

Marketing Strategies used by political parties in Indian Elections



IBM-306: Marketing Analysis

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Abstract: Politics is something that everyone can relate to in some way. Whatever may be a person's gender, income, caste or religion he is bound to be affected by government policies. There can be several ways to decide the country's top leadership like monarchy, communalism, democracy, etc. Out of these, democracy is the most trusted one due to the involvement of the people themselves in choosing their leaders and have their say in decision making. One of the most important processes of democracy is the conduction of free and fair elections. Often political parties resort to election campaigning to gain the trust of the voters before elections. It involves carrying out rallies, lectures, media debates, etc. Usually, a huge amount of money is spent in these election campaigns, often larger than the worth of several multinational companies. Another technique that has become quite famous with the advent of technology is the use of social media sites like Twitter, Facebook, etc to build a good image and tarnish the image of rivals. It is said that politics is not a child's play, it's a serious business.

I. INTRODUCTION

POLITICAL communication is one of the key differentiating tools of any democratic system and political campaigning during election time is one of the widely experienced political communications. connecting with people plays a very important role in democratic elections. Various strategies are adopted by political parties in order to communicate their views to voters in order to earn their votes. With an increase in the number of voters and the advancement of technology, the methods of political campaigning have changed over the past years. From simple person to person communication we have moved on to complex technology-driven methods to connect with people.

Advertisement is one of the most common methods used by political parties nowadays. With more and more people using the technology now the scope of the digital advertisement has started to play a major role. Political parties have started to use various tools to analyze the advertisement campaign which also helps them to improve their strategy. People nowadays are exposed to a huge amount of advertisements because of competitive politics in India which has dramatically increased the commercial use of newspapers, television and especially social media websites like Twitter, because of which there has been a significant rise in the amount of money spent by parties during the election.

In this work, we present an analysis of such techniques used by political parties with a special emphasis on social media. A comparison of various countries is also presented.

There are several techniques used to predict election results using social media. The most widely used techniques are volumetric analysis and semantic analysis. The results will vary from country to country due to differences in internet usage by the common people e.g. developed countries like the US and UK have high internet usage whereas countries like India and Pakistan only a few percents of the population has access to the internet usage.

II. The Study

The idea of investigating the relevance of usage of political advertisements is backed by may research with the fact that there are some effects of exposure to political marketing and these effects are not at all uniform. A huge amount of money is spent by parties in a short span of time during the elections probably without giving heed to this fact. This becomes more interesting in the case of Indian politics because, factors like religion, caste, creed are one of the prime basis of any election outcome in India.

Most of the past researches were done in and around the time of elections. It could be easily expected that the general interest and concern about politics tend to be higher

during these times. There's also a certain chance of having a recency effect, so various effects of political ads should not be considered as isolated effects.

The current study has taken the approach of data mining, sentiment analysis, as well as people's opinion regarding the effects of political advertisement. The study expects that differences in perceptions about the role of advertisements are mediated by their voting decisions.

One of the main reasons for this study is that the money of taxpayers is involved especially for the last few decades. The parties are in a belief that more money to advertisements will lead to more voter turnout favoring the party. But the data of 2009 elections clearly defies that. A vote for the incumbent party depends on the well-being of the national economy as well as the individual household. As reported in the Economic Times, "Indian voter and the Indian election is mind-bogglingly complex. There are complicated equations of caste, religion, urban-rural divide, linguistic and geographical diversity, and male female-youth constituencies. So, for a national advertising campaign, it is hard to find a common strand. Despite this political advertising is used heavily during the election time and quite often it is given more than its fair share in credit or blame"

III. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

The type of research used was basic **EXPLORATORY TYPE** research to design a hypothesis to find the relation between different marketing factors to its effect on candidates of different ages.

We used both **PRIMARY AND SECONDARY DATA** in our research to arrive at a conclusion. Our research is primarily focused on India but we also performed a comparison between a developed country i.e. USA. Several factors like education,

income levels, internet usage were found to affect the behavior of voters as well as political leaders.

A) DATA COLLECTION

The **PRIMARY DATA** collected was a study from the responses of 150 people of all ages above the voting age and below 18yr as well. The respondents were widely dispersed as the questionnaire was used in person as well as was floated online. The questionnaire was focused on the to find the influence of strategies used by parties. One problem with this technique that due to limited resources we could not sample the population properly. We could not collect many responses from the age category above 55 years of age.

But later while analyzing the other forms of data that the sampling error is quite low. Another form of primary data that focussed primarily on social media was collected using data mining from twitter. This was performed using open source tools, Social Mention and Tweet Sentiment Visualisation. Social Mention takes all the mentions of a particular word on the internet and categorizes them in the form of their sentiments and qualities like passion etc. Whereas Tweet Sentiment Visualisation particularly on twitter. We used keywords like Narendra Modi, BJP, Rahul Gandhi, Congress party, etc for India and similarly names of prominent leaders like Donald Trump, Joe Biden, etc for other countries. These websites first clean and filter out the data. Both supervised and unsupervised approaches were used to analyze the data.

For the purpose to collect Primary data, we circulate a **SURVEY FORM**. It comprises of a **QUESTIONNAIRE**, which asks the respondent about the individual's likes and preference. Few questions from the Questionnaire are as follow :

POLITICS AND YOU :

This survey is targeted at recognizing various marketing strategies used by political parties. This form is anonymous, so please answer all the questions freely.

1.) What is your age group?

- ☐ Below 18
- ☐ 18-25
- ☐ 26-42
- ☐ 43-60
- ☐ Above 60

2.) What is your gender?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Prefer not to say

3.) Biggest challenge faced by Indian Politics according to you?

- ☐ Cultural Differences
- ☐ Economy
- ☐ Corruption
- ☐ Education

4.) Which sources/platforms do you prefer to get the latest happenings?

- ☐ Social Media
- ☐ Newspaper
- ☐ Friends and Family member
- ☐ Tv news channel

5.) What percentage of news floating on social media do you think is fake?

- ☐ Response on likert scale (0 to 10)

6.) Which propagandas of political parties attract you the most?

- ☐ Economical
- ☐ Foreign Relation
- ☐ Environmental issues
- ☐ Religion
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Employment

For **SECONDARY DATA**, we read various articles and research papers available for similar topics. We performed a thorough literature review of these resources and they were quite helpful in giving us some direction in the beginning and helping us to reach a final conclusion.

Finally, the data accumulated was analyzed using statistical techniques and qualitative techniques. And everything has been concluded to build a **STATISTICAL PREDICTION MODEL**. A special web site was also designed based on the this prediction model. The website is composed of a quiz with multiple questions based on our analysis of different parties. The answers given by the user will be used to predict which party he is more likely to vote for based on a machine learning model.

IV. Analysis

There are mainly two techniques used for the analysis of data collected from social media sites. These are :

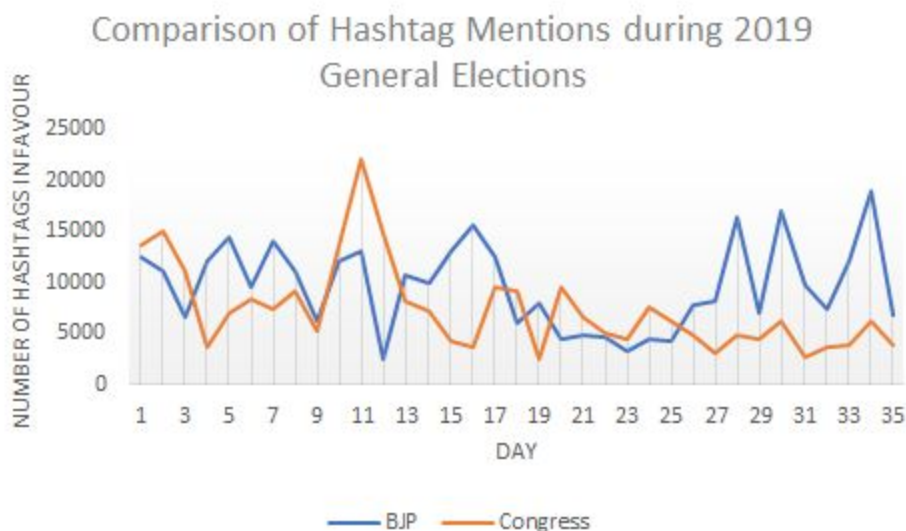
- 1) **VOLUMETRIC ANALYSIS** – Volumetric analysis is aimed at measuring the volume of attention or support (i.e. Frequency of mentions, supporters, likes, etc) measured by simple counts.
- 2) **SENTIMENT ANALYSIS** – Sentiment analysis is aimed at measuring the net, positive and negative impressions of each party. It analyses the sentiment of each tweet that whether it is sad, happy, aggressive .

Generally the sentiment analysis based model has better results. But we have used both approaches in our research. But mainly focused on sentimental analysis.

We have collected the data from Twitter for the time period near 2019 Indian General Assembly Elections.

Volumetric Analysis (The data used for this analysis can be found in the excel file attached with this submission)

We calculated the total number of hashtags in favor of BJP and Indian National Congress and the following distribution was obtained



We can see clearly for most of the days the number of social mentions for BJP is much higher than that of INC which agrees with the final results. Secondary sources reported have similar trends for other countries also. But, in some countries where they had a lot of minority parties, sometimes they were over-represented.

A.) Twitter Sentiment analysis for 2019 General Election :

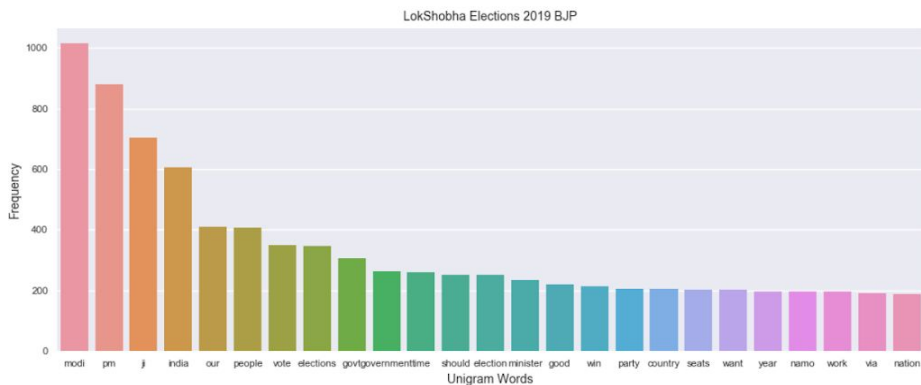
Introduction: Sentiment analysis has been predominantly used in data science for the analysis of customer feedback on products and reviews. They are used to understand user ratings on different kinds of products, hospitality services like travel, hotel bookings. This time we use this technique to analyze user tweets — positive, negative or neutral by crawling twitter through APIs.

Here we summarised some sentiment analysis of the crawling tweets from different hashtags of either party, party leaders floating during Lokshobha Elections for Congress and BJP.

Sentiment Representation by WordCloud

The different kinds of tweet sentiments are represented by means of different WordClouds. WordClouds are ideal representatives of labeled sentiments as the most common words specific to a mood appear bigger and bolder than other less frequent words. WordClouds are the fast and easy mechanism of representing the most relevant words for a theme or context. It's one of the most convenient ways to convey information visually appealing and engaging manner.

Bhartiya Janta Party :

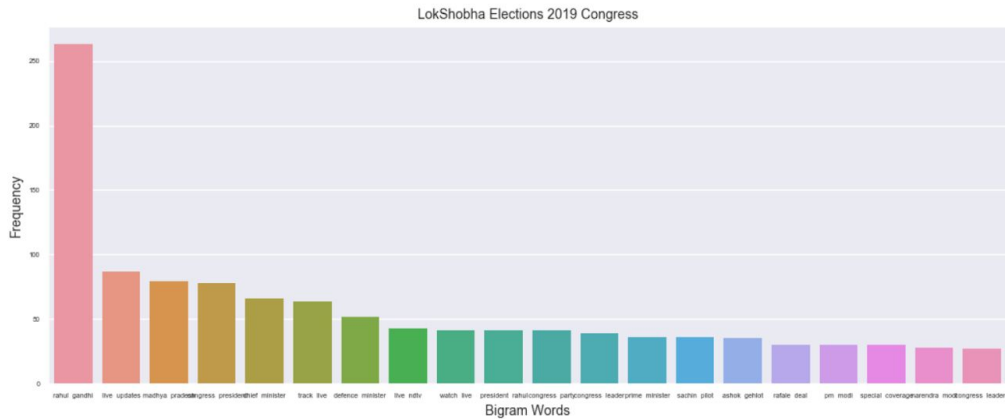


From the figure Above, you can see certain words of BJP like “Modi”, “pm” are more frequent and the tweets exhibit a tendency to “support”, “congratulate”, “thank” Prime Minister Narendra Modi for country’s development. Words like “Vikas”, “development”, “honest team” , “agree”, “sath” , point out positive sentiment towards Modi government. Further tweets that honor Prime Minister, are visible though words like “hon pm”, “dearest”, “fan”.

One kind of negative sentiment like “Fear” for the BJP government is analyzed and represented through a separate WordCloud. The “Fear” WordCloud shows a kind of negative feeling, fear/threat in people’s minds from opposition parties.

The “Fear” WordCloud has prominent bolded words like “worry”, “failure”, “mistrust”, “fighting” “worried”, “unexpected” , “wounded” that raises questions about doubts and uncertainties in people’s minds.

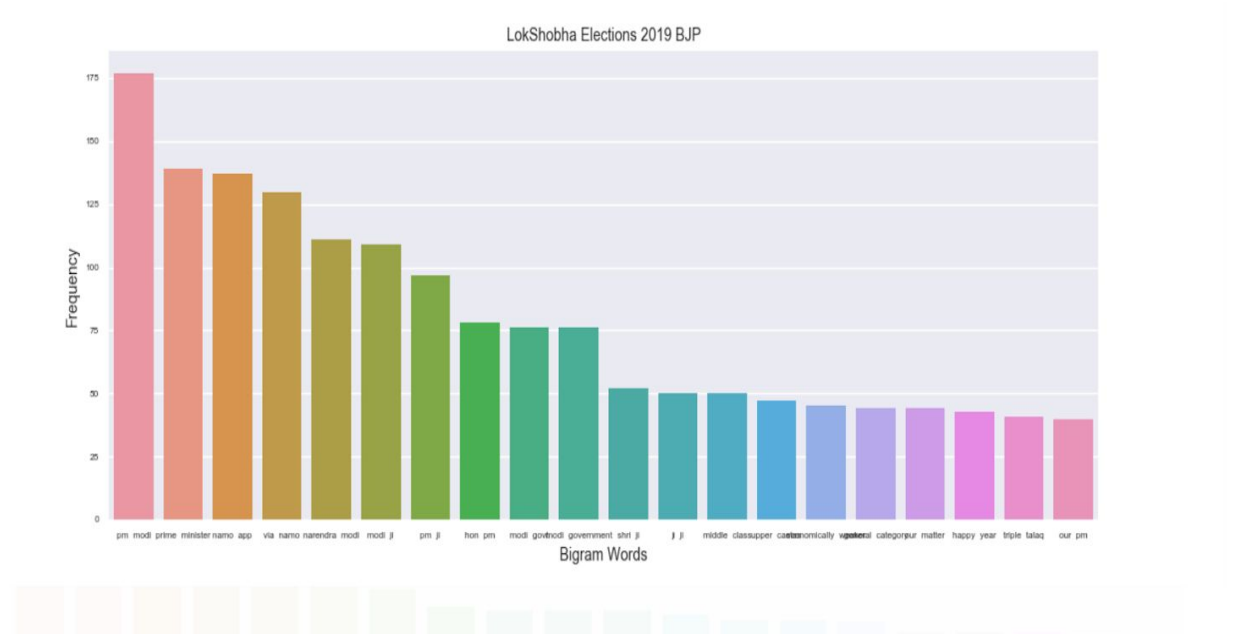
Congress:



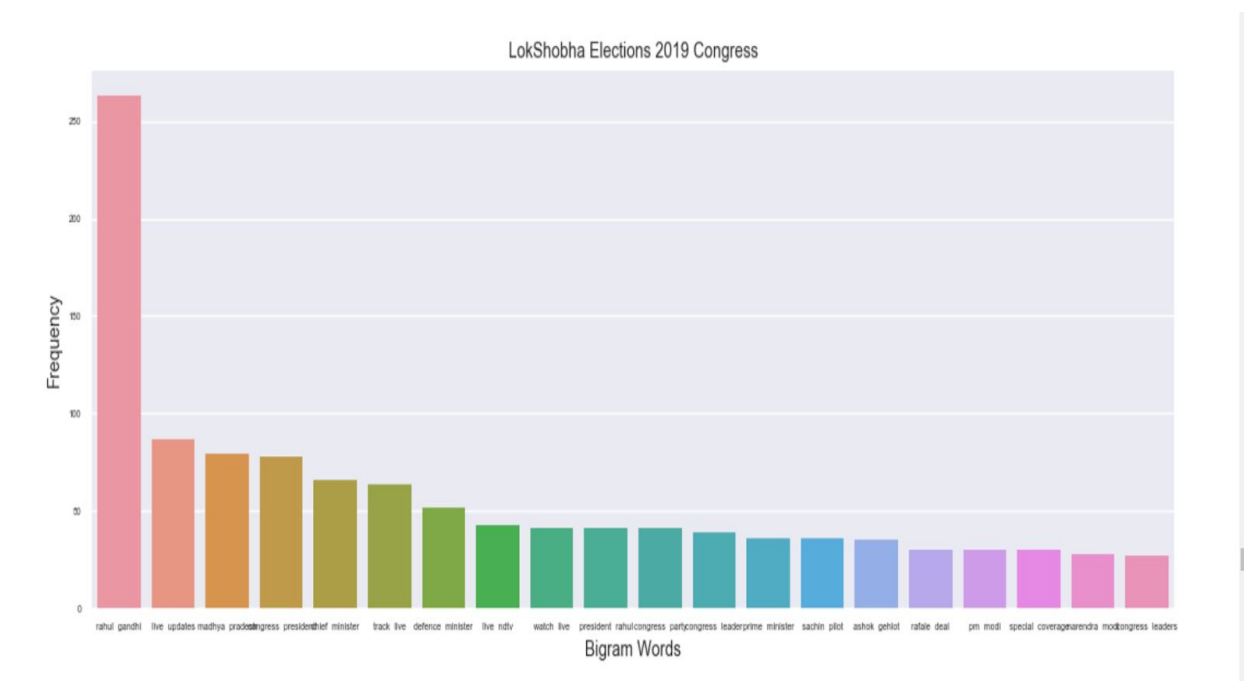
Similarly, doing the sentiment analysis for Congress, 2 different moods one Positive — Joy and another negative -Sadness are represented by means of WordCloud. The “Sadness” WordCloud of Congress have clearly distinguishable words like “lost”, “refused”, “defeat”, “destroy”, “crying”, “missed”, “loot”, “slaps” that remark a sense of negative disheartened feeling in the tweets. Further the occurrence of most frequent words “Gandhi”, “Rahul” shows Rahul Gandhi as one of the foremost leaders of Congress.

The positive tweet sentiments for Congress are represented by means of “Joy” WordCloud. Similar to the previous WordCloud “Rahul Gandhi”, “Congress” dominates the word cloud.

Words like “win”, “good”, “congratulation”, “great”, “truth”, “happy”, “love”, “victory”, “dancing”, “grand”, “cheer”, “laugh” exhibits a strong “Happy” and “Joyous” public sentiment for Congress.



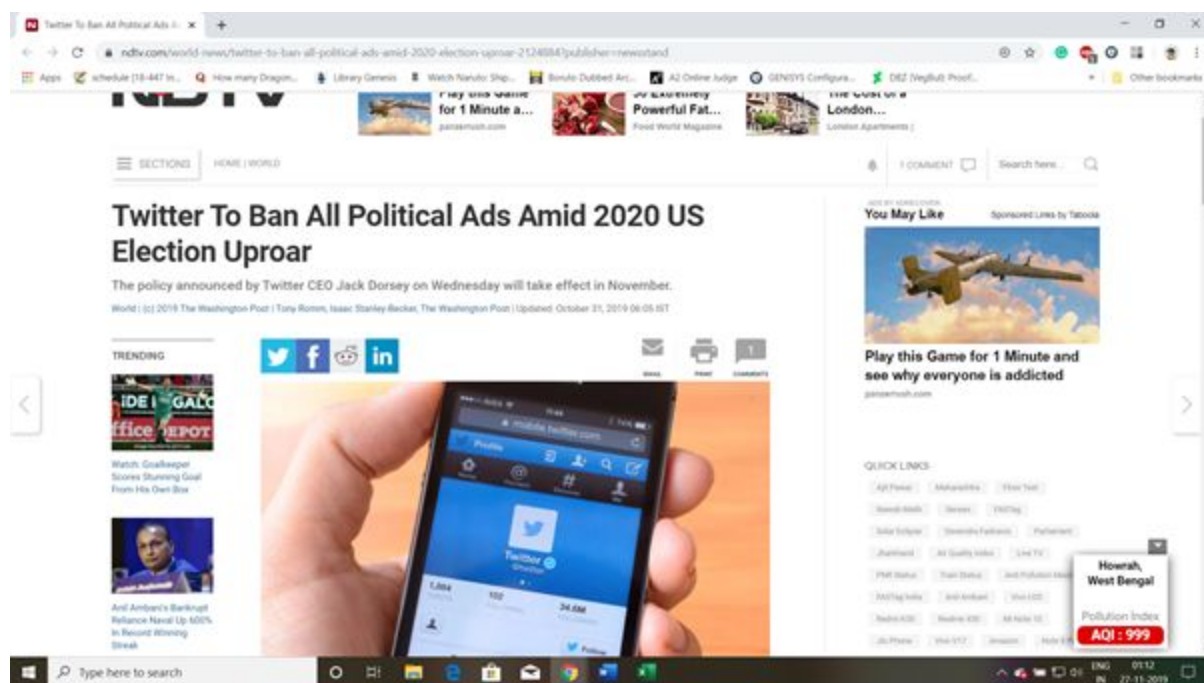
Similarly, **Bigram Frequency Distribution** for Congress and BJP shows the most dominant 2-word occurring in the respective tweets.



B.) COMPARISON TO DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

As we have seen above the impact of social media was quite high in 2019 General Assembly Elections but still, social media has not penetrated India as much as developed countries like the US and UK[]. According to a report by ICUBE which that tracks digital adoption and usage trends in India reported that total internet penetration in India is around 40%, still much less compared to 80% in the US. Therefore the role of social media is quite strong in the US and other developed countries.

Recently Twitter announced that it would ban all advertisements about political candidates, elections and hot-button policy issues such as abortion and immigration, a significant shift that comes in response to growing concerns that politicians are seizing on the vast reach of social media to deceive voters ahead of the 2020 election.



This decision has achieved mixed results with some critics highlighting that it would not affect what users can tweet and share on their own. The political ad ban also might not have much impact on widely followed accounts, including President Donald Trump's, whose tweets already reach more than 66 million users each day.

But Twitter's nearest relative i.e. Facebook has refused to introduce such policies.

A.) THE CHI-SQAURE TEST

The Primary data collected from survey mention above is analyse and represented in tabular form as below :

| <i>Observed Frequency</i> | | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------|------------|----------------|---------|---------|
| <u>Info Source</u> Age | Social Media | Newspapers | Family/Friends | TV news | • Total |
| Below 18 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 10 |
| 18 - 25 | 62 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 164 |
| 26 - 42 | 21 | 12 | 13 | 12 | 58 |
| 43 - 60 | 10 | 13 | 6 | 14 | 43 |
| Total | 98 | 59 | 53 | 65 | 275 |

Table 1

A chi-square (χ^2) statistic is a test that measures how expectations compare to actual observed data (or model results). The data used in calculating a chi-square statistic must be random, raw, mutually exclusive, drawn from independent variables, and drawn from a large enough sample. For example, the results of tossing a coin 100 times meet these criteria.

Hypothesis to be tested :

- **H_0 (Null Hypothesis)** : The age of people and the news source that they prefer are independent of each other.
- **H_1 (Alternate Hypothesis)** : The news source that people prefer is dependent on their age.

$$\chi^2 = \sum (OF - EF)^2 / EF$$

- OF : Observed Frequency
- EF : Estimated Frequency

$$EF = (R.T(\text{Row total}) * C.T(\text{Column total})) / G.T(\text{Grand total})$$

| <i>Expected Frequency</i> | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------|------------|----------------|---------|
| <u>Info Source</u> Age | Social Media | Newspapers | Family/Friends | TV news |
| Below 18 | 3.5 | 2.1 | 1.9 | 2.4 |
| 18 - 25 | 58.4 | 35.1 | 31.6 | 38.8 |
| 26 - 42 | 20.7 | 12.4 | 11.2 | 13.7 |
| 43 - 60 | 15.3 | 9.2 | 8.3 | 10.1 |

| <i>Value of χ^2</i> | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|------------|----------------|---------|
| <u>Info Source</u> Age | Social Media | Newspapers | Family/Friends | TV news |
| Below 18 | 0.64 | 0.57 | 1.9 | 1.06 |
| 18 - 25 | 0.82 | 0.83 | 0.78 | 0.87 |
| 26 - 42 | 0.004 | 1.013 | 1.8 | 0.71 |
| 43 - 60 | 1.83 | 1.56 | 1.44 | 1.50 |

$$\chi^2 = 18.327$$

With degree of freedom = 9 and confidence interval = 0.05. The critical value from the chi-square curve is 16.919.

Since the value of $\chi^2 >$ the critical value (16.919), the alternate hypothesis is accepted.

Hence, the news source that people prefer is dependent on their age.

Based on the above results the youth between the age of 18-25 are influenced more by Social Media.

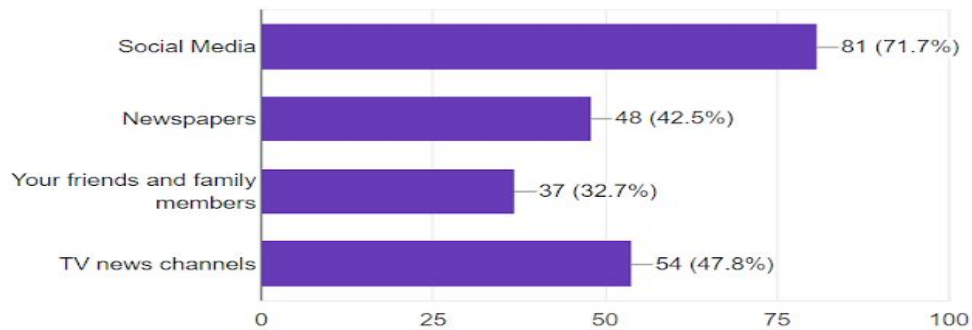
V. Results

Elections are surely a complex and multi-dimensional social in nature. Hence to capture the different voters, parties are always engaged in to find ground reports of the region and find there strategy. The strategies based on data analytics change daily and parties need to create war rooms from the very first day. It is a 24-hour cycle where at the end of the day party leaders, candidates and workers need to recalibrate the campaign and fine-tune their strategy for the next day. As from our analysis, we have found that there are many factors that political parties use to garner our votes. The major ones are:

A.) SOCIAL MEDIA :

The current civilization is a digital society. Every day, we come across many digital techs/platforms. Even most of the news that we gather today comes from social media.

Our data clearly shows that most of the data (around 71.7%) about political parties, their propaganda and their work is collected from Social Media. Even, Twitter has banned tweets about politics in the time of elections in America.



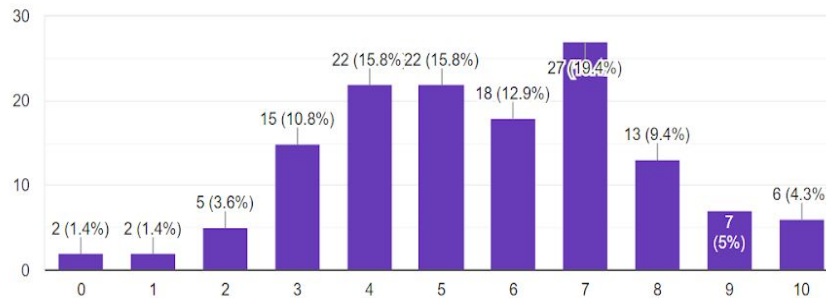
With such an effect it is sure that political parties will not leave this resource untapped. Many parties have built special offices for this purpose alone. A recent News report revealed that there are persons employed by parties that were operating more than 50 WhatsApp groups and even more facebook pages.

But with the rise of Social Media, there was also a rise in fake news. It is not new however it becomes a hot topic in 2017. Traditionally we got our news from trusted sources, journals or media outlets. However, the internet has enabled a whole new way to publish, share and consume information and news with very little regulation or editorial standards. Now many people get their news from social media and networks and often it is difficult to tell its credibility. Information overload and lack of understanding about how the internet works have contributed to a large increase in hoax stories and fake news.

In our survey, the amount of fake news that people think is floating around is about 45 to 60 %. Political parties use fake news to diss each other, interrupt in their works or even sometimes to incite some social groups which led to riots.

What percentage of news floating on social media do you think is fake?

139 responses



Coming to twitter, its a major platform used for political advertisement. Every new hashtag, slogans or Shayari and ranks in trending has a huge impact on the mind of voters. Using Data Mining, twitter data from 2019 elections were collected, after sorting it and assigning to parties, the frequency was collected which helped us to see how much election campaigning is included on this platform.

B.) TYPE OF CANDIDATE :

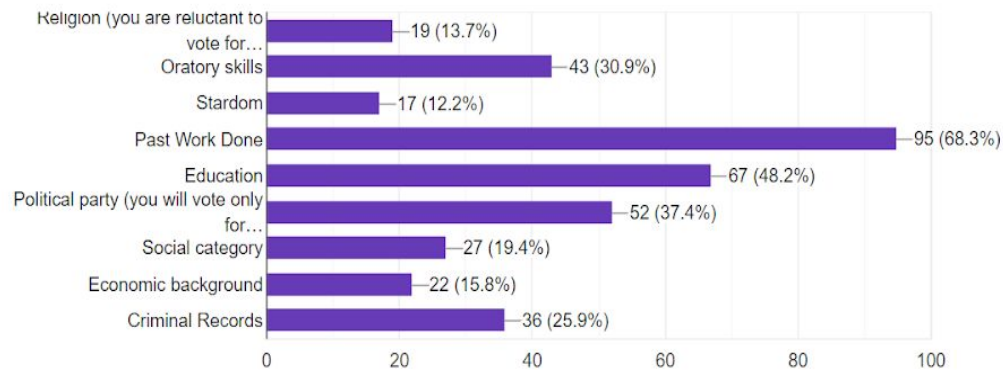
With so much diversity in India, each region has its own needs with different ideal types. Parties always choose their candidate in a region after certain groundwork is done. Some regions may prefer the age of a candidate, some of its religions and others maybe his background or political backing. In our survey, it can be easily that seen we had got a wide array of results. But still, the work done by candidates in the past has much more effect.

A simple example was seen in the Pathankot elections 2019, where congress collaborated with a political edge, a political strategist. After analysis, they found that they have to

focus more on youth, more jobs and a candidate with a humble and soft-spoken personality trait. The search was started and they found their suitable candidate Anil Vij which one with a huge margin against the former MLA.

On what basis do you choose the local political candidates in elections?

139 responses



C.) RELIGION, LANGUAGE & SOCIAL CATEGORY :

Religion and politics always go hand in hand. But the use of religion was almost non-existent at the time of independence. It is an interesting observation that communal politics gained strength only after 40 years of the national government.

Secularism in India began to face tremors with the revival and strengthening of religion-leaning political parties in the country. Congress which focused on minorities and Muslim vote was swept clean by pro-Hindu strategies of BJP, RSS and Vishva Hindu Parishad.

There are mainly two consequences of amalgamation of religion, caste, and politics. One, it has given prominence in political life to religious leaders like 'Imams', 'Priests' and 'mahants'. They are already playing an active role in government decision-making. And the Other, practices and festivals have already started making serious inroads into public

life. Politics on namaz on roads, early morning loud voice of prayers or azan and pollution of the environment by various religious activities.

In the recent Karnataka elections, congress realized it will be hard to win against Yeddyurappa in Central and Mumbai Karnataka. Hence they arrived at the strategy of dividing Lingayats, by giving minority status to the community, having thought they will claim one faction of Lingayat Community.

To counter this BJP approached Swamijis of Lingayat-Veerashaiva community informing deeds of congress and assuring them center is against it. BJP converted this into an ominous sign for Hindu Community itself and displayed it as dividing Hindus. Congress in reaction turned to Hindi opposition by the center and turned into a linguistic campaign. It partially helped Congress to gain some seats but ultimately lead to there loss. But, what matters most was, how these parties involved religion, caste, and language into politics.

D.) YOUNG VOTERS :

By 2020, India is poised to become the youngest country in the world with an average age of 29 years. As we face this demographic shift, India is looking at a gigantic workforce. Ahead of the 2019 General Elections, the Election Commission of India pegged the total number of registered voters at 900 million. Of this, 15 million are said to be first-time voters in the 18-19 age group. These youths will one day lead the nation and hence play a very important role in the development of India. Political parties know this and always try there best to claim this vote share. Opposite to the older counterparts, young people are less focused on factors like religion, caste whereas they have more focus on employment, economy, education and oratory skills. In 2014, BJP with its propaganda of generating 10 million jobs combined with a unique way of speaking of PM Shri Narendra Modi made them the most popular party among youth.

The data collected in our survey clearly shows that youth or in other words voters between the age of 18-25 preferred a better economy in terms of propaganda as well as oratory skills, background and education in case of qualities of Candidate.

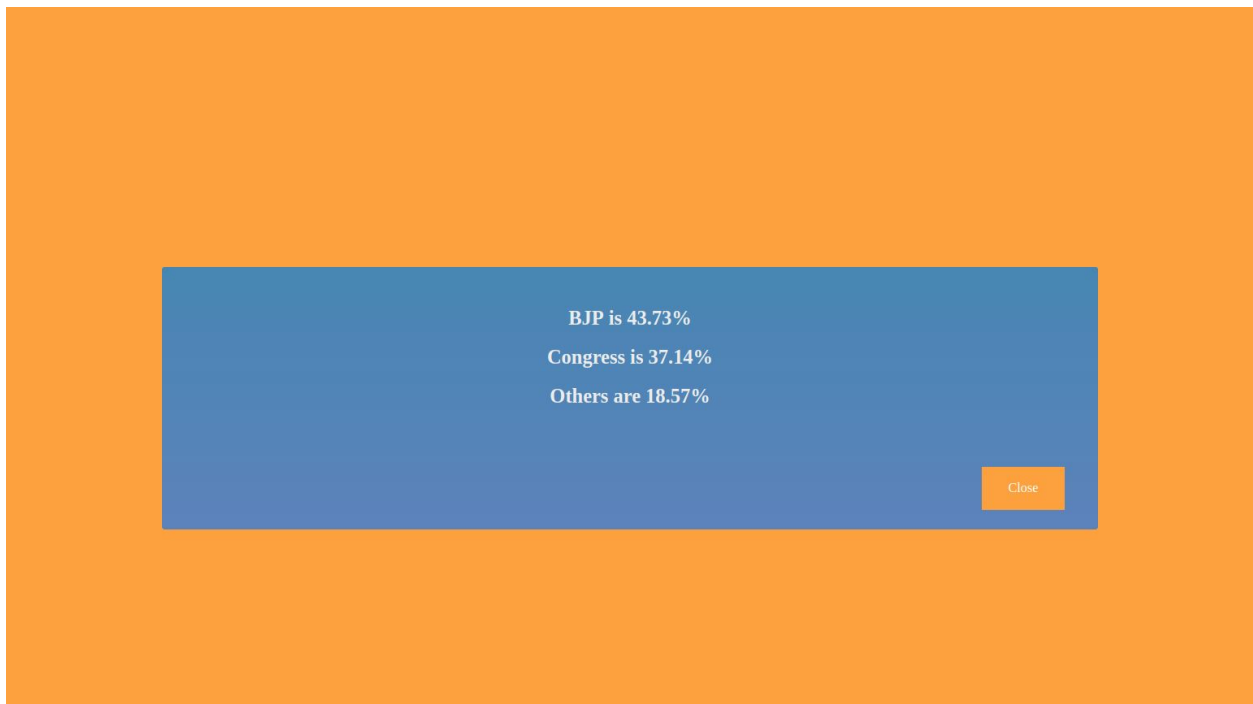
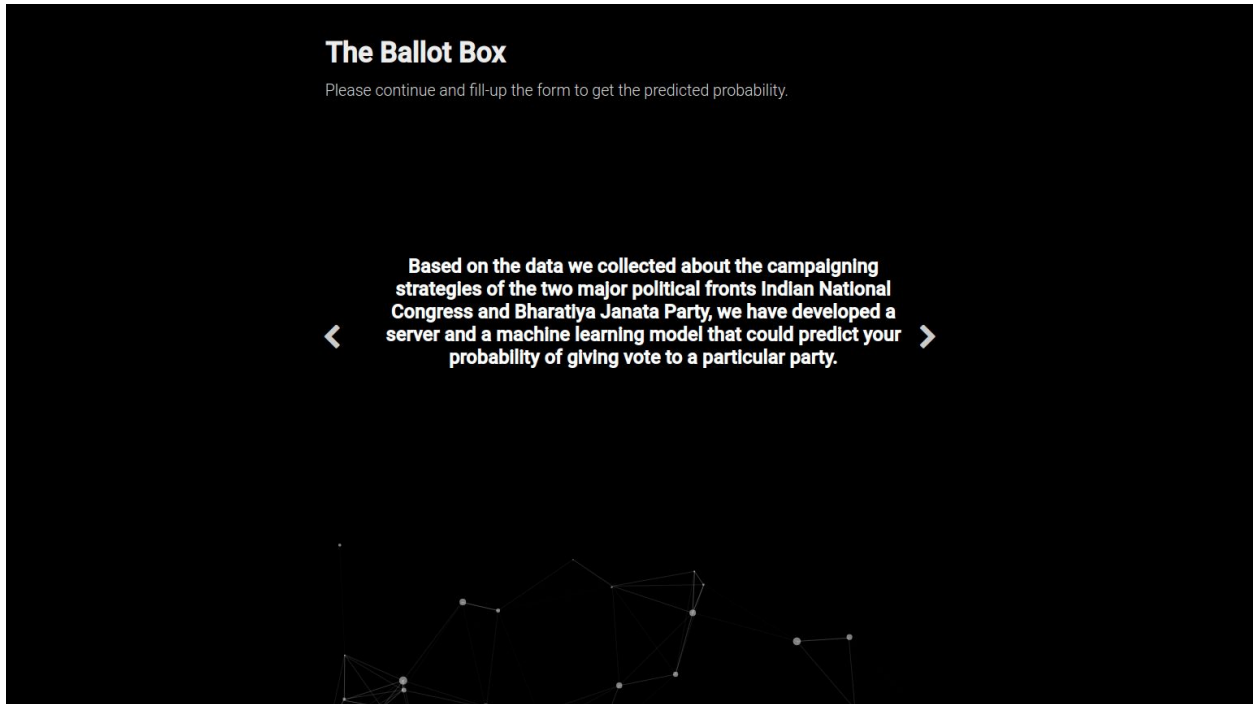
VI. CONCLUSION

In this research, we have followed a set of methods to collect the data. We have used a questionnaire to get diversity in the thoughts and beliefs of the voting population. The thought process of the voters forms the base of the marketing strategies used by various political parties during elections. From this survey, we have identified sources from which voters obtain their information where strategic technology-driven marketing methods turn out to be effective. We have used various free open-source software to mine data from popular social media platform Twitter.

From the questionnaire responses, we have done a χ^2 analysis to test the alternative hypothesis that the source of news varies with the age of the person. The data obtained from tweets during the time of elections has been used for volumetric as well as sentimental analysis. From this data, we have obtained a correlation between the number of tweets and the success of a political party in the 2019 general elections.

From all the primary and secondary data collected in this marketing research, we have developed a **statistical and mathematical model** to predict the probability of voting a particular party based on a set of questions that the person will answer.

Link to website :- <https://politic1.herokuapp.com>



As social media makes sharing of information quite easy even with a large population and also it provides two-way communication, it is sure to have a profound effect on the future of politics in hugely populated countries like India.

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