ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Media

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN ELECTION CAMPAIGN: AN OVERVIEW ON KARNTAKA ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2018 OF DHARWAD DISTRICT

KEY WORDS: Internet, New Media, Smartphone, Social Media.

Vishwanath Koti	Research Scholar, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Karnatak University, Dharwad – 580 003.
Dr. Sanjayakumar Malagatti*	Research Guide and Assistant Professor, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Karnatak University, Dharwad – 580 003. *Corresponding Author

ABSTRACT

Election has its own footpaths in the history of India. India is a republic and a democratic country; elections have been conducted in the country since its independence. During the elections the process and methods of camping is changing. New trends, techniques and technologies have been utilized to reach the old and young voters of the country. Nowadays along with traditional media like print and electronic media the new media and social media like whatsapp, facebook, Instagram, twitter, and YouTube are widely used by the political parties and election candidates. Internet based new media and social media are considered as an important tool to be connected with voters.Technologies have the power to change the scene of politics. It is necessary for opinion leaders to be up to date with new technologies for election campaign. As social media becomes a buzzword, every candidate feels the need to use social media during elections for campaign. In India Smartphone users are increasing day by day, including residents of cities and rural people who are using social media for information and entertainment.

INTRODUCTION

The internet is marked as a powerful medium of communication. Social media played crucial role of connectivity. It has created a public sphere where information is being shared and ideas are being exchanged at the speed of light. Social media is considered as the best medium to reach people and keep them informed regularly. In the age of digital media new trend is activated in the form of elaborated tweets, hash tags, updates of important notifications, creating awareness and to tell the story about developmental activities done by an individual.

Each social media networking site targets a different audience and uses different tools to allow people to share ideas, videos, photos and links to form a network of people connected by common interests.

The Election Commission of India recently conducted election for Karnataka assembly-2018 and declared its results on 5th May 2018. Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) come out as the majority big party with 104 seats, Indian National Congress Party (INC) was declared the second place with 78 seats and third place by Janata Dal Secular (JDS) with only 38 seats and two independent candidates who proved their victory. During election all political parties along with independent candidates used traditional Media like newspapers, radio, television and pamphlet for their camping in a big way, along with traditional media social media also worked as a main vehicle to reach out to most of the voters in Dharwad district. More than 20,000 whatsapp groups were created and involve in election camping in the state. Social media has not only become important media vehicle for election camping for all the political parties but also it has become an important medium to reap electoral benefits.

SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS

Each social media networking site has created different tools to connect users and to increase communication throughout the nation and the world. Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are three of the most popular social media sites that politicians use to connect to their constituents. A social media strategy should include the different aspects of each site to take full advantage of each site communication capabilities. In this chapter I will delve into social media tools to show how candidates can use them in their campaigns.

POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

The internet creates a civic culture among the young voting population. This civic culture helps citizens feel their participation as an important part of the democratic process. The internet also creates a forum that is accessible 24/7. These forums allow people to voice their opinions and learn about the political process. The discussion that emerges from this civic culture, however, instigates an image and candidate-driven campaign as opposed to an issue-driven campaign.

Area of the Study

Dharwad is the one of the prominent district in Karnataka. Dharwad-Hubli twin city is the second largest city after Bangalore in the state. Dharwad district encompass an area of 4,263 km. It contains 379 villages and 6 statutory towns. Dharwad is identifiably known as the academic center with prestigious educational institutes along with three universities Karnataka University, Karnataka College, IIIT, IIT, Karnataka State Law University and Agri University are some of them.

According to District Information and Public Relations Department's publication Dharwad District Assembly Election since 1957 to 2013, Dharwad district is having 14.48 Lakh voters among them 50.73 % are male and 49.27 % voters are female. There are 7 legislative assembly constituencies in Dharwad district.

Table 1: Constituency wise distribution of voter according to their gender

Constituency	Male	Female
Navalgund	102531 (51.11)	98075 (48.89)
Kundagol	95628 (47.67)	89102 (44.42)
Dharwad	102817 (51.25)	100461 (50.08)
Huballi-Dharwad (West)	96076 (47.89)	94516 (47.12)
Huballi-Dharwad (Central)	117255 (58.45)	116629 (58.14)
Huballi-Dharwad (East)	124399 (62.01)	125007 (62.31)
Khalgatagi	96359 (48.03)	89893 (44.81)

Communication channels for Election campaign

During assembly election 2018 all political parties and independent candidates prepared print media like newspapers, pamphlets, posters and handouts and used in campaign, in electronic media different television channels along with the local channels, radio and FM channels were also used. In outdoor media flex banners, hoardings, publicity vans and stickers were also used. In folk media street plays and folk songs were used. Along with all these different media types social media and new

media like face book, whatsapp, twitter, blog and instagram are also used to reach the target voters.

MCC reporting app: Election commission launched an android app called MCC reporting. Through this app, public can complain to the election commission about the violation cases of code of conduct with video clips, audio clips, images of violated materials of the candidate's etc.

Objectives of study
• To study the usage of social media in Karnataka state assembly election 2018.
• To understand the effectiveness of social media in election campaign
• To examine the strategies of social media for set up of campaign

METHODOLOGY
The present study is conducted based on the content analysis. The researcher referred to various media like newspapers, television channel reports, advertisements of AIR and FM channels and collected data from District Election Commission and Information and Public Relations Departments. Thus the present study is an admixture of both qualitative and quantitative research methods.

Significance of the Study:
This article investigates whether the election candidates address the topics most important to the mass audience and to what extent their communication is shaped by the characteristics of Social media tools. Based on open-ended responses from a representative survey conducted during the election campaign, we train a human-interpretable Bayesian language model to identify political topics. Applying the model to social media messages of candidates and their direct audiences, we find that both prioritize different topics than the mass audience. The analysis is also important that politicians use Whatsapp, Facebook and Twitter for different purposes. We relate the various findings to the mediation of political communication on social media induced by the particular characteristics of audiences and socio technical environment.

Explanation of the study
#### Chart 1: Use of social media in Navalgund constituency
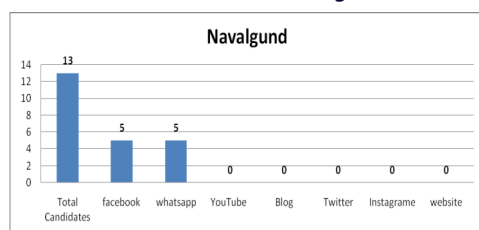
The above chart 1 indicates that the usage of social media during Karnataka Assembly Election 2018. A total of 13 candidates contested from Navalgund constituency of Dharwad district, among them only 5 candidates used facebook and 5 candidate used whattsapp. No candidate used other social media like You Tube, Blog, twitter, Instagram and websites. This clearly indicates that election candidates are have less awareness about social media and voters of Navalgund constituency are not much focused with social media.

#### Chart 2: use of social media in Kundagol constituency
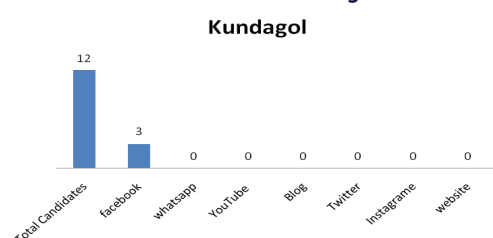
The above chart 2, shows Kundagol constituency having a total of 12 candidates.   Among them only 3 candidates used social media. All others uesd only facebook. No candidate used whatsapp, youtube, blogs, twitter, instagram, and websites. Thus the candidates of Kundagol constitutency had less awareness about social media.

#### Chart 3: use of social media in Dharwad constituency
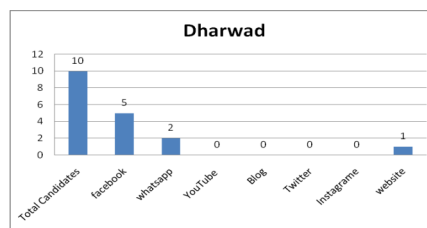
The above chart 3, shows the use of social media in the Dharwad constitutency. A total of 10 candidates contested from Dharwad constitutency. Among them 5 used facebook and 2 candidates used whatsapp and only one candidate used website. Among 10 candidates 8 candidates used social media. No candidate used youtube, blogs, twitter and instagram.

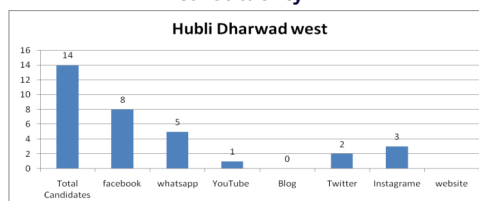#### Chart 4: use of social media in Hubli-Dharwad East constituency
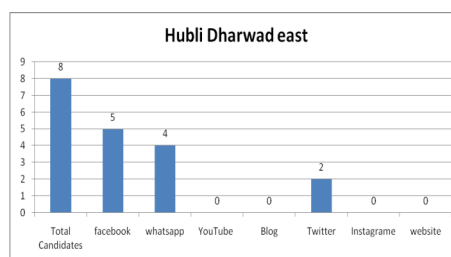
The above chart 4, shows the use of social meida in the Hubli-Dharwad east constituency with a total of 8 candidates contested election. Among them 5 candidates used facebook, 9 candidates used whatsapp and 2 candidates used twitter. No candidate used YouTube, blog, Instagram and website.

Chart 5: use of social media in Hubli-Dharwad Central constituency
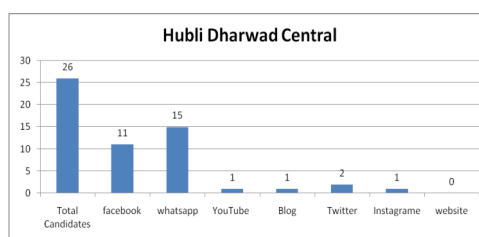

The above chart 5 shows the use of new media in Hubli-Dharwad Central constituency where 26 Candidates contested the elections.   Among them 11 candidates used Facebook, 15 candidates used Whatsapp, 2 candidates used twitter and one candidate used YouTube, blogs and Instagram. No candidate used website. The chart also indicates that whatsapp was used more than any other type of social media for campaigning.

Chart 6: Use of social media in Hubli-Dharwad West constituency

The above chart 6, shows the use of new media in the Hubli-Dharwad west constituency where a total of 14 candidates contested election. Among them 8 candidates used facebook, 5 candidates used whatsapp, 3 candidates used instagram, 2 candidates used twitter and one candidate used twitter and one candidate used YouTube. The high markings on the chart indicates that more than the other constituencies, Hubli-Dharwad west was more aware about the use of social media in election campaign.

Chart 7: use of social media in Kalaghatagi constituency
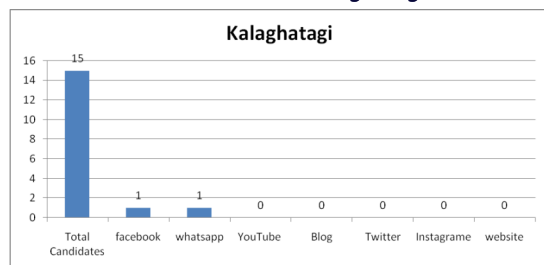
The above chart 7 shows that 15 candidates contested in the Kalaghatagi constituency election. Among them, 1 candidate used the facebook and 1 candidate used whatsapp. No other candidate used youtube, blog, twitter, instagram and website. This is clearly indicates that candidates have less awareness about social media use in election campaigns.

Study Findings:

In the Dharwad District a total of 98 candidates contested election. Among them 84 candidates used social media, 38 candidates used facebook and 32 candidates used whatsapp. In the Kalaghatagi and Navalgund constituencies the candidates not much aware about the use of social media. In Dharwad district constituencies, except Dharwad constituency no other candidates used the website. In Dharwad constituency only one candidate used website. As for the other constituencies in the Dharwad district, youtube was used in Hubli-Dharwad central and Hubli-Dharwad west constituencies. Youtube was used by only one candidate each in Hubli-Dharwad central constituency and Hubli-Dharwad west constituency. Twitter was used in Hubli-Dharwad east, Hubli-Dharwad central and Hubli-Dharwad west constituencies.

CONCLUSION:

Political advertising is a growing field, and with the addition of social media to the tool-kit, political advertisers are changing the direction of democracy. Social media has grown to be a part of our everyday lives, making the transition for politicians to connect though social media even less difficult. Through my research I have detailed the effect of social media on political campaigns and studied how social media was applied as a tool to create an effective social media strategy for political campaigns. To further my research I looked at each social media site to learn the full extent of their capabilities. Facebook gives campaigns the opportunity to create a dialogue and extend the reach of the campaign with the ability to add donation and volunteer functions. Facebook also offered targeted ad and promotional capabilities to help reach more constituents with the ability to measure how useful the site is. Twitter allowed candidates and campaigns to keep users up-to-date with short messages, which humanizes the candidate and offers another way for citizens to get involved and connect in the democracy.

Social media has changed the way news breaks, YouTube has changed the way a culture hears the news, providing a platform to post and watch videos over and over again. Candidates can again connect to voters through bypassing the traditional media with their own announcements that can directly reach their subscribers. Each of these tools will improve a social media strategy if they are updated and follow the branded message which a campaign creates for their candidate and not forgotten, or misused. With the creation of a social media strategy, campaigns will be able to follow these simply tips and steps to effectively use social media in their campaign to extend their reach and learn from their constituents.

This plan will benefit political campaigns showing the use of social media at a local level instead of for just national elections. This plan will need to be expanded as new social media sites arise and will have to adjust to each candidate's campaign. There is no guaranteed winning solution, but if followed, the guidelines provided to a campaign will use their time and money wisely on social media. In the upcoming 2019 Parliament election candidates have already made social media a part of the national race; we will see political campaigns evolve into democratic conversations with more citizen involvement. In the 2018 legislative election we saw a huge increase in the youth vote thanks to the social media networks, but will a race without the controversy we faced in 2019 still drive people to the polls with the help of social media.

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