AN OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT IN POLITICS

Accamma C.G

Assistant Professor, Department of Management,
Center for Management Studies, JAIN (Deemed-to-be University), Bangalore, India
Email Id: accamma_cg@cms.ac.in

Abstract

This paper discusses the role of politics in social media – the power interplays among actors on social media as they attempt to promote their interests and values. It argues that social media cannot exist without some kind of political involvement: where there is social media there is politics; neutrality is the exception rather than the norm in social media. Next, it discusses the different manifestations of this involvement and suggests classifying the social media politics into politics of architecture (platforms and networks structure) and politics of dynamics (networks structure, information flows, and curated flows). Power is exercised in each dimension in three key modes: influencing decisions, setting the agenda, and shaping stakeholder preferences and norms.

Keywords: Confirmation Bias, Fake News, Policies, Social Media, Social Sites.

I. INTRODUCTION

The political landscape has changed quite a bit in the last couple of decades. The internet has played a large role in this transformation. Social media, in particular, is now a serious factor in political campaigns and in the way people think about issues. Candidates and their supporters constantly post their views on Facebook and Twitter. Each party has its own pages, from which it broadcasts propaganda and requests for donations. Let's look at some of the leading ways that social media influences politics today [1]. One of the ways that social media has transformed politics is the sheer speed at which news, poll results and rumors are shared. Whereas in the pre-internet days, people had to wait for the next newspaper or TV news show to get the latest information, online news is a 24/7 phenomenon. Social media has taken this a step further. While you can access news on many websites at any hour, most people spend more time on sites such as Facebook and Twitter than they do on serious news or political websites [2].

This means that you get all of the latest trending news stories and opinions shared by your friends whenever you log on. Political polls are an important part of every campaign. They are often confusing, because you can often find multiple polls with contradictory results posted on the very same day. As with other types of political news, the internet has greatly increased the number of poll results we see each day. Social media has accelerated this even more. Not only do social media sites report the results of polls, you can actually participate in Facebook polls. Polls results have a big influence on elections. This is true even if they are flawed. A poll can be a self-fulfilling prophecy [3].

For example, if people think one candidate is far ahead in the race, they might conclude there's no point in voting for the underdog. When people are posting the latest poll results on social media throughout the day, there's a great deal of pressure on candidates to pull ahead of their opponents. One of the positive effects that social media has on politics is the opportunity for voters to interact more easily with candidates and elected officials [4]. Traditionally, if you wanted to meet a politician or candidate, you'd have to attend a live event. Not everyone is able to do this. With modern technology, it's now possible to attend virtual events where you can participate in live streaming events and interact with politicians and candidates. Political campaigns are now influenced by every story, whether true or not, that gets spread around social media. It's getting more and more difficult to separate actual news from fake news online. Social media makes this distinction especially confusing. The constant stream of memes, links and rumors about political leaders and candidates is a mixture of truth, lies, satire and speculation. There is now quite a few fake or satirical "news" sites that often post stories that sound authentic [5].

The Onion is the best known of these, but there are now many others as well. Some fake news sites are not even amusing but simply exist to post clickbait stories or to troll readers who don't do their own research. There are also sites with political biases or those peddling various unsubstantiated conspiracy theories. It's easy to be influenced by misinformation posted by your friends and followers, even if they don't intend to mislead you. It's therefore necessary to use a great deal of discernment before believing anything. In this author discussed the pervasiveness of the role played by politics in social media. Social media politics represents conscious and frequent acts whereby multiple actors exercise power to wrestle for competing claims on issues relevant to the governance and use of social media, but also issues with political ramifications outside of the social media realm.

II. DISCUSSION

A. Social Media and C-Governance:

Social media has led to the emergence of citizen led governance (C–governance) in India. Anti-corruption movement by Anna Hazare and protests followed by Nirbhaya gang rape were channelized through the social media. These events garnered enormous national and global support by involving the common man [6].

B. Anti-corruption Movement:

Anna Hazare initiated a Satyagraha (Fasting for a noble cause) movement for passing a stronger anti-corruption Lokpal bill in the Indian Parliament. He started a hunger strike when the demand was rejected by Indian government. The movement attracted attention in the media, millions of supporters inside and outside of India. People showed support through social media such as Twitter and Facebook. Online Signature Campaigns like avaaz got more than 10 lakh signatures in just 36 hours. This led the Government to seriously consider the introduction of the Lokpal bill in parliament [7].

C. The Power of Confirmation Bias:

One of the hidden forces that operates on social media is confirmation bias. This is especially powerful when it comes to controversial topics, including politics. If you're like most people, the majority of your friends and followers on social media probably share your outlook. This means that the vast majority of tweets, Facebook posts, pins or other content you read on these sites tend to express the same point of view, one that you already hold. It's natural for people to surround themselves with others of like mind. This is true both online and offline. On social media sites, this can create the illusion that "everybody" thinks the same way [8].

If you have a few hundred friends on Facebook, for example, and 90 percent of them agree on most political issues, the information you get will be filtered through this bias. People will post links to stories that confirm your existing bias. They'll repeat opinions you already hold. For this reason, social media may reinforce our opinions and make it more difficult to entertain alternative points of view. In politics, it can help to make people more opinionated and less tolerant of others. On the other hand, if you make an effort to connect with an assortment of people with diverse viewpoints, you can overcome confirmation bias and use social media to make you more open-minded.
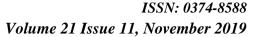
D. Social Media and the Future of Politics:

Because social media is relatively new, we're just starting to see its impact on society. There are sure to be many political changes that come about due to social media. There are now proposals for internet voting, which could lead to more people participating in elections. This could make social media even more influential, as people could literally vote moments after reading the latest comments or links they found on Facebook or Twitter [9].

Other advancements will also change politics. Polling techniques on social media will become more common and, hopefully, more accurate. More virtual political rallies and town halls will take place. As social media becomes ever more popular, its impact on politics will only increase over time. It will be interesting to observe how this plays out.

E. Political leaders in direct connection:

One of the beneficial outcomes of web-based social networking is the open door for voters to interact with political leaders. In the past, on the off chance that you needed to meet a

government official, you had to go to an event. Not every person can do this. With present-day innovation, it is conceivable to go to virtual occasions where you can participate in live occasions and interact with government officials.

F. Rumors and Fake News:

Political issues are presently impacted by each story, regardless of being genuine or not, that gets spread over the internet. It is getting increasingly harder to isolate genuine news from fake news on the web. Social media makes this refinement particularly befuddling. The consistent stream of images, connections, and gossips about political leaders is a blend of truths and untruths. There are currently a significant number of fake news websites that frequently post stories and sound bona fide [10].

Some fake news sites are not by any means entertaining yet basically exist to present misleading content stories or on troll voters who do not do their very own examination. There are additional sites with political predispositions or those selling different unverified news. It is difficult to be affected by falsehood posted by your companions, regardless of whether they do not mean to misdirect you. It is in this way important to utilize a lot of wisdom before taking anything for granted.

G. Confirmation Bias:

One of the concealed powers that work via online media is confirmation bias. This is particularly incredible with regard to dubious topics, including political issues. In case you are just like the vast majority, most of your companions via social media presumably share your viewpoint. This implies most by far of tweets or Facebook posts you read on these sites. It is normal for individuals to encircle themselves with others of like personality. This is genuine both on the web and offline. Via social media users, this can make the deception that everyone thinks a similar way. On the off chance that you have a couple of hundred companions on Facebook, for instance, and the majority of them concede to most political issues, the data you get can be based on bias.

Consequently, social websites may fortify our suppositions and make it increasingly hard to engage in elective perspectives. In political issues, it can make individuals increasingly stubborn and less tolerant of others. Then again, on the off chance that you endeavor to interface with a grouping of individuals with various perspectives, you can conquer confirmation bias and utilize social media to make you increasingly liberal [11].

H. Future of Politics with Social Sites:

Since social media is generally new, we are simply beginning to see its effect on society. There are certain to be numerous political changes that are going to be affected because of social sites. There are presently suggestions for webcasting the voting, which could prompt more individuals taking an interest in decisions. This could make social sites considerably

compelling, as individuals could truly vote in minutes after reading the most recent remarks they found on Facebook or Twitter.

III. CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed and demonstrated the pervasiveness of the role played by politics in social media. Social media politics represents conscious and frequent acts whereby multiple actors exercise power to wrestle for competing claims on issues relevant to the governance and use of social media, but also issues with political ramifications outside of the social media realm. Lately there has been an important discourse raising growing concerns that most decisions related to social media algorithms are not only non-neutral, but heavily biased politically, leading to the conclusion that "Cyberspace never was – and never could be – independent from the governing institutions, economic structures, and culture and social worlds that gave rise

IV. REFERENCES

[1]   J. van Dijck and T. Poell, "Understanding social media logic," Media Commun., 2013, doi: 10.12924/mac2013.01010002.
[2]   K. Harvey, "Social Media, Definition and Classes of," in Encyclopedia of Social Media and Politics, 2014.
[3]   C. Clark and K. Rumbold, "Reading for pleasure: A research overview," Natl. Lit. Trust, 2006.
[4]   K. Jacobs and N. Spierings, Social Media, Parties, and Political Inequalities. 2016.
[5]   J. Habermas, "Political communication in media society: Does democracy still enjoy an epistemic dimension? The impact of normative theory on empirical research," Commun. Theory, 2006, doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2885.2006.00280.x.
[6]   R. Robertson, "Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity," in Global Modernities Global modernities, 2012.
[7]   J. Tucker et al., "Social Media, Political Polarization, and Political Disinformation: A Review of the Scientific Literature," SSRN Electron. J., 2018, doi: 10.2139/ssrn.3144139.
[8]   M. Dewing, "Social Media : An Introduction Social Media : An Introduction," Library of Parliament. 2012.
[9]   P. Dahlgren, "Social media and counter-democracy: The contingences of participation," 2012, doi: 10.1007/978-3-642-33250-0_1.
[10] D. Miller et al., How the World Changed Social Media. 2018.
[11] J. Fardouly and L. R. Vartanian, "Social Media and Body Image Concerns: Current Research and Future Directions," Current Opinion in Psychology. 2016, doi: 10.1016/j.copsyc.2015.09.005.