

EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL MEDIA STRATEGIES ON VOTER PERCEPTIONS IN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS DURING THE 2024 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Political campaigns underwent dramatic changes because of quick digital media evolution which directly affected voter understanding and voting choices. This paper studies digital media campaign effects on voter perception throughout the 2024 parliamentary elections by analyzing different network platforms and personalized content strategies and audience engagement methods. This research uses both quantitative social media data analysis and digital advertisement metrics together with qualitative data from voter interviews and sentiment analysis to deliver its findings. Digital campaign strategies prove highly influential for how voters make their political choices because they deliver custom content and a blend of endorsements from important persons along with contemporary political discussions. The research examines the moral effects of digital political advertisement while investigating its wide-ranging impact on democratic voting. The study adds to modern political communication understanding while presenting guidelines for digital voter engagement transparency that professionals of both policy and campaigns need today. To conclude, this study finds that digital media strategies significantly shape voter perceptions and engagement in political campaigns. The findings highlight the necessity for political parties to adopt data-driven and interactive digital approaches for effective voter outreach.

Keywords: Digital media, political campaigns, voter perceptions, electoral outcomes, social media strategies, targeted messaging, voter behavior, sentiment analysis, digital political advertising, democratic participation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The expansion of digital technology integration throughout daily existence transformed political communication at the global level (Anom, 2024)¹. The Indian parliamentary elections of 2024 marked a significant advancement in political digital tactics including social media methods for voter interaction. The political landscape evolved from conventional rallies and print media networks to utilize WhatsApp and Twitter (X) together with YouTube and Telegram for interactive targeted campaign delivery (Ayu, 2023). Digital strategies became essential for influencing public opinion while shaping discourse and mobilizing voters because the country has 800 million internet users and 960 million eligible voters.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Some research studies have examined the Indian election campaign in terms of its growing trends using digital media across different parties. Scholars have also examined ways political actors mobilize voters over online spaces, the way they use digital mediums evolving along traditional campaigns, and the ways courts update legal approaches to regulate how new media interfere in elections. The body of studies taken collectively informs a proper overview of ways in which digitization is restructuring traditional campaigning political tactics in both India and other similar democracies.

Biswas et al., (2022) investigated voting patterns together with electoral developments throughout the West Bengal Lok Sabha elections from 2004 to 2019. The researchers evaluated how different social and political factors alongside economic performance and party strategies and local regional concerns shaped voting patterns across those years. Through their research they established important voting behaviors such as how local residents reacted to new political alliances and national politics. The authors provided detailed statistical information which revealed and analyzed changes in voting behavior during the 2004 to 2019 elections. The research examined political developments in West Bengal by examining how local and national political elements influence voter choices (Biswas, 2022)².

¹ Anom, E. R. M. A. N., Vina, E., & Samani, M. C. (2024). Political Communication Strategy in the 2024 Indonesia's Presidential Election. *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 40(2).

² Biswas, F., Khan, P. N., & Ahamed, M. F. (2022). A study of electoral dynamic and voting behavior from 2004 to 2019 in Lok Sabha elections of West Bengal. *GeoJournal*, 87(5), 4363-4389.

Rahim et al., (2023) proposed a legal cultural model based on social media strategies to avoid money politics during the planned 2024 simultaneous elections in Gorontalo Province, Indonesia. Their study looked into how social media is used as an instrument of political campaigning but also as a means to carry out money politics, thus perpetuating corruption. The research evaluated whether current legal and ethical frameworks adequately restrain such practices, highlighting that a robust legal culture complemented by targeted social media engagement can prevent the adverse effects of money politics. Based on comparative analysis of political candidates' behaviors, legal frameworks, and voter behavior, the authors established a model that gives precedence to preventative legal education via digital media. This study offers insightful information on how legal infrastructure can use contemporary means of communication to enhance a more equitable electoral process (Rahim, 2023)³.

Adi and Huda (2023) studied the development of political campaign strategies from conventional to online approaches in Mojokerto District, Indonesia. Their study investigated how online platforms reorganized political mobilization and communication. The research evaluated how Mojokerto District politicians engaged with online tools, such as social media, website creation, and online advertisement materials, to widen their reach and involve citizens in political activities. The authors pointed out the benefits of online campaigns, including cost-savings and voter-to-voter contact, but also noted the challenges of digital literacy and disinformation. The research presented here offered valuable information on the evolution of political campaigns and the increasing use of digital technologies in contemporary electoral politics. (Adi, 2023)⁴.

Ohme (2019) investigated how novel political media consumers of social media platforms interacted with election campaigns. The research examined digital native voters who recently entered the voter rolls through their election conduct. In his examination Ohme studied the impact of social media on political engagement along with campaign involvement for first-time voters to understand their media interaction patterns and opinion-building methods for

³ Rahim, A., Rusmulyadi, R., & Ibrahim, V. (2023). A Model of Legal Culture for Prevention of Money Politics Through Social Media Strategies for Facing Simultaneous Elections in 2024 Gorontalo Province. *Jurnal Hukum Volkgeist*, 8(1), 123-132.

⁴ Adi, A. S., & Huda, M. R. (2023, December). The Transformation of Political Campaigns from Conventional to Digital Political Campaigns (A Study in Mojokerto District). In *International Joint Conference on Arts and Humanities 2023 (IJCAH 2023)* (pp. 1797-1802). Atlantis Press.

candidate involvement. The research investigation showed that social media activity enhances political participation and digital natives demonstrate higher frequencies of such activity. The research documented how digital media continues to reshape voter behavior especially among fresh voters while demonstrating social media's expanding role in electoral mobilization efforts of present-day elections (Ohme, 2019)⁵.

3. DIGITAL CAMPAIGNING AND THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

Successive general elections of 2024 represented a transformative moment for political communication due to digital campaigning becoming the essential tool for political engagement with voters (Badham, 2022)⁶. Social media platforms Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and X (formerly Twitter) created new prime electoral battlegrounds surpassing traditional media channels to establish their dominance during India's first digital electoral contest. Political parties used algorithmic targeting together with viral content formats and influencer networks to apply their political messaging to voters through daily life experiences thus making content more engaging and sustaining while fostering active participation. The method voters used to access political information evolved across demographic groups with younger people from cities using social media and messaging platforms but older rural citizens sticking to TV and printed media. Changes in the way politics is conveyed through personalization alongside rapid dissemination and the formation of echo-channels portend an era where digital campaigning surpasses traditional electoral methods as the primary determinant of electoral responses and political strategy development in democracy.

3.1.Social Media as an Emerging Theatre of Fierce Political Contest

The 2024 Indian general elections functioned as both the worldwide biggest electoral process and the most tech-forward along with expensive electoral campaign in Indian history (Balakumaraguru, 2024)⁷. In contrast to historic election campaigns traditional newspaper print

⁵ Ohme, J. (2019). When digital natives enter the electorate: Political social media use among first-time voters and its effects on campaign participation. *Journal of information technology & politics*, 16(2), 119-136.

⁶ Badham, M., Luoma-aho, V., Valentini, C., & Lumimaa, L. (2022). Digital strategic communication through digital media-arenas. In *Research handbook on strategic communication* (pp. 416-430). Edward Elgar Publishing.

⁷ Balakumaraguru, B., & Ganesh, R. S. (2024). Role of Social Media Campaign: New Era of Election War and their Impacts in India. *Shanlax International Journal of Arts, Science and Humanities*, 11(4), 138-144.

and television debate events along with public rallies and poster displays controlled media communication but the 2024 election marked a fundamental shift to digital dominance. The main platforms of social media including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and X (formerly Twitter) became the fundamental domains for political messaging creation and message disputes and message increase. Political content entered the daily digital encounters of users through platforms which provided both interactive features and personalized content recommendations.

Social media gained extraordinary power in this election because algorithms identified voters through their activities and preferred content as well as geographic location. Social media differed from traditional campaign strategies because it delivered campaign material to users without forcing them to choose between participation or avoidance of political content. The Campaign integrated political material through advertisements and campaign content within news feeds and stories which merged with normal user interactions. The political messaging became unpreventable because of this system which continuously showed campaign content to voters all through the election period (Baldwin-Philippi, 2015)⁸.

This forum served political parties for information dissemination as well as persuasion techniques and inflammatory material. The political parties delivered specialized political messages toward specific voting groups including young citizens as well as women and novices and spiritual communities along with local population segments. Social media provided political entities with tools to use meaningful language and specific cultural symbols alongside touching graphic material which enabled them to create a personal connection to targeted voter segments.

Every speech and statement which attracted controversy on social media platforms triggered immediate wave after wave of user reactions and organized digital harassment campaigns. The medium granted rapid response capabilities which allowed parties to quickly counter adversary attacks through strategic narrative shifting within little more than a few hours. Political campaigns used viral content especially memes and short-form videos to reach millions of

⁸ Baldwin-Philippi, J. (2015). Using technology, building democracy: Digital campaigning and the construction of citizenship. Oxford University Press.

people while spending small amounts of money in comparison to traditional advertising methods.

Social media established itself as the primary stage for political campaigns following the results of the 2024 elections. Political actors used this system to maintain an endless personal style of communication which led to interpretive blurring between political activities and entertainment features as well as between persuasive strategies and propaganda techniques. Digital engagement during the recent elections marks a transformative moment for Indian politics because digital methods now appear to rival conventional campaign techniques for shaping electoral results.

3.2.Information Channels and Voter Attitudes

Understanding voter behavior regarding political information consumption enables experts to better examine the impact of social media on public opinion development alongside electoral results. The multiple channels where people obtain information about the 2024 Indian general elections have had major impacts on voter attitudes combined with voter perception of trust levels alongside engagement with political content. The 2022 C-Voter and SPRF India research initiative examined how political information spreads to and is received by voters throughout India. Social media together with television stand as the top two information sources concerning elections as shown by the study which revealed that 30% of the participants mainly use social media for political news updates.

Vote patterns are undergoing a fundamental transformation based on this discovery. Press and radio no longer maintain their dominant influence on Indian voters since young city dwellers prefer instant dynamic information that caters to their personal interests. Users now receive political information instantly through Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (X), and WhatsApp platforms which embed news into entertaining peer-shared material creating more exciting content people cannot overlook. Platform users can find news alongside spaces for political discussions and the creation of opinions alongside groupthink content.

The C-Voter and SPRF study showed major partisan discrepancies regarding voter behavior when obtaining political content. Supporters of the BharatiyaJanata Party (BJP) within NDA-aligned groups actively sought political news more often than other voters. The members of

this group watched television frequently because they believed particular TV channels matched their political preferences. Individuals who vote for opposition parties show less activity in seeking traditional media news about politics by heavily using both digital alternative platforms and their peer network for updates.

Social media developed into a platform that attracted equivalent use from both political sides which consumed its content almost equally. Social media algorithms develop user-specific content referral systems by analyzing individual behavior patterns thus strengthening pre-existing opinions. The extensive user base together with spontaneous interactions along with the ability to generate content from users on social media platforms created opportunities for people to experience new political perspectives but this advantage diminishes due to its massive reach (Bhat, 2024)⁹.

A series of interconnected factors composed of personal media tastes and online expertise with platform automated processes demonstrates a fundamental shift in election voter opinions. Social media operates as more than an alternative to conventional media since it has established itself as a fundamental element within voters' information acquisition networks. This effect transforms voter understanding of political matters while also changing their emotional reactions to both topics and contesting candidates. Political campaigns now focus on developing audiences through these different channels because information availability directly affects how voters behave during elections and in following elections and their willingness to vote.

Table 1: Comparative Overview of Political Information Channels and Their Impact on Voter Attitudes (Borz, 2024)¹⁰

Source: <https://sprf.in/social-media-as-an-emerging-theatre-of-fierce-political-contest-insights-from-the-2024-indian-general-elections/>

Information Channel	Primary Audience	Nature of Content	Engagement Style	Partisan Influence	Impact on Voter Attitudes
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⁹ Bhat, A. A., & Noor, R. (2024). Examining political discourse: A comparative analysis of pdp and Bjp's facebook campaigns ahead of the 2024 elections. *Mass Communicator: International Journal of Communication Studies*, 18(4), 32-40.

¹⁰ Borz, G., & De Francesco, F. (2024). Digital political campaigning: contemporary challenges and regulation. *Policy Studies*, 45(5), 677-691.

Television	Rural, elderly, traditional viewers	Broadcast debates, speeches, expert panels	One-way, scheduled viewing	Often perceived as biased	Reinforces existing beliefs; high impact among older voters
Newspapers	Educated, urban, older demographics	In-depth articles, editorials, analysis	Passive, daily engagement	Varies by publication	Encourages critical thinking; slow influence
Social Media	Youth, urban, mobile-first users	Memes, reels, live videos, hashtags	Interactive, real-time	Algorithm-driven, echo chambers	Shapes perceptions quickly; fosters rapid opinion formation
WhatsApp/Telegram	Mixed (family groups, local networks)	Forwarded messages, images, political content	Peer-to-peer, viral	Hard to regulate	Highly influential in spreading propaganda and misinformation
YouTube/Video Platforms	Youth, tech-savvy voters	Vlogs, explainer videos, campaign documentaries	Personalized, visual-heavy	Influencer-driven	Builds emotional connection; good for storytelling and branding

4. DIGITAL ADVERTISING AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

Political campaigns as part of the 2024 Indian general elections underwent a profound revolution through the adoption of digital advertising which became the central method for voter connection and narrative governance (DADA, 2023)¹¹. Political parties especially BharatiyaJanata Party (BJP) and Indian National Congress (INC) utilized data-based advertising through Meta and Google to precisely reach specific targeted voter populations in their geographic locations and language preferences and interest profiles. Such platforms created a foundational platform that enabled political forces to define public sentiment while

¹¹ DADA, L. S. (2023). Media's Influence on Voter Behavior: The Impact of News Coverage on Election Outcome. Journal of Human, Social and Political Science Research.

building support and managing current developments. Surrogacy-based web pages together with private networking systems operated as essential distribution channels for political content that ran under the system's eyes because they leveraged regulatory unknowns to spread viral social media content. Both BJP and INC allocated their campaign funds diversely as BJP targeted Odisha and West Bengal whereas INC directed its funds toward Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. The organic development in election marketing infrastructure demonstrates the growing digital campaigning systems while requiring better balance between platform visibility and governmental responsibility as well as ethical conduct and localized interaction.

4.1.Meta and Google Advertising

Social media platforms became indispensable to political campaigns when Indian general elections took place in 2024 because they relied heavily on paid advertising. Meta Facebook together with Instagram and Google YouTube plus Search ads functioned as the most significant players among them. These platforms offered two main advantages: wide reach and powerful micro-targeting tools which sent customized content to certain demographic areas and regional groups.

During the duration of May through August 2024 the BharatiyaJanata Party (BJP) utilized Meta ads totaling ₹6.61 crores according to data retrieved from the Meta Ad Library. Elsewhere in the digital realm the Indian National Congress (INC) used advertising but at reduced capability levels. The BJP implements a strategic digital campaign because its vast financial resources allow it to outspend the opposition in digital advertising (Dommett, 2018)¹².

Party messages gained additional strength through multiple unofficial pages controlled by supporters that shared similar political views. The unidentified accounts serving as surrogates for political parties exploited unclear accountability boundaries to extend polarizing information thereby detaching the party from legal oversight. The content pushed by these accounts regularly strayed into areas which crossed ethical boundaries or pursued messages

¹² Dommett, K., & Temple, L. (2018). Digital campaigning: The rise of Facebook and satellite campaigns. *Parliamentary Affairs*, 71(suppl_1), 189-202.

that used emotions and community appeal as voter influence strategies. The Model Code of Conduct faces implementation difficulties because of tactics that test its boundaries.

Google advertising became essential for implementing the digital strategy in Odisha since the state received exceptional spending levels. Strategic Google Ads from parties appeared next to public inquiries about local affairs and regional leaders in addition to inquiries about competing political groups. Campaigns gained the ability to control messages in real time through this highly specific targeting system which utilized regional population sentiments.

Digital advertising has transitioned from supplementary to essential according to the combination of Meta and Google Ads usage. This system enables immediate contact with voters at the last moment while reinforcing messages repeatedly with a scalable tool for managing information flow. The lack of proper regulation and real-time oversight creates concerns about transparency while permitting potential manipulation of digital advertising through Meta and Google Ads platforms.

Table 2: Meta and Google Ad Spend Overview by Selected Political Pages (May–Aug 2024)

Source: <https://sprf.in/social-media-as-an-emerging-theatre-of-fierce-political-contest-insights-from-the-2024-indian-general-elections/>

Political Entity / Page	Meta Ad Spend (INR Crores)	Google Ad Trend	Electoral Outcome	Observation
BharatiyaJanata Party (BJP)	6.61	High (especially in Odisha)	Success (national level)	Led in ad spend; used surrogate pages to extend digital presence
Indian National Congress (INC)	1.62	Moderate	Mixed results	Focused on northern battleground states
BJP – Odisha Chapter	1.35	Very High	Success	Strategic state-level ad push; successful in

				both Lok Sabha and Assembly polls
All India Trinamool Congress (AITC)	0.23	Moderate	Success (WB)	Strong performance despite lower ad spend
Aam Aadmi Party – Punjab	0.16	Low	Success	Focused on organic campaigning and local issues
BJP – West Bengal	0.25	Moderate	Upset	High digital investment didn't yield expected results
Congress – Punjab	0.07	Low	Success	Regional targeting in stronghold state

4.2.State-Wise Social Media Ad Expenditure and Political Competition

During the 2024 Indian general electoral period states battling competitive politics experienced increased digital campaign costs particularly within Meta and Google platforms. Political parties distributed their advertisement budgets according to their estimation of which regional contests were most uncertain. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) pumped substantial funds into digital advertising for both Odisha and West Bengal alongside other states in southern and eastern regions. The state Assembly elections held in Odisha required the BJP to invest the greatest sum of their digital advertising budget from all states. The Indian National Congress (INC) focused its advertising budget on the important political battleground of northern states including Uttar Pradesh (UP), Punjab and Haryana for the purpose of recovery (Goodstein, 2023)¹³.

The state-wise social media advertisement spend between BJP and Congress can be clearly assessed through Figure 1 below which displays their expenditure in each state. The data reveals that BJP heavily spent on digital advertising within Odisha and West Bengal but Congress had greater advertising budgets in UP and Punjab. The political organizations

¹³ Goodstein, S. (2023). How Digital Changed the Political Landscape. In *Campaigns and Elections American Style* (pp. 269-290). Routledge.

directed their funds towards specific states because they required voter conversion while reinforcing key messages and countering opposition messaging.

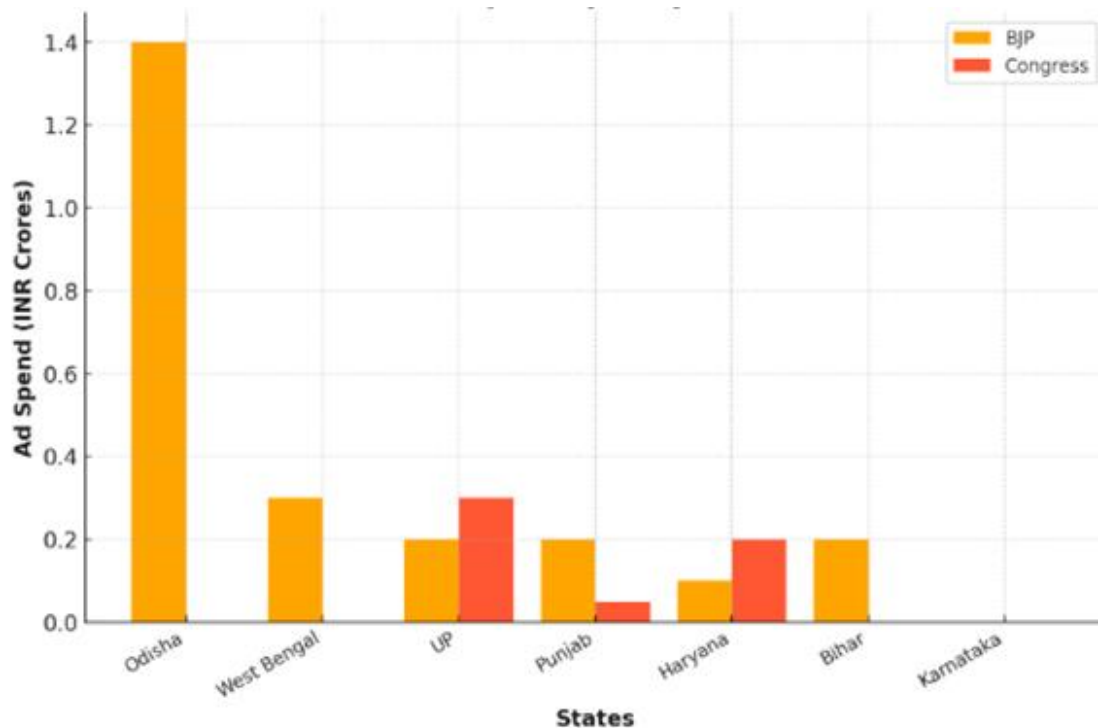


Figure 1: Political Ad Spend by Party Across States

Source: <https://sprf.in/social-media-as-an-emerging-theatre-of-fierce-political-contest-insights-from-the-2024-indian-general-elections/>

The heavy digital presence of BJP in West Bengal states resulted in electoral failures even though the party spent substantial funds on social media advertisements. Local leadership and grassroots organization together with existing voter loyalty proved decisive for determining BJP's electoral results. The complex nature of elections proves that digital prominence needs to merge with field-level political activities to achieve effective results. Social media advertising produces superior reach and narrative command yet its success depends on successful fusion with general campaign approaches together with public opinions.

4.3.Content Strategy and the Use of Surrogate Pages

Surrogate pages became a highly contentious digital campaign practice during the 2024 Indian general elections because they operated unofficially as duplicate pages across social media platforms (Harini, 2023)¹⁴. Such surrogate pages functioned crucially to spread inflammatory political content which allowed parties to maintain operational distance from their potentially incriminating content. Surrogate pages posted content under false identities to create huge quantities of political memes along with short videos and infographics and satirical messages for shaping public opinion through targeting opposing leaders as well as minorities and specific social or political matters.

The effective power of these surrogate operations originated from being impossible to track while operated from multiple sources. They functioned independently from political party control so they evaded disclosure requirements from the Election Commission and standard campaign finance rules. This method enabled them to extend the limits of the Model Code of Conduct while broadcasting messages that official party outlets hesitated to disseminate publicly. Platforms removed content because of hate speech activities and disinformation alongside ethical violations yet this material reemerged through replicate pages followed by multiple resharing events thus establishing an unstoppable cycle of propagandistic material.

The substitute network infrastructure utilized different social media channels chiefly Facebook and Instagram with additional service through WhatsApp and Telegram for increasing peer-to-peer content distribution. These networks had an effective mechanism for spreading emotionally intense content which was purposefully created for instilling strong emotions rather than providing information. Such tactics allowed political parties with extensive digital presence mainly the BJP to gain control over public discourse and suppress opposing viewpoints while crafting artificial public perceptions.

The absence of proper controls or light on digitally published content led to erosion of electoral integrity. The public struggled to distinguish actual political messages from artificial digital propaganda in their election communications. Political communication and media received

¹⁴ Harini, D. I. (2023). PDIP Political Dynasty Phenomenon Ahead of The 2024 Election. *International Journal of Politic, Public Policy and Environmental Issues*, 3(1), 23-30.

major damage because citizens got lost in an overload of information while enduring manipulative content. Surrogate pages used during elections as digital weapons demonstrated the immediate requirement to establish robust norms and content accountability and digital ethics enforcement in India's electoral system.

5. INFLUENCER INVOLVEMENT AND VOTER ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

The 2024 Indian general election brought about an exceptional evolution of political communication through digital influencers alongside strategic content creators while interactive engagement tools played a crucial role in transforming campaign strategies and improving voter outreach. Political entities migrated from traditional media forms by hiring personal storytellers who utilized data to create engaging politics content which thousands of popular social media influencers boosted through their enacted communication roles as voter-access bridges. Various tools including hashtags along with reels video options and real-time updates and live streaming functioned as essential methods for linking with different population segments throughout the country. The political campaigns used hashtagssuch as #AbkiBaar400Paar, #JudegaBharatJeetegaIndia, #MainBhiElectionAmbassador as more than just catchy slogans because these digital rallying tools powered support mobilization and built political identities throughout social media. The successful growth of visibility and voter participation among youth voters and first-timers created new issues that included misinformation spread and digital echo chambers along with the commercial transformation of political power dynamics. This section investigates how influencer-based culture together with engagement tools shaped voter reception by evaluating both positive empowerment aspects and challenging ethical implications of digital democracy evolution in India (Huda, 2023)¹⁵.

5.1.Engagement of Digital Media Strategists and Content Creators

The 2024 Indian general elections became a historic moment for digital political campaign professionalism through the strategic involvement of digital media consultants with branding firms and content creators (Kreiss, 2015)¹⁶. Digital media strategists joined forces with political

¹⁵ Huda, D., Winarto, A. E., & Lestariningsih, L. (2023). Analysis of 2024 General Election Digitalization System as An Effort to Improve The Quality of Democracy in Indonesia. *Journal of Development Research*, 7(2), 272-282.

¹⁶ Kreiss, D. (2015). Digital campaigning. In *Handbook of digital politics* (pp. 118-135). Edward Elgar Publishing.

parties and agencies as their driving force to develop precise data-guided campaigns rather than depending on traditional communication systems. The Association of Billion Minds (ABM) tied to the BJP formed one of the most influential groups of digital consultants while individual strategists like Robin Sharma and Sunil Kanugolu supported both Congress and other regional parties.

The design process for region-specific content combined with slogan adaptations and format changes and tone adjustments for reaching local audience perceptions. The strategists applied demographic information together with social listening technologies and behavioral analytics to generate audiences based on their castes or religious backgrounds or youth groups and women groups as well as urban and rural voters. The highly focused approach enabled campaigns to present content that mirrored the authentic stories of individual audiences so messages became more moving and genuine.

The year's most transformative development combined influencer cultural content with political communications strategies through partnerships with influencers. Social media influencers who led large audiences of young people collaborated with party messages through content that incorporated their personal touch while delivering political statements in discreet ways. The partners worked through informal arrangements that maintained a genuine quality in their content by avoiding explicit political messages. The ruling party organized the National Creator's Award shortly before elections to build relationships with popular digital creators thereby gaining their large fanbases. Despite its official apolitical figure the National Creator's Awards took place during an election period which created a strong link between social media influencers and the current ruling party.

The adoption of digital storytelling power went against traditional campaign methods. Reliable execution of campaign objectives included two-way digital engagement techniques as well as viral content distribution and immediate response capabilities instead of traditional monologues. Digital platforms unleashed new possibilities when influencers employed hashtags together with trends and memes as well as reaction videos in their campaign strategies. The activities of content creators functioned as cultural bridge builders and campaign

supporters throughout social media while maintaining an unbranded style to distribute messages broadly and easily (Rahim, 2023)¹⁷.

The practice brings ethical problems because it establishes questions about how money flows within political systems together with issues of visibility and use of political influence as a commercial tool. The rise of influencer-driven content now serves as the main persuasive tool which makes it difficult to determine whether the content represents genuine opinions or it is promotion cultivated through payment. The increasing power of strategic digital content creation shifts how political messages are made and received thus determining that digital networks and their creators will play vital roles in future election battles.

5.2.Creation and Promotion of Hashtags

Digital campaigns now use hashtags beyond simple catchphrases as strong digital tools which influence the formation of public stories while activating voter emotions and advancing campaign platforms. The 2024 Indian general elections saw political parties together with influencers and public institutions use hashtags as tools to enhance their exposure and improve engagement levels. The Election Commission of India launched the hashtag#MainBhiElectionAmbassador to boost voter participation especially targeting young voters and first-time voters as part of its audacious initiative. According to Table 3 the hashtag proved successful in a non-partisan civic engagement drive that gained large exposure on Instagram X (formerly Twitter) and YouTube. The campaign united influencer networks and state symbolisms with civic awareness videos to drive voter participation and enhance public duty (Roemmele, 2020)¹⁸.

Political campaigns adopted hashtags to present their identity through expressions that combined their strategic narratives along with party ideologies for mass mobilization purposes. Facebook, WhatsApp, X and Instagram Reels served as the main channels through which the BJP promoted its #AbkiBaar400Paar digital campaign which displayed nationalist and

¹⁷ Rahim, A., Rusmulyadi, R., & Ibrahim, V. (2023). A Model of Legal Culture for Prevention of Money Politics Through Social Media Strategies for Facing Simultaneous Elections in 2024 Gorontalo Province. *Jurnal Hukum Volkgeist*, 8(1), 123-132.

¹⁸ Roemmele, A., & Gibson, R. (2020). Scientific and subversive: The two faces of the fourth era of political campaigning. *New Media & Society*, 22(4), 595-610.

majority-focused messages (Small, 2020)¹⁹. The party's campaign hashtag #AbkiBaar400Paar delivered both optimism and strategic objectives about attaining more than 400 seats across every campaign channel. Indian National Congress (INC) developed #JudegaBharatJeetegaIndia to promote national unity and inclusiveness while challenging authoritarian rule in the country. The INC used its hash tags to reach Indian citizens who cared about social equity through their official website and Instagram and Twitter platforms. The Indian public and other entities used hashtags #VoteForChange and #IndiaVotes2024 to convey their opposition to establishment power alongside their views on media election reporting. Given Table 3 demonstrates how every hashtag contained specific themes while having established utilization goals tied to selected digital platforms to drive their essential position in the 2024 digital electoral movement.

Table 3: Prominent Hashtags Used During the 2024 Indian General Elections

Source:

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/382885665> The Role of Analytics and Digital Media in Indian Election Campaigns -Harshad Katikar

Hashtag	Affiliated Entity	Theme / Message	Purpose	Platform Visibility
#MainBhiElectionAmbassador	Election Commission of India	Voter participation & civic duty	Non-partisan civic engagement campaign	Instagram, X, YouTube
#AbkiBaar400Paar	BJP	Nationalistic confidence & majority push	Mobilize base, show strength	Facebook, WhatsApp, X, Reels
#JudegaBharatJeetegaIndia	Indian National Congress	Unity, anti-incumbency,	Oppose BJP, promote	Instagram, Twitter,

¹⁹ Small, T. A., & Giasson, T. (2020). Political parties: Political campaigning in the digital age. Digital politics in Canada: Promises and realities, 38(1), 136-142.

		inclusive India	secular narrative	Campaign sites
#VoteForChange	Regional/Independent groups	Voter empowerment and anti- establishment	General political awareness and change call	WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter
#IndiaVotes2024	Media/Public Users	General election coverage	Public engagement and discussion	Pan- platform, Media houses

5.3.Impact on Voter Perceptions

- Social media platforms Facebook as well as Instagram and X (Twitter) and YouTube served as essential political information sources during the 2024 elections transforming voter behavior towards campaign messages.
- Through live videos and social media posts and reels voters received direct communications from leaders which eliminated the distance between political representatives and voters.
- Political content received a distinct personalization because Facebook adjusted its presentation to user behaviors so people could connect with leaders and matters they desired. This increased digital participation, especially among urban youth and first-time voters (Wiktor, 2021)²⁰.
- The way algorithms shape content distribution causes users to encounter exclusively similar viewpoints which produces personal truth bubbles in political discussions.
- Voting citizens exposed themselves to increasingly prevalent fabricated news pieces along with manipulated content and deepfake videos that produced widespread acceptance of false political information throughout the campaign period.

²⁰ Wiktor, J. W., & Sanak-Kosmowska, K. (2021). The competitive function of online advertising. An empirical evaluation of companies' communication strategies in a digital world. *Procedia Computer Science*, 192, 4158-4168.

- According to Carnegie Endowment analysts traditional personal campaigning remains essential for emotional and relational experiences because social media cannot fully replace it.
- The population in rural areas of India continues to attach priority to human interaction and neighborhood campaign visits since those things remain inaccessible through digital platforms.

6. CONCLUSION

Social media platforms including YouTube and Facebook as well as X and Instagram became vital tools during the 2024 Indian general elections for political parties to unite voters and form stakeholders while defending against competitors. Political entities spent more money on specific digital advertising and influencer marketing and AI-driven campaign strategies because they needed technology to advance electoral political performance. Strategic content production through hashtag usage along with meme distribution and continuous real-time posting enabled groups to both grow their support base and alter voter mindsets. The growth of digital platforms allowed political entities to expand their outreach yet these advances produced problems including fake information distribution and political division that fact-checkers and regulatory institutions attempted to solve yet false content spread widely. Traditional grassroots campaigning techniques persisted alongside digital initiatives because social media works as an amplification tool instead of entirely replacing face-to-face interactions. Information technology reshaped election patterns during the 2024 elections by uniting data analytics with artificial intelligence together with customized digital campaign methods thus creating a precedent for future Indian political campaigns. The positive revolutionary influence of digital media on politics co-exists with unresolved uncertainties making the impact of this technology a double-edged sword.

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