the messages. But a observation study carried on the Facebook posts and Whatsapp group it has been found that most of the time people forward the messages that lands in their group, which means they have just become

The most subscribed Content Generator

the instrument of transmitting the message. Very few people are actually engage in the activity of the creating or generating message may be the skills and the content topicality, creativity and presentation format are the deciding factors on creating the content. Shyam Rangeela, who is famous for mimicking leading politicians, Zakir Khan, famous for his societal trait observation and Kunal Kamara for subtle and sharp humour. Good number of subscribers follows them.

Limitation of the Study
Only the select Digitality aspects were being studied. The study is not exhaustive only relational aspects touched upon. The data used is based on the secondary source of information. The secondary source of information has its own limitations. An attempt is being made to cover wide spectrum of technological and human psychological aspects but not sufficient. Further study is still needed.

Conclusion
The active participation of the people, as citizens, in politics and civic life improve and strengthen democracy. Well informed and politically active citizens contribute in many ways to improve the democracy of the state. Satire is turning out to be most viable ammunition in the political campaign armoury, when it comes to make ones presence felt. Humour and Satirical content is used to

achieve a wide range of goals, such as: communicating a message, educating voters, placing an issue on the agenda and increasing support for a policy or cause. Social Media Network is the perfect platform or media a channel for those who wish to create ripple in the sea. Dub smash, Viral, Flash mob and other multimedia campaigns are helpful if the content quality is high, useful to the subscribers. Social media help triggers the people's engagement in the political discourse. Most of the people are satirical-content consumers. It is mainly due to the social media network the politics has become Real-time accessible, If the content is humorous and perfect amount multimedia blended citizen feel irresistible when it comes to share the content and make it viral. Political Meme, Dub smash, Viral, Flash mob and other multimedia are instrumental in creating the content and citizen act as content transmitters on social network. Participation in the political discourse is the most important requisite to improve or strengthen the democratic setup of the state. And thus by way of satirical political content generation/creation and sharing the active citizen are participating in the political discourse and by way of engaging on the digital platforms the citizen improving and strengthening democratic setup of the state.

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