**Impact of Social Media on Politics in India**

**Dr.Ganesh Prajapati\*\***

**Waymade College of Education(CVM University)**

**Vallabh Vidyanagar,Gujarat,INDIA**

[**ganeshprajapati@waymadedu.org**](mailto:ganeshprajapati@waymadedu.org)

**Abstract**

The approach is to explore the topics of social media which are often different and they do always interact with each other and force the analysis of its causes arriving sometimes at a different conclusion. Social media plays a key role in circulating news through multimedia platforms - C–governance, Anti-corruption Movement, Social Media and Indian Politics and attention to how social media is used for campaigning and for mobilizing social movements.

**Keywords :** Social media, anti-corruption, Indian Politics

1. **Introduction**

Social Media mirrors the real world and is all about conversations. Social media facilitates the interactive web by engaging users to participate in, comment on and create content as means of communicating with social graph, other users and the public. Social media has emerged as a major tool where citizens are able to talk about the issues of day to day life and also of national importance. In 21st century, Facebook, Twitter and You tube are not just innovations in the internet world, but are fast emerging as influencers and opinion creators.

**2.Classification of Social Media Websites**

Social media websites can be grouped as Social Networking sites, Social Bookmarking websites, social news websites, Social Photo and Video Sharing and Wikis. Social Networking sites like Facebook. FM interact by adding friends, commenting on profiles, joining groups and having discussions. Social Bookmarking websites link list, simply interact by tagging websites and searching through websites bookmarked by other people. Social News websites Digg, Propeller, Reddit interact by voting for articles and commenting on them. Social Photo and Video Sharing sites YouTube etc. interact by sharing photos or videos and commenting on user submissions. Wikis. (Wikipedia, Wikia) interact by adding articles and editing existing articles.

**3.Social Media and their Effects**

Social media have influenced many aspects of our life be it education, culture, administration, marketing, businesses or politics. Social media have been able to make profound impact by means of news, interaction, learning and marketing. Social media has become an important source of news. Various news channels tweet or give updates on significant happenings all over the world and the news quickly gets passed around the networks in ways never experienced before. It allows people to keep in touch more regularly. People in different cities, countries and continents can keep in touch effortlessly and it creates an opportunity to experience different cultures and exchange opinions.

Social media have also played a large part in fostering learning. Children who start using the social media platforms develop early communication skills, and generally become more literate. The whole dynamics of marketing have been changed. Companies are becoming more consumer¬centered through interactions made over social media. They are able to understand the needs of the market from the market itself.

**a.Social Media and C-Governance**

Social media has led to the emergence of citizen led governance (C–governance) in India. Anti corruption movement by Anna Hazare and protests followed by Nirbhaya gang rape were channelized through the social media.These events garnered enormous national and global support by involving the common man.

**b.Anti-corruption Movement**

Anna Hazare initiated a Satyagraha (Fasting for a nobel cause) movement for passing a stronger anti-corruption Lokpal bill in the Indian Parliament. He started hunger strike when the demand was rejected by Indian government. The movement attracted attention in the media, millions of supporters inside and outside of India. People showed support through social media such as Twitter and Facebook. Online Signature Campaigns like avaaz got more than 10 lakh signatures in just 36 hours. This led Government to seriously consider the introduction of Lokpal bill in parliament.

**c.Delhi Gang-rape**

In December, Delhi gang rape case, which made people’s collective anger to blast and come out on streets. Nationwide protests at India Gate area in New Delhi was a people’s movement and it was the scruples of the people who made them come out and demand justice for Nirbhaya. Social media played a pivot role in mobilizing people to India Gate.

T.V. was telecasting all the developments in the case but it was mobile phone which was updating those seating on streets. Every news item was reaching them on their cell phone via Facebook and Twitter etc. People received the reactions of famous people who are respected and hold a special place in society on twitter and got bonded like never before. The massive protests led the government to set up Justice Verma committee to bring changes in Rape law. Later on the Criminal Law [Amendment] Bill, 2013 was passed by the Lok Sabha on 19th March, 2013, and by the Rajya Sabha on 21st March, 2013. The amendments brought stricter punishments for the rapists.

# 4.Social Media and Indian Politics

# What is the impact of social media in politics of a democratic country like India? With so much ‘buzz’ being created about social media and as more youngsters are joining in the political parties have finally woken up to its importance. Everyone is recognizing this new and powerful medium to interact with the masses and make them participate and thereby enabling better communication. Indian politicians, be it young or old have started experiencing the impact of social media in one form or the other. Now, almost every political party used the social media to get their message across the masses.

Political campaigns are in no way just limited to buttons and banners for politicians to reach their constituents. The new political arena is full of commercials, blog posts, and hundreds of tweets. Through social media, politicians are now able to constantly display their message through endless commercials, see direct responses to their actions via Facebook or Twitter, and connect with public. Social media creates a new political dialogue. It takes the power of political messaging away from the mass media model and places it firmly into peer-to-peer, public discourse. The word of mouth advertising—a recommendation from someone you trust–is the most powerful form of persuasion and social media creates multiple levels of trust based on relationships.

# a. Social Media and Political Parties

In recent times, Indian political landscape has seen two major national parties, Indian National Congress and Bhartiya Janta Party fighting an online political battle. Online propaganda is aggressively used against each other. Each and every medium is used to wage war of words. One tweet leads the other to respond immediately. The most famous tweets from both sides were, BJP calling Rahul Gandhi as ‘Pappu’ and Congress calling Narendra Modi as ‘Feku’. Both the parties try to downplay the achievement and exaggerate the failures of each other. Both sides claim to have large number of followers.

The political parties have their own websites which was not seen some years back and some of them also use other social mediums to interact with people. With every party having its own website and leaders being active on different media it makes the citizens feel that they are within their reach. The need to take appointments or wait for them to talk is no longer required. The leaders are accessible at the click of a button.

The Congress party’s new vice president, Rahul Gandhi who is one of the icons of youth in India has used almost every social medium apart from actual communication to interact with the people and especially the youths. He has used social networking websites like Facebook to talk to people and prominent people as well as common man interacts at the same time. He also writes blogs to share his views with people. Mr. L. K. Advani of BharityaJanta Party has his own blog. Mr.Shashi Tharoor of Congress Party was one of the first politicians to start tweeting. Mr.Narendra Modi chief minister of Gujarat, has used all media to interact with people. He has been effectively using social media to disseminate information and remain in touch with the young population of India. He has often quoted that power of social media should be harnessed to involve youth in democratic process. The impact of his approach is visible in Gujarat elections.

**b. Social Media and Loksabha Elections**

Now coming to Lok Sabha elections of 2014, will wide spreading social media change the fate of political parties? The analysis of Indian demographics needs to be studied. The internet penetration in India is not very high. But the number of users is increasing very fast. As per the research conducted by IAMAI and IMRB International in June 2013, the Internet usage has gone up drastically, with 190 million active users in June 2013. Out of these 130 million are urban users and 60 million are rural users. Along with it there are considerable number of people using twitter and Facebook. Thirty seven per cent of urban Indian registered voters are online and use internet regularly. NRI population of India is 25 million. This population is active user of social media.Though they don’t have voting rights but they do influence the voting pattern of their relatives back home. This indicates that the number of people who directly or indirectly use or get influenced by social media is by no means a small number.

When talking about age profile of voters, facts indicate that India will be going for polling in 2014 with a younger electorate. The age group of 18¬35 yrs now constitutes 31.3% of the population (Census 2011). The Election commission estimates that the number of first¬time voters will go up to 149.36 million. This group is same as the one which is accessing social media 24\*7. India’s user base of Facebook between the age group of 18¬25 (52.8%) exceeds the average across other top 15 countries (33.7%) (Source: Inside facebook Gold, data from Facebook September 2010) But the ground reality is that these internet users seldom vote.

According to the census of 2011, India’s population is 121.01 crore, out of which Urban population is 377,105,760 (31.16%) According to Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) about 74% of all internet users in Urban India use social media. This indicates that social media can play a vital role in influencing urban Indian population. But the rural India population is 833,087,662 or 68.83%. Thus, a large majority of Indians live in rural areas with literacy rate of 68.91%. Previous elections have shown that the rural voter influences the results. Voting by rural people has always been more than by the urbanites. Analysis of the above figures show that since rural population is more but literacy rate is less, they are less likely to be influenced by social media, which not only requires literacy, but also a person should be tech savvy. Moreover, in India there are multiple factors which influence an individual voting decision. Indian voters, both urban and rural, keep caste, religion, community sentiments above all other considerations.

# 5.Conclusion

# The advent of social media has enabled an unprecedented empowerment and engagement of the ‘aam aadmi’ for expressing political opinions. A positive development of social media emergence has been that the youth is talking about the political issues. Earlier the political discussions were restricted only to those who read newspapers, watched news channels or participated in discussions in nukkad of a village or clubs. But now, social networking has made the youth of India to sit up and discuss political issues. They spend time to analyze and discuss politics. They now have views on the happenings of political events and they also influence the administrative decision making. But getting the youngsters together to vote in elections and using social media as a platform to help political parties is still a pipeline dream. It may take decades in India to replicate USA in the use of social media campaigning and to influence the voters. Social media revolution in the Indian political space is real, tangible and accelerating. Though it may not bring in huge changes immediately, but still it will play an important role in creating political awareness, which in itself is a huge step forward for a developing country like India.

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