

New Mediated Communication Tools and Voting Patterns: Case Study of Punjab Elections 2017

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Abstract:

One element of society that the internet has changed appreciably is politics. Ongoing research is addressing subjects which include whether or no longer or now not the internet is most important to extended political polarization — the tendency of like-minded people to cluster even nearer collectively of their habits and viewpoints. Politicians for his or her promotions throughout elections rely on new media to a super extent. Political parties now have shifted a way to dig and reach the roots to cast vote without delay from the voters with the assistance of new media. Politicians these days are genuinely gifted to have a one to at least one communication and listen to the issues of hundreds. New media acts as a powerful mode of frequent feedback and attain with least delay has made it the quality tool for promotions as well as to influence the general target voters directly. Present study analyzed the impact and extent of the new mediated communication tools as key-players in the arena of elections.

Keywords: Political-polarization, New Mediated tools, Politics and New media, Voting behavior.

I. INTRODUCTION

At present, internet is used for close to everything, and for lots human beings it might be unattainable to imagine existence without it. The amount of new mediated users are progressing day by day and people are becoming more habitual to taste the better sides of Social Networking Sites to socialize in the world of net by the channel of receiving or sharing the information and ideologies of an individual in a virtual globe. Media and politics are the key pillars on which the society runs and relies upon. These pillars decide and form the ideologies of the upcoming generation. Media and politics are interdependent due to the fact media allow in to steer and form the notion of hundreds, loads immediately or not directly are predicated on media to come back on a selection. In today's time, it is miles very tough for a voter to solid vote to an accurate political candidate because of faux promises that lead to disaffection closer to politics, an effective media facilitates the audience to keep a check on exercise of presidency's strength and moves. New media may

be something gift on net as an alternative or not its social networking websites or it could be source engines or it may YouTube and so forth, this serves as the tool for promotions and at once influencing minds of the target market and shaping the favored image into the minds of loads.

The political domain of Punjab has consistently been dominated by way of the Akali Dal and Indian Nationwide Congress. Punjab election of Vidhan Sabha has total 117 seats and 117 MLA's get to flavor the pine of victory from 117 constituencies. Every time internet user attempt to open a video simply before elections on YouTube its miles discovered that viewer first need to undergo the video that constitutes the ideologies and guarantees a political birthday party will satisfy, those all pre-play films are honestly the gateway of promotions for political events. Congress leader captain Amrinder Singh started targeting the farmers of Punjab so as to fetch a large amount of votes into his favor, he also turned all the odds against AAP by mocking statements that a non-Punjabi cannot enter and rule

Punjab and only a Punjabi can understand the sufferings of a Punjabi. Captain also promised to restore the lost charm of Punjabi culture and replenishing Punjab into a cultural yet heritage state. Voters are the identified entity that comes forward one and all to cast their valuable vote in favor of the favored party which they feel is to the best of their understanding, is best to represent them. Voters play a very keen role in deciding and staging the future of their country in front of the entire globe. Politicians always seek to control the mindset of the voters in any possible way so as to help them to gain and full the treasure of ample votes under their name.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Two-step Flow of Communication critically explains the importance and dependency of the voters or general audience upon the content that is initially manipulated and changed yet framed according to the mindset and beliefs of politicians and which also influence or persuade the ideologies of the common man. Sometimes it has been observed that rather than media itself, Interpersonal or face to face communication plays a better role in constructing or making a public opinion or ideology which is another way of seeing things. Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet (1948) explains the role of media in generating the impactful influence over the mindset of the general people during the period of United States Presidential elections in the year 1948. This in particular means that the general public gains information from the disseminators (Opinion Leaders) via manner of interpersonal conversation instead of attaining the information directly from where these disseminators gathers their information i.e. Media stores. In two step theory it is observed that medium has been a concept to rather affecting human's options and behaviors. Motives which includes an interpersonal verbal exchange with an own family individuals, acquaintances and contributes to shape or redefine the public image or opinion compared to the direct influence from media over the perception of the audience within.

Discussing about the theories which affect the mindset or perception of an individual's way of thinking and reacting to a particular thought or scenario it can be said or perceived that "Agenda Setting Theory" has to be the key player as it the most important theory in world of communication and persuasion, coined by Maxwell McCombs and Donald L. Shaw. The representation of media's information or messages critically impacts the perception and preference of the message into the minds of audience. Viewers sometimes completely reliable upon the media sources in matter of keeping themselves updated in regards to the daily updates and keeping themselves updated all the time so media is not only just the medium to share information is should act like the medium to sharing credible information. There has been ample of works or researches done to understand the influence and importance of this theory.

Statement of problem

According to the theories which are discussed above it can be said that opinion leaders plays a vital role in generating the masala content for the general public and channel their thoughts with the help of social media networks into the minds of perceivers. So the present studies focuses upon the effectiveness of new mediated communication tools, the impact of internet and how effective is this tool in influencing balloting behavior of citizens.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

The relationship between the internet and politics is prevailing and never-ending rational yet effective when comes to influence, persuade and affect someone or his/her thoughts. Many studies have been done on the relevant issues/problems. The relationship can be understood by the following studies that had been conducted by the various researchers and scholar in an attempt to be more precise and contribute them into the field of knowledge.

Daniela V. Dimitrova et al. (2014) under “The effect of digital media on political knowledge and participation in election campaigns” explains that how different media forms such as print, radio, television and internet affect the voters separately. It explains the anonymous media forms available to for the politicians that can be used differently for the different sections of society. In general form this research paper explains that most of the media forms have puny effects on political learning but all few media forms has a very apt and reasonable effects on governmental involvement.

Maurice Vergeer et al. (2014) entitled “Online social networks and micro-blogging in political campaigning” explains deep concept related to micro blogging i.e. small tweets assisted some entities supervising the European parliament in the period 2009 to establish an attachment between the government and its publics in order to let them know about the various policies and updates about the government. It also explains its function as a tool of mass communication in the era of new media. It argues that twitter has done remarkably powerful performance in proving himself the best contributor to the new world applications to of the net in the process of creating and shaping the ideologies of general audience effectively. The bullet theory or the hypodermic needle explains the urge of the micro blogging and how the message or the information available on the tweets makes a direct impact on the viewer’s mindset anonymously.

Nirmal Jacob (2010) focuses on the impact of political communication on voting behavior explains the importance of political transmission and how political parties indulge themselves in practice of relating themselves to the publics. The research paper also urges that mass communication not only serves the impactful purpose of its own but is also effective in arriving to the public or the audience living in the rural areas of the nation. The researcher also describes about the relevance of the content published in various medium forms such as newspapers and television channels by the

politicians to gain much of the political attention and seek voter’s confidence upon them.

Michael Gurevitch et al. (2016) in “Political Communication —Old and New Media Relationships” attempted to explain the different aspects that lead to a drastic redesign in political or governmental environment and parallel how distant net is succeeding in replacing or overriding the political transmission ecosystem. The research attempts to draw a thick line between the old and new media and it’s advent that has caused the revolution of in the world of transmission and persuasion.

IV. RESEARCH GAPS

Not much studies have been done on the related areas and the dimension of the present research is little different from earlier possible researches on Punjab elections 2017, dearth of the relevant works performed in India to know the role of net in affecting the behavior of new active voters in Punjab region during elections in year 2017, so present study attempts to fulfill this gap.

V. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Following are the objectives on which the present research attempts to focus:

- To analyze the importance of new media tools in political polarization
- To analyze the effectiveness of new media on new voter’s behavior

VI. METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

The sample survey was conducted employed a questionnaire on voter’s opinions and perceptions and the effectiveness of new mediated communication over the voting patterns of the college goers as new voters. For this research particularly more than 200 questionnaires were distributed applied multi-stage sampling technique in Ludhiana city of Punjab. Present study is limited to Ludhiana city only and new voters were not easy to be found and approached, where respondents were randomly selected from government college of

Ludhiana criterion on the basis of internet users and new voters.

Data interpretation

According to the data collected 72% females were frequent internet users, 28% of females used internet less frequently whereas frequently 62% males used internet and 38% of males use internet less frequently. Total 58% of females used Internet daily more than 5 hours and 40% of females respondents used internet daily 2-3 hours and only 2% of females respondents used internet less than 1 hour daily. Total 54% of males used Internet daily more than 5 hours, 40% of male respondents used internet daily 2-3 hours and 6% of male respondents used internet less than one hour. This interprets that the majority of respondents spend more than 5 hours daily on internet, so it can be interpret that respondents spend ample of time on internet daily.

Total 38% of females used internet for entertainment, 34% of females used internet for social networking, 22% females used internet for spreading information and 6% females use internet for academics and research. According to the data collected only 4% of males used internet for entertainment, 54% of males used internet for social networking, 38% males used internet for spreading information and 4% females use internet for academics and research. It results that social networking is dominated when it comes to usage of internet on daily basis, after that Information spreading is the key factor for internet usage among respondents.

According to the data collected 60% of female respondents were found influenced by new media on an average, 40% of female respondents' were very much influenced through new media. Total 48% male respondents were influenced by new media on an average, 52% of female respondents' were very much influenced through new media. Most of the respondents gets influenced by media, male tend to get influenced by the media more as compared to females whereas females posed the nature of being average towards the media influence.

Total 18% female respondents got influenced by new media, 15% by radio, 14% by family, 14% by peers/friends, 13% by newspapers, 12% by magazines, 9% by opinion leaders and 5% by posters/pamphlets whereas 23% male respondents got influenced by new media, 1% by radio, 31% by family, 15% by peers/friends, 3% by newspapers, 20% by magazines, 0% by opinion leaders and 7% by posters/pamphlets. The collaborated results interpret that most of the respondent's voting behavior gets influenced by new media and family members or relatives of respondents. It was very clear that female respondents somehow get influenced by opinion leaders but male respondents do not get influenced at all.

Out of total respondents, 46% female respondents mostly used whatsapp, 42% of female respondents used Facebook, 10% of female respondents used YouTube, 2% of female respondents used twitter whereas 58% of male respondents mostly used whatsapp, 8% of male respondents used Facebook, 34% of male respondents used YouTube, no male respondents used twitter. The collaborated results interprets that whatsapp was the dominated application which was mostly used by the respondents, followed by Facebook and YouTube. The least used application by both males and females was twitter. Total 64% of female respondents were much aware about twitter, 30% of female respondents posed average known and 6% of female respondents knew very much about micro blogging where 82% of male respondents were much aware about twitter, 2% of male respondents posed average known and 16% of male respondents knew very much about micro blogging. Respondents knew much about the micro blogging.

Total 64% of female respondents often saw political advertisements marginally, 22% of female respondents saw most of the time and 14% saw rarely whereas 70% of male respondents often saw political advertisements marginally, 16% of male respondents saw most of the time and 14% saw rarely. The collaborated results interprets that all the respondents at whole usually saw the political

advertisements marginally. Above results conclude that political advertisements were mostly seen during the time of elections.

A total 80% of female respondents found political advertisements interactive sometimes, 16% rarely found them interactive and only 4% found them interactive every time whereas 40% of male respondents sometimes found political advertisements on new media interactive, 58% rarely found them interactive and 2% found them interactive every time. Total 64% of female respondents found political advertisements on new media credible at sometimes, 32% rarely found them credible and 4% found them credible every time. But 54% of male respondents found political advertisements on new media credible, 46% rarely found them credible and no one found them credible every time. The collaborated results interprets that most of the respondents agreed that political advertisements on new media were interactive. Male respondents strongly agreed that they rarely found political advertisements interactive. Respondents sometimes found political advertisements credible on new media. Male respondents had a very thin line between the credibility of the political advertisements.

Total 64% of female respondents sometimes reacted to political advertisements online, 34% reacted rarely and 2% reacted all time but 50% of male respondents sometimes reacted to political advertisements online, 50% rarely reacted and no one reacted every time.

According to the data collected 40% of female respondents agreed that online political campaigns strengthened their personal thoughts much, 40% respondents stayed neutral, 18% respondents stayed less and 2% agreed on very much but 14% of male respondents agreed to strengthen their personal thoughts much, 60% respondents stayed neutral, 26% respondents stayed less and no one was very much and very less influenced.

Total 50% of male respondents faced less strengthening from political campaigns on YouTube, 38% stayed neutral, 12% stayed with much and no

one answered on very much and very less whereas 32% of female respondents' faced less strengthening from political campaigns on Facebook, 16% stayed neutral, 34% stayed with much, 10 % answered very much and 8% interpreted as very less.

Total 20% of female respondents' faced less strengthening from political campaigns on whatsapp, 8% stayed neutral, 10% stayed with much, 6 % answered very much and 56% interpreted as very less whereas 48% of male respondents faced less strengthening from political campaigns on whatsapp, 44% stayed neutral, 8% stayed with much and 0 % answered very much and very less. The collaborated result interprets that online political campaign on whatsapp posed less influence on strengthening of thoughts whereas more than half of respondents agreed on having neutral influence on strengthening thoughts.

VII. MAJOR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

The study focused on certain aspects like effectiveness of new media tools, the role of new media in influencing the voter's behavior during elections 2017. The voters were very much using the internet or the new media for daily use. The most of the voters used internet more than 5 hours a day and really wanted to be updated regularly through new media. New media was a very great influence on the voting behavior of the voters. There were certain internet application such as Facebook, YouTube and whatsapp which had their degree of influencing the voting behavior in terms of considering the credibility for the same. This helped the politicians to get the correct information for what media or factors influence the new voters' minds.

There were found many factors those influenced the voting behavior of the new voters such as newspapers, magazines, friends, family and new media. The most dominant factor in influencing or affecting the voting behavior of the voters was new media followed by parents or relatives of an individual. The study also stressed on family as a

keen role in influencing or affecting the voting decision of the voters. The study also found out whatsapp is the new media application that had been dominating the entire online application scenario of the respondents. There were many internet applications that were used but whatsapp was winning the relay. Voters usually saw the political advertisements and face pop-ups on various applications during the period of elections. Voters also agreed to the new media somehow better than the other media. New media personifies the crucial and tactful impact over the mindsets of voters and their voting behavior. There were many factors that influence the voting behavior of a voter and new media was the key factor that dominated the paradigm.

Scope for further research work

- Further research can be done on the importance of social networking sites in shaping a public opinion.
- Another study can be done on credibility of new media content and how new media bypass some laws of privacy and copyright.

Further research can be done on role of family in influencing the voting behavior of voters.

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