

Facebook: A Strategic Instrument for Political Parties' Electoral Campaigning

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Abstract

The youth's growing inclination for New Media-led political parties to exploit new media to persuade young voters. With this in mind, national political parties began to promote the election campaign agenda via New media in order to sway the favour of young voters. In the Indian context, the New Media election campaign wars started in 2014, but the general elections of 2019 saw the next wave of New Media campaigning. Almost all national parties have official Facebook accounts, through which they launched their election campaigns in 2024 general election of India. The current study focuses on how major political parties use Facebook to sway young voters in their favour via election campaign-related posts. The aim of this research was to investigate how young voters are influenced by election campaign posts on Facebook and what kind of propaganda tactics are employed to draw in young people. A qualitative content analysis of the official Facebook account of the oldest national political party i.e. Indian national congress and the ruling party the Bhartiya Janta Party were conducted.

Keywords: Facebook, National political parties, Youth, New media, General elections.

Introduction

The Indian general election of 2024 was momentous. This was the world's biggest democratic election. Even before this, the opposition parties had formed a joint alliance in the form of the United Progressive Alliance and contested elections under it from 2004 to 2019, but this time the political parties, facing a do-or-die situation, formed the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (I.N.D.I.A.), in which the staunch opposition parties also joined hands; their aim was only to stop Narendra Modi from becoming the Prime Minister for the third time. This time, the opposition attempted to contest the elections collectively at the grassroots level.

Except for places like Punjab and West Bengal, the policy of one seat, one party was followed. Before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) coined the slogan "Abki Baar 400 Paar." It appeared to be disintegrating. The opposition gave a tough challenge to the NDA at the grassroots level by raising the slogan of defending the Constitution. This time in the general elections total 96.88 crores registered voter decided the fate of 8,360 candidates. Out of which more than 21 crores were youth voters. Amidst these lessons, NDA under the leadership of BJP also gave a tough challenge to the opposition. During the 2008 presidential election, politicians in the United States began utilizing social media to engage with electors. During the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections, former President Barack Obama actively engaged young voters using social media. (Bimber, 2014). India adopted the internet with open arms, and during the past ten years, the country's digital population has grown significantly,

surpassing 600 million active internet users. In March 2024, Facebook's dominance in the Indian social media market was around 71 percent.

India has over 378 million Facebook members, making it the country with the largest Facebook audience (Dixon,2024). All major parties were attempting to win over younger people. In fact, it is projected that 153 million young people cast votes in the general election of 2019. Out of which 63 million, or 41% of the young, voted for the BJP and 19% for the INC (Deka,Kaushik,2024). The main contest was once again between BJP and INC. This electoral struggle was waged not just on the ground, but also through the new media. INC's social media team responds quickly to major events around the country, creating content within 24 hours.

In the run-up to the elections, Congress heavily relied on Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra and Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra to improve his image. According to estimates, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its state affiliates were the most active spenders on social media during the election, spending more than Rs 21 crore.

Trailing the BJP, the INC spent more than Rs 10 crore on Facebook advertising within the same time period. Biju Janata Dal and its affiliates have invested nearly identical amounts. Facebook earns Rs105 crore from political advertisements in three months, with the BJP being the leading spender (Shrivastava,2024). According to figures from Google's Ads Transparency Centre, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) spent at least Rs 41 crore on political advertising through Google since the Model Code of Conduct was implemented, followed by the Congress, which spent Rs 30 crores over the same time. With over 500 million active users on WhatsApp each month in India, the BJP was attempting to interact with voters by sending them a personalized "Letter from the Prime Minister" on the messaging app. The website 'My First Vote for Modi,' which was introduced by the BJP, enables users to promise to support Modi and upload a video explaining their decision. However, the Congress maintained a Rahul Gandhi WhatsApp group where the leader appeared to engage with users and answer their questions (ET,2024). The party created a website, "pehlavotemodiko.bjp.org," in an attempt to win support of first-timers. Targets to register 5,000–20,000 registered young voters across each parliamentary constituency were assigned to the BJP's youth wings. While the Youth Congress was tasked with reaching at least 10,000 families in each parliamentary segment with the party's guarantee cards and other promises (Deka, Kaushik,2024). Political parties are producing readily digestible material, which has led to an extraordinary rise in the popularity of Reels (short videos on Instagram). These Reels mostly use humor, political satire, and criticism of the opposition. They also use popular music to increase viewer involvement (Roy,2024).

The 2024 election was a watershed moment in political discourse, as traditional campaigning strategies collided with cutting-edge technology. With the growth of artificial intelligence (AI), the widespread impact of social media platforms, and the internet's vast reach, political players have used digital technologies to engage voters, create narratives, and even alter perceptions (HT,2024). There were 20,000 dedicated volunteers who engaged directly with over 5 lakh people using WhatsApp. These volunteers then promptly disseminated the posts/video messages/You Tube links with others via WhatsApp groups and other social media sites (ET, 2024).

Use of New Media in election campaigning

There was a time when roads, streets and walls were covered with election posters, banners and flags. But now this is becoming a thing of the past. Due to the strictness of the Election Commission and the leap in technology, candidates are using new media more to woo voters. This is the rationale behind the contest

to collect votes via videos, memes, and cartoons on Facebook, X, and other platforms. Political parties are making great use of social media after realizing its significance in the elections of 2014 and 2019. Big parties have established social media and IT cell. The need for video editors, content writers, mimic artists, and search engine optimization (SEO) managers has grown as a result of candidates seeking professional assistance. This time, political influencer marketing was also widely employed in the general elections, with a greater focus on exposing the weaknesses of the opponent than on emphasizing one's own advantages. Social media platforms have become effective instruments for political communication, giving politicians and political parties the ability to interact with voters directly, spread their views, and rally support. Political campaigns have grown utterly dependent on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp, which provide politicians quick access to millions of people. India is considered as one of the most connected nations in the world, with over 65% of its youth under the age of 35; social media plays an important part in the lives of these young people (Gayatri Wani, Nilesh Alone, 2014). Politicians used new media to evade the conventional press' dominance over the news agenda. At this early stage, the entertainment emphasis of new media provided political leaders and candidates with a more welcoming environment for presenting themselves to the public than hard news channels (Moy et al., 2009).

Role of New Media in Indian Elections

Social media is an essential component of new media. It is playing a new role in Indian elections; it has generated a new environment in election campaigning; political parties have discovered a new means to engage with their supporters; and the usage of social media has offered a new platform to both political leaders and voters during election (Sarmah1 & Mohapatra, 2020). Political parties used social media sites like YouTube, Facebook, and X to broadcast roadshows, rallies, and media conferences in real time. This also allowed the parties to reach out to the public directly, rather than depending primarily on traditional television news outlets. According to the data from the Election Commission, The Bharatiya Janata Party spent ₹325 crores on media advertising (electronic and print, cable website, bulk SMS, TV channel, etc.) for the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, whereas the Congress spent ₹356 crores (Mint, 2024). (Narayanan, V., Kollanyi, B., Hajela, R., Barthwal, A., Marchal, N., & Howard, P. N. 2019) discovered that more than a quarter of the information posted by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and a fifth of the content shared by the Indian National Congress (INC) is junk news, but the Samajwadi and Bahujan Samaj Party (SP-BSP) posts virtually little sensational, extremist, or conspiracy content. The Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) recognized the importance of social media and attempted to incorporate it into their party's Lok Sabha election 2014 and 2019 campaign strategies. The BJP made considerable use of social media networks and mobile phones for advertising. The 2014 Lok Sabha elections have been termed "India's first actual mediatized election" in comparison to previous elections (Strömbäck, 2008). These young professionals, the majority of them below 35, crowd-sourced ideas on Facebook, whereas Twitter was employed to interact, provoke, and react to breaking news and events (Rodrigues, U. M. 2014). During India's 2014 legislative general election, all political parties and candidates made substantial use of social media to organize votes in their favour (Dogra, N. K., & Kaur, S. 2021). Elections remain fundamental to India's political structure. Every election, either parliamentary or assembly, is unique due to the changing political context of the nation or states where the Assembly elections will be place (Sarmah & Mohapatra, 2020). The extremely fierce and fluid arena of democratic competition will continue to drive political parties and figures/candidates to explore and employ a variety of techniques in order to comprehend and win a general

election battle. This research looks at how national political parties utilized Facebook to sway young voters during the 2024 general election. This study will try to analyze the qualitative facts of the posts made from the official Facebook account of NPP. Tries to understand the issues and intensity of the message. With this, in the future, efforts will be made to understand the strategic and broader impact of the election campaign posts of political parties on Facebook. New media technologies have added a new element to political campaigns. Several political parties have launched their own blogs, websites, Twitter accounts and Facebook pages. They routinely watch and read their new media stuff. The content is also constantly updated. Several political leaders reply to questions from the public and cadres. They are aggressively utilizing the technologies for electoral campaigns (Dogra, N. K., & Kaur, S., 2021). In order to close at least some of these research gaps, this study compares and examines the ways in which India's major political parties engaged with voters on Facebook during the parliamentary election campaigns in 2024.

Literature Review

New media specifically seeks to involve the public in political engagement, including voting, addressing public officials, volunteering in local communities, and participating in protest movements. After studying all of the factors, one can fairly conclude that social media has transformed the way political campaigns are conducted throughout the world, impacted the current media process, and impacted the whole democratic political structure. The world has been transformed by new technology and media, which have had an impact on every area of our civilization. This new method of advertising by political parties has altered the political climate of a country. Social media has sparked changes in the campaign methods of political parties, candidates, and political groups, while also changing people's engagement in elections (Sarmah & Mohapatra, 2020). Candidates have integrated new media into their organizational methods for contacting, motivating and informing voters. Campaigns have also developed sophisticated micro targeting strategies, including the use of targeted text messaging to reach certain constituencies, such as ethnic group and issue constituencies (Hillygus and Shields, 2008; Hendricks and Schill, 2014). Facebook has a significant influence on people's social lives. Facebook allows users to keep in touch with friends, family, and other connections without regard to time or geography, as long as they are connected to the Internet (Gayatri Wani, Nilesh Alone, 2014). Traditionally, one of the key benefits of Web 2.0 communication tools for political parties and candidates in election campaigns has been the capacity to directly communicate with the public (Boulianne, 2015). Social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, or Instagram provided politicians a chance not just to advertise and spread messages regarding their policies between their followers and encourage electors, but also to get immediate, measurable testimony to the level of participation with their online interactions via social buttons (e.g. 'like', 'share', 'retweet') and user feedback (Stetka, V., Surowiec, P., & Mazák, J. 2019). The political life of contemporary democratic and semi-authoritarian governments revolves around election campaigns. Election campaigns and citizen-politician communication strategies have changed significantly since the introduction of new media technologies. Today, both developed and developing countries utilize social media extensively for communication and political campaigns (Mare, 2018).

Research objectives

- To find the status of Facebook posts of national political parties during the 2024 GE.
- To examine the strategy of national political parties to sway the young voters through election campaign-

gning.

Research questions

- What kind of Facebook posts of national political parties were transmitting through their official Facebook account?
- Did these election campaigning posts of NPPs target young voters?

Research Methodology

This study focused on the content of national political parties' Facebook posts during the 2024 general election. A qualitative method for data collection has been used. Purposive sampling was used to choose a sample from India's oldest national political party, the Indian National Congress, and the country's leading national political party, the Bhartiya Janta Party. A checklist was constructed based on certain factors and distributed to multiple specialists for validation. The final checklist was produced in accordance with the suggestions. A content analysis was carried out from the beginning of the model code of conduct for the 2024 GE to the last day of voting (16th March - 1st June 2024). Each day, four posts from both NPPs' OFAs were taken. A total of 624 posts were used as samples.

Data Analysis

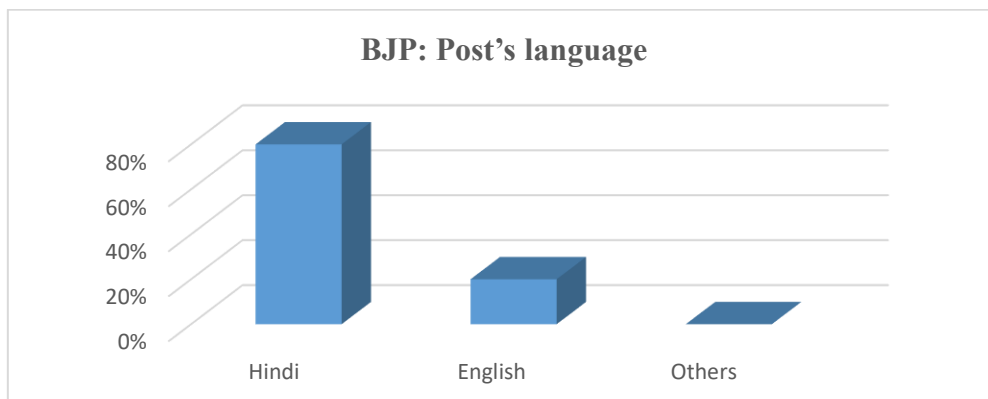


Figure 1.1: BJP-Post's language

Figure 1.1 shows the language used by the BJP in its Facebook posts during the 2024 general election. The analysis found that 80% of posts were written in Hindi. However, just 20% of the posts on the BJP's OFA were done in English, and there was no post in the regional language throughout the content analysis.

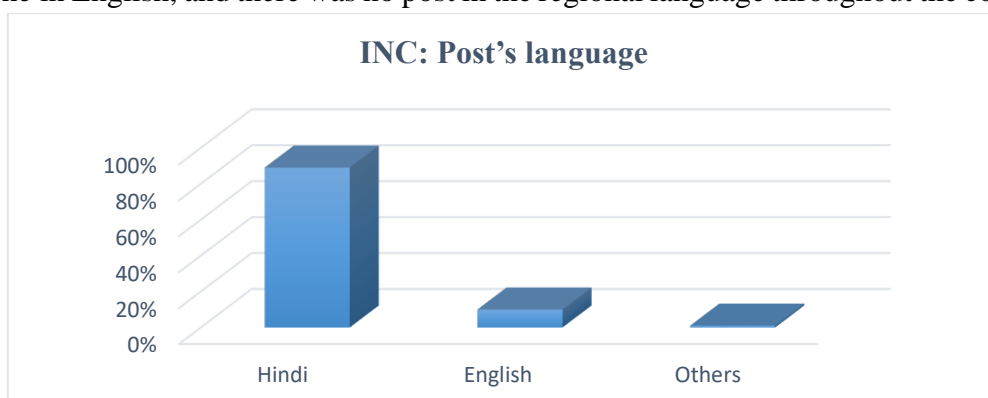


Figure 1.2: INC-Post's language

Figure 1.2 displays the language used in the INC's Facebook post during the 2024 general election campaign. After the content analysis of the INC's OFA, the research indicated that only 89% of postings were posted in Hindi, 11% in English, and none in the regional language.

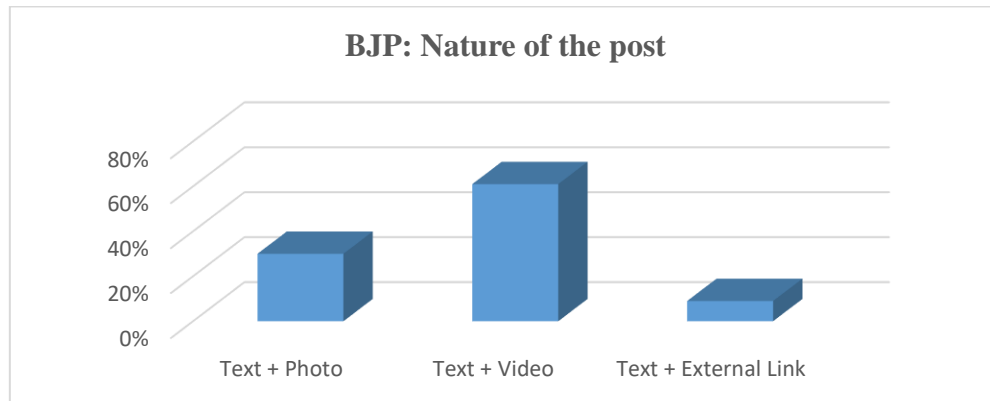


Figure 1.3: BJP- Nature of the post

Figure 1.3 depicts the format of the BJP's Facebook posts for the 2024 general election. According to the survey, the BJP's OFA posted 30% of its posts in text and photo format. A Text + Video format was used in 61% of posts, while a Text + External link type appeared in 9%.

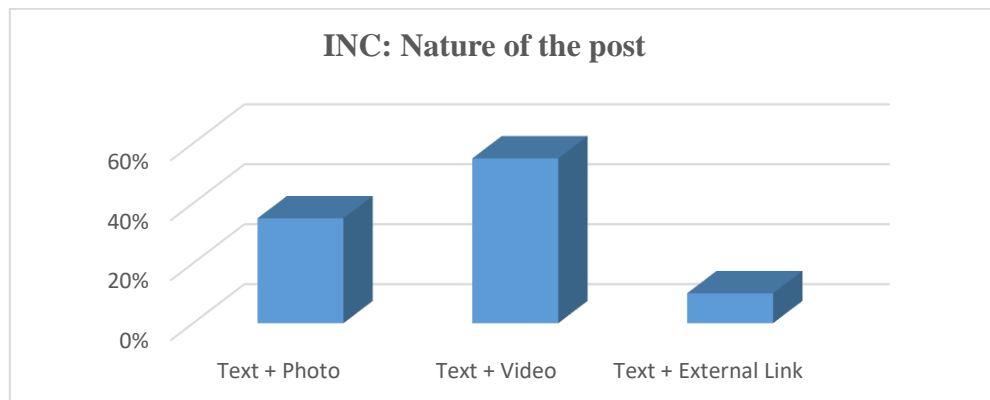


Figure 1.4: INC-Nature of the post

Figure 1.4 shows that 35% of FB posts from the INC's OFA were done in Text+ Photo format, 55% in Text+ Video format, and 10% in Text+ External link format.

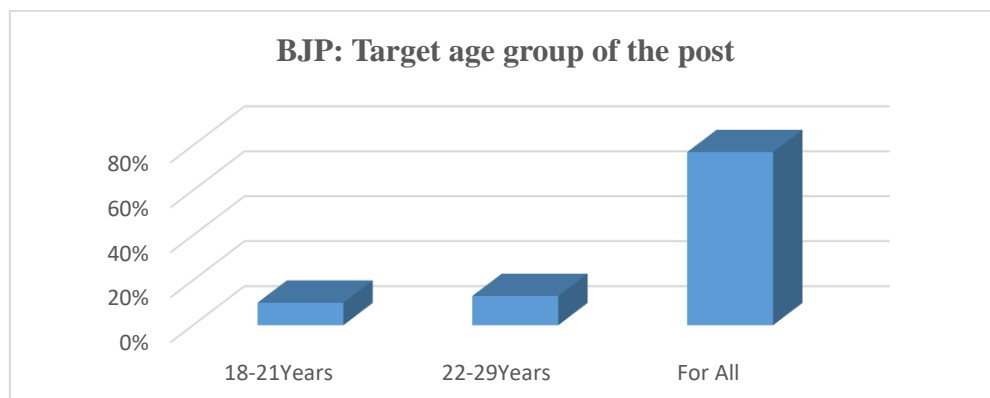


Figure 1.5: BJP-Target age group of the post

The third parameter of the content analysis was identifying the target age groups of the NPPs' FB posts during the 2024 GE. The findings of this research show in Figure 1.5 that 10% of the BJP's OFA posts targeted voters between the ages of 18 and 20, while 13% were focused on voters between the ages of 21 and 29 and 77% were targeted at all voters.

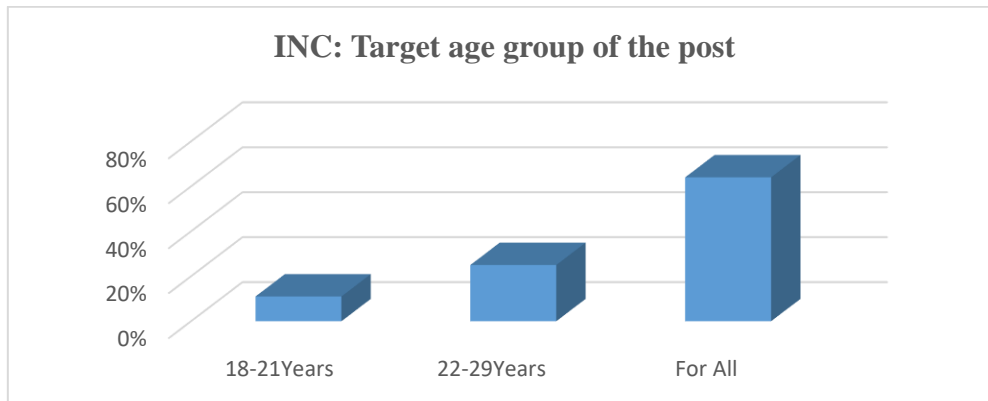


Figure 1.6: INC-Target group of the post

Figure 1.6 depicts the target age group of the INC's election-related Facebook posts in the 2024 GE; during the content analysis, it was discovered that only 11% of posts from the INC's OFA were directed at voters aged 18 to 20, 25% at voters aged 21 to 29, and 64% at all voters.

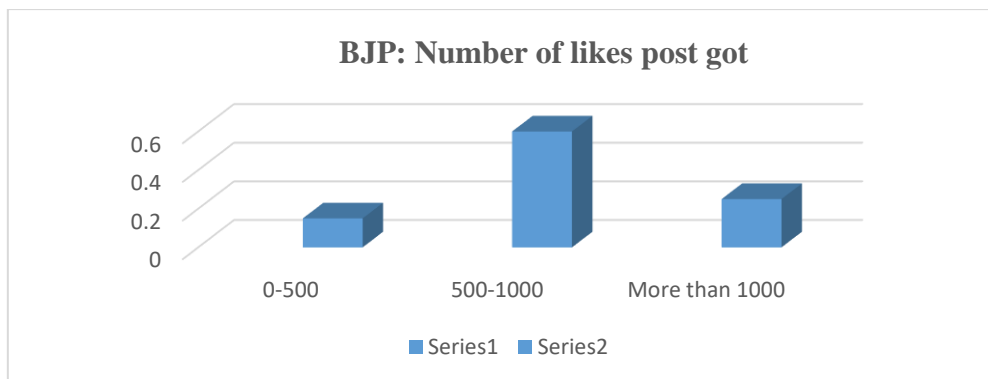


Figure 1.7: BJP-Number of likes post got

The fourth criteria of content analysis are to look at how many Facebook likes postings receive. Figure 1.7 shows that just 15% of the BJP's OFA posts received 0–500 likes. 60% of posts received 500-1000 likes. On the other side, 25% of posts received more than 1000 likes.

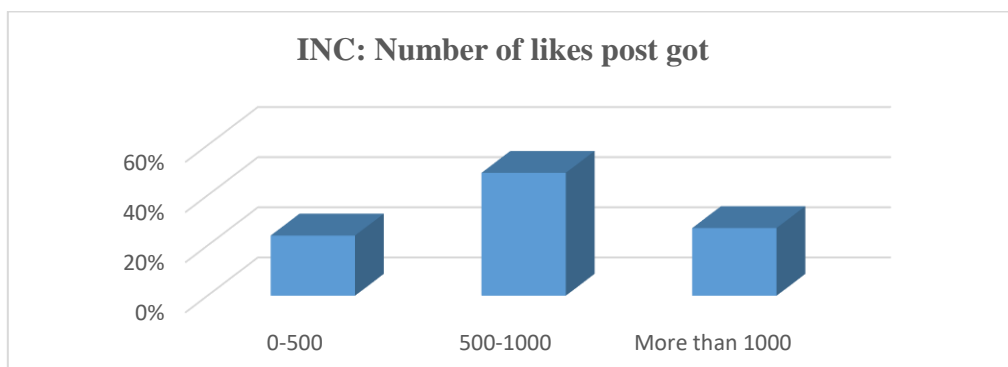


Figure 1.8: INC-Number of likes post got

Figure 1.8 shows that 24% of the INC's OFA posts received between 0 and 500 likes. 49% of posts received 500-1000 likes, with 27% got more than 1000.

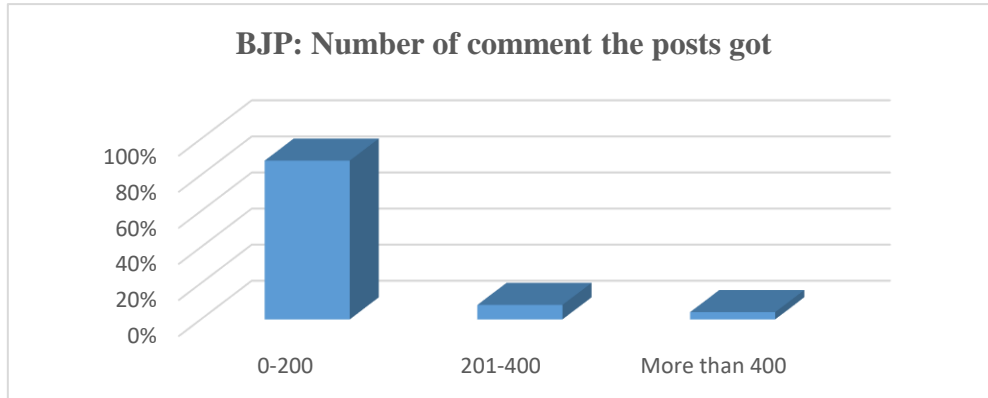


Figure 1.9: BJP-Number of comment the posts got

The fifth crucial criterion was the amount of comments received on the NPP postings during the 2024 GE. According to figure 1.9, issued by the BJP's OFA, just 88% of the postings connected to election campaigns received 0–200 comments. 8% of posts received 200–400 comments, while 4% received more than 400 comments.

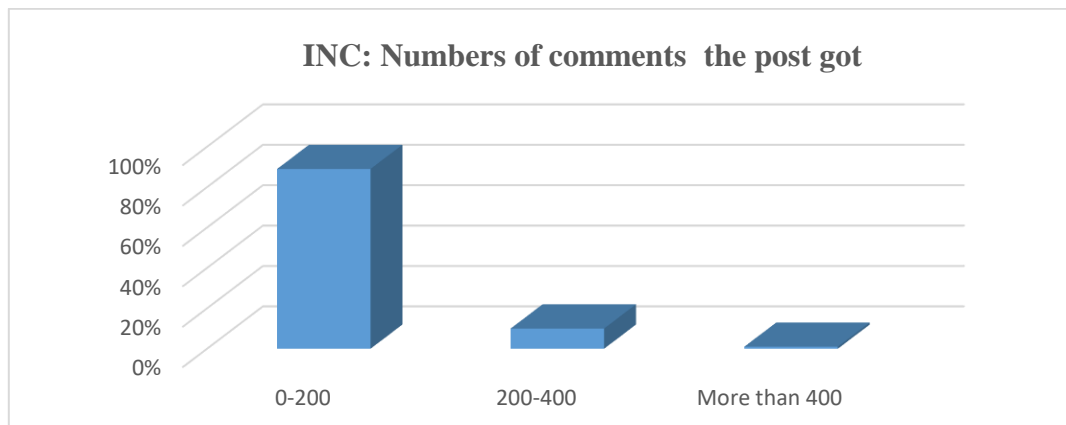


Figure 1.10: INC-Numbers of comments the posts got

Figure 1.10 reveals that just 89% of all posts on the INC's OFA received 0 to 200 election-related comments. 10% of posts received 200 to 400 comments from voters, while 1% received more than 400 comments.

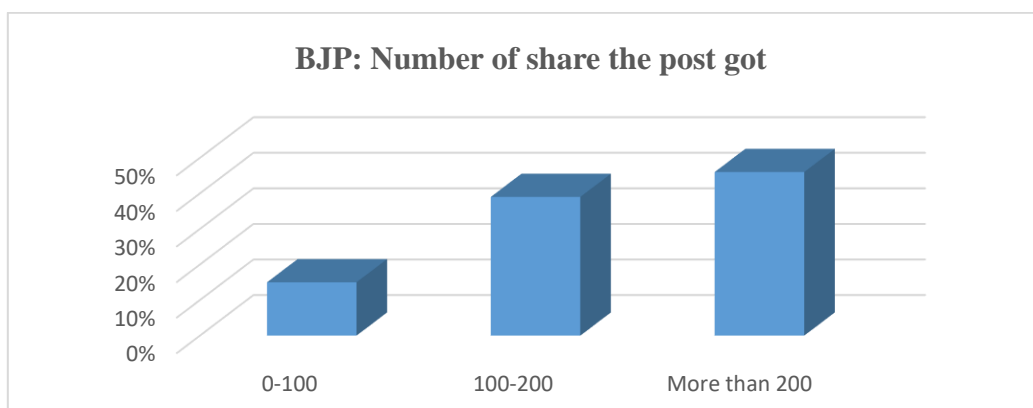


Figure 1.11: BJP-Number of share the post got

Figure 1.11 depicts the amount of shares in the BJP's Facebook postings during the GE 2024. 15% of the BJP's OFA posts got 0 to 100 shares, while 39% of the total posts got 100 to 200 shares, and 46% got more than 200 shares.

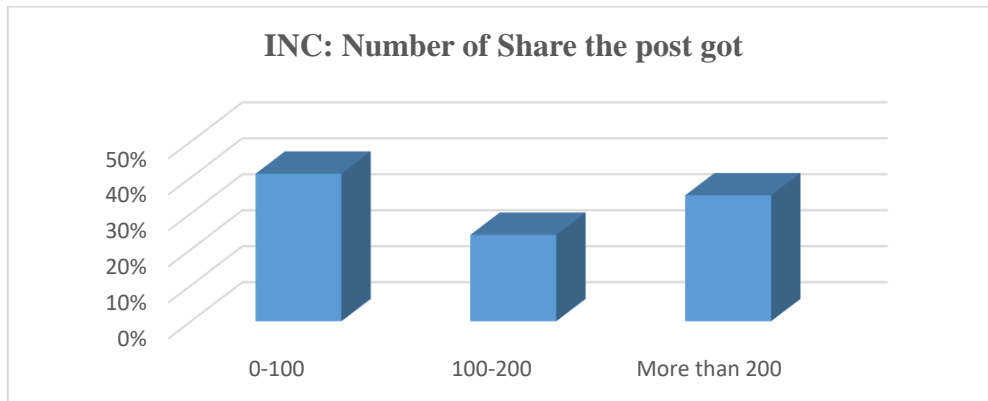


Figure 1.12: INC-Number of Share the post got

Figure 1.12 displays the number of shares in the INC's Facebook posts during the 2024 GE; after analysing the INC's OFA, it was discovered that only 41% of the total posts got 0 to 100 shares by users, 24% got 100 to 200 shares, and 35% got more than 200 shares.

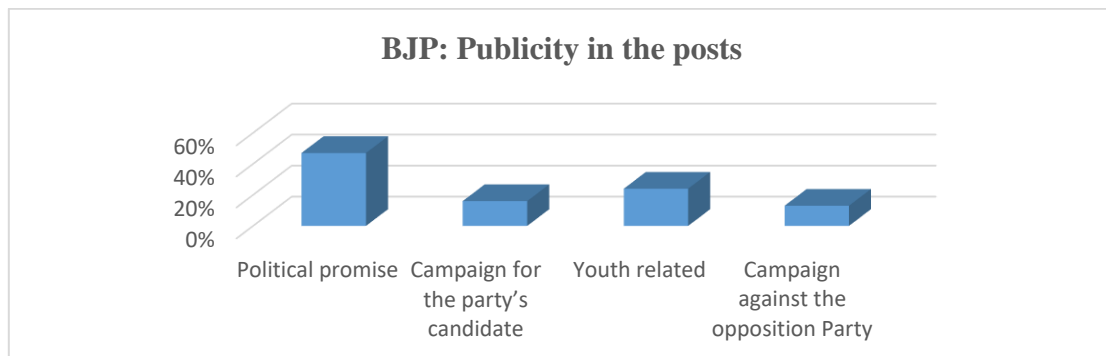


Figure 1.13: BJP-Publicity in the posts

Figure 1.13 depicts publicity in the BJP's Facebook posts during the 2024 General Election. After doing a thorough data analysis, it was shown that 47% of the BJP's OFA posts were based on political promises. 16% were related to the campaign for the party's candidate. While 24% of posts were on youth. The campaign against the opposition party contributed to 13% of the posts.

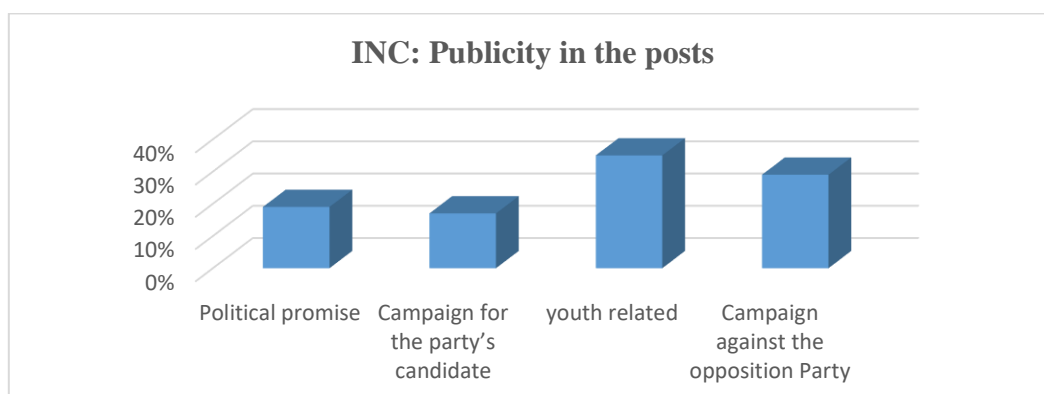


Figure 1.14: INC-Publicity in the posts

Figure 1.14 reveals that just 19% of the INC's OFA posts were based on political commitments. 17% of posts were dedicated to the campaign for the party's candidate, 35% to the young, and 29% to the campaign against the opposition party.

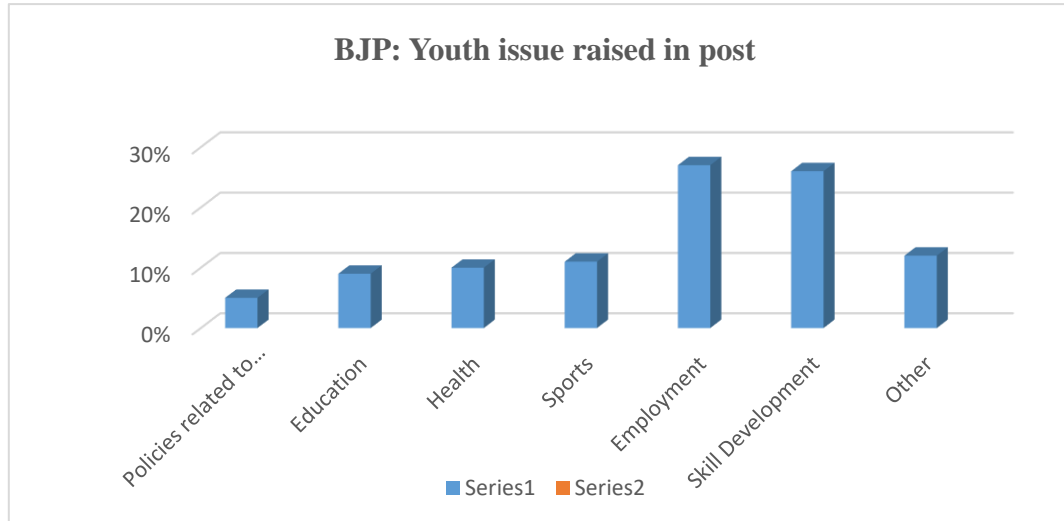


Figure 1.15: BJP-Youth issue raised in post

Figure 1.13 displays the BJP's 27% share of the posts, which are grouped into seven categories. Figure 1.15 displays the seven most critical young issues raised by the BJP in their election campaign-related Facebook posts during the 2024 general election. 5% focused youth welfare policies, 9% education, 10% health issues, 11% sports, 27% employment, 26% skill development, and 12% other issues.

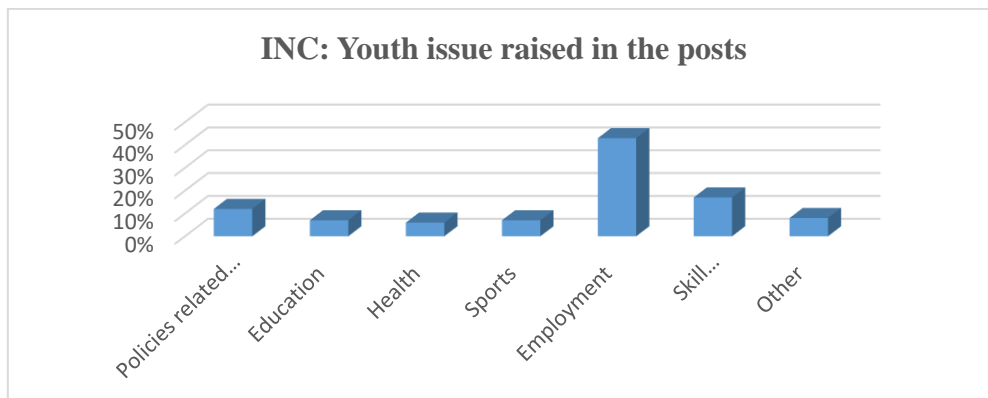


Figure 1.16: INC-Youth issue raised in the post

Figure 1.14 illustrates the BJP's 35% share, which is further broken into seven segments. Figure 1.16 depicts the top seven youth-related issues raised in INC Facebook posts during the 2024 general election. 12% of posts addressed youth welfare policies, 7% education, 6% health issues, 7% sports, 43% employment, 17% skill development, and 8% other issues.

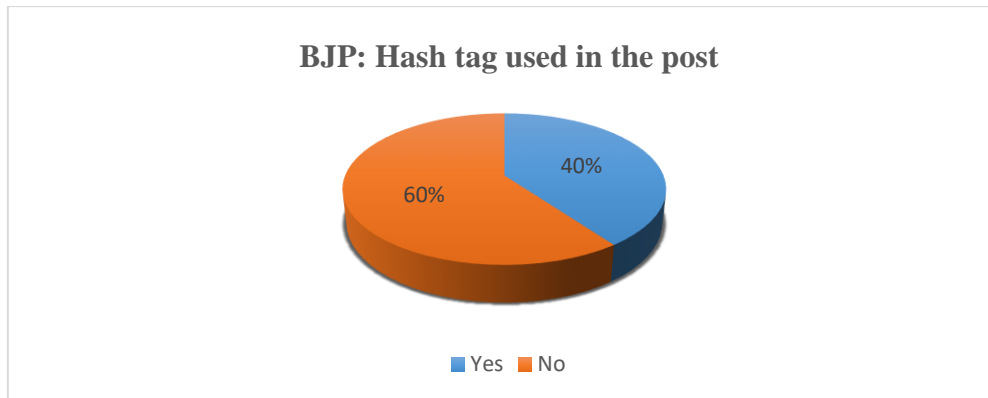


Figure 1.17: BJP-Hash tag used in the post

The hashtag (#) function is comparable to a hyperlink in that it generates an algorithm and connects you to any Facebook campaign's trending post. Using hashtags is a way to disseminate your posts. You may also use Facebook search to analyse your postings. If you add a hashtag in your post, it will be shared with particular individuals who follow it or engage in relevant activities on Facebook. Figure 1.17 depicts the haste utilized in the BJP's Facebook posts. After analysing the BJP's OFA, it was discovered that 40% of all posts during the 2024 GE included a hashtag. While just 60% of all posts were lacking a hashtag.

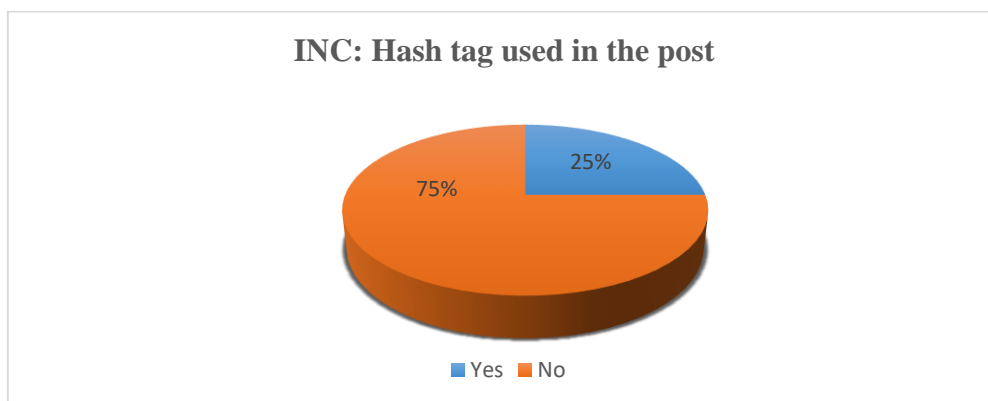


Figure 1.18: INC-Hash tag used in the post

In terms of the INC's OFA, Figure 1.18 shows that just 25% of postings had a hashtag, whereas 75% did not.

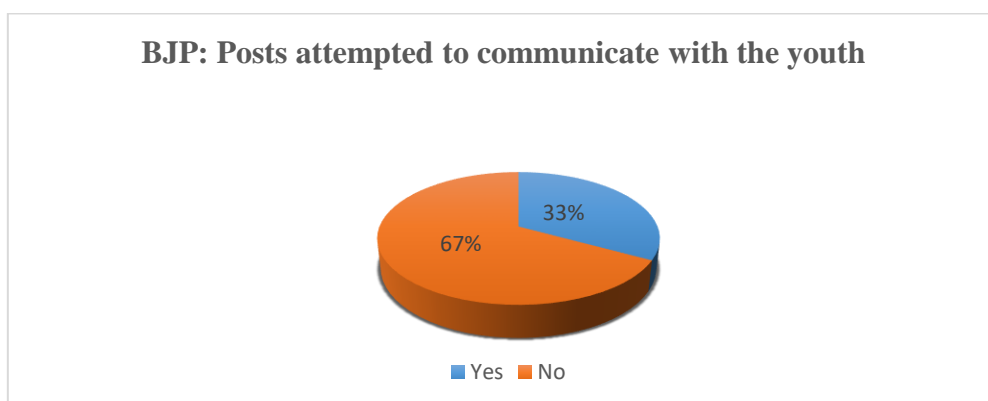


Figure 1.19: BJP-Posts attempted to communicate with the youth

Figure 1.19 displays the BJP's election campaign-related Facebook posts, which aimed to interact with the young during the 2024 General Election. Only 33% of the BJP's OFA post were allocated for young people. 67% of the remaining positions had no direct interaction with young people.

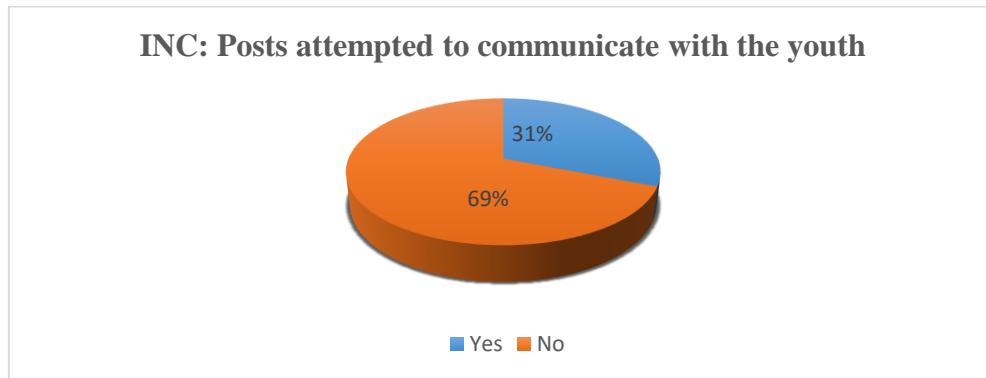


Figure 1.20: INC-Posts attempted to communicate with the youth

Figure 1.20 shows that of the INC's election-related Facebook posts, just 31% were meant to reach out to younger voters. Only 69% of the remaining positions included no direct interaction with young people.

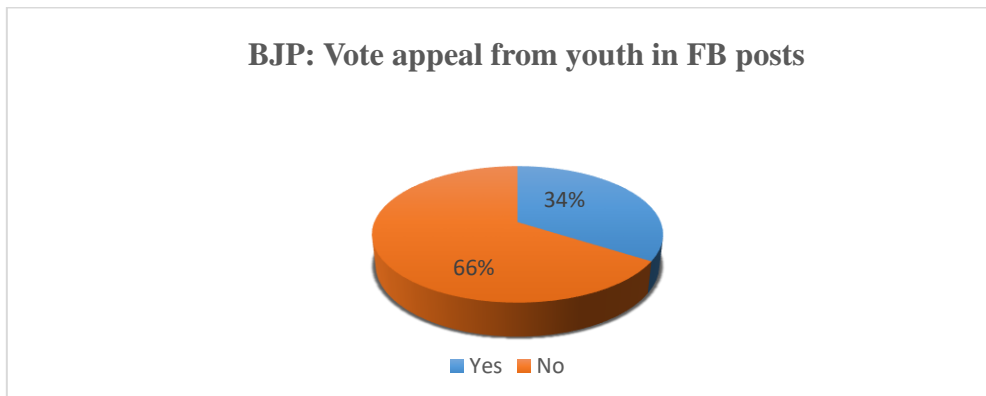


Figure 1.21: BJP-Vote appeal from youth in FB posts

Regarding the BJP's OFA, Figure 1.21 reveals that 34% of posters specifically appealed to the youth to vote for the party. While 66% of votes-related posts drew interest from everyone.

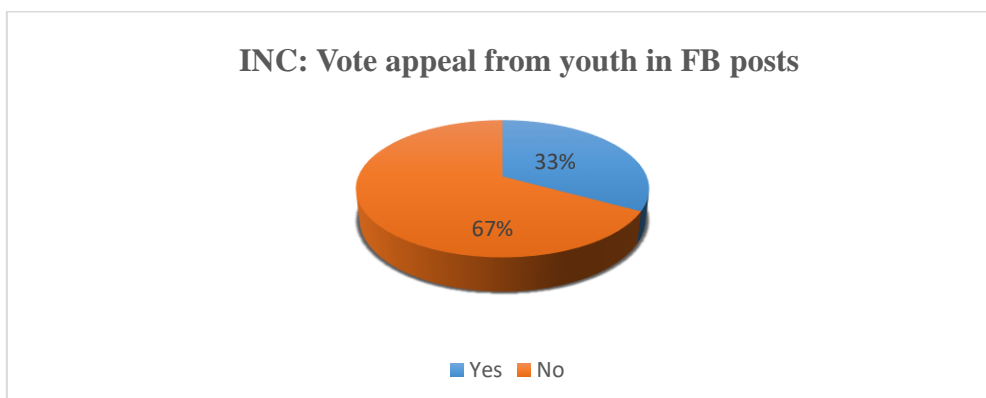


Figure 1.22: INC-Vote appeal from youth in FB posts

In contrast, see Figure 1.22. INC's OFA was worried that 33% of posts directly appealed to young people to vote for the party. While 67% of posts were about vote pleas from everybody.

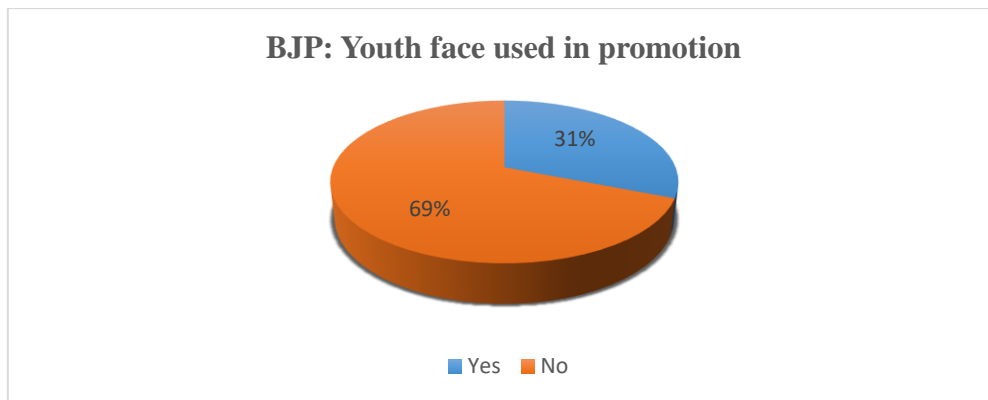


Figure 1.23: BJP-Youth face used in promotion

Figure 1.23 depicts the status of the BJP's promotional Facebook posts using youth faces in the 2024 general election. According to the survey, just 31% of the total posts in the BJP's OFA used youth faces, while 69% did not.

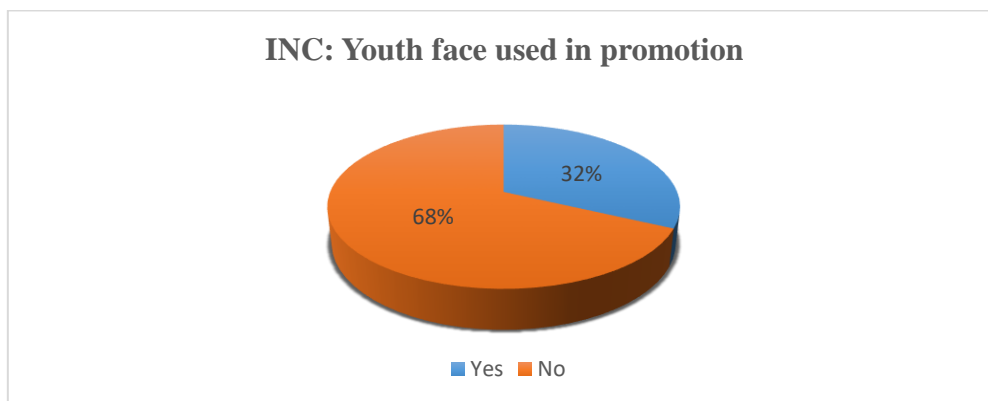


Figure 1.24: INC-Youth face used in promotion

Figure 1.24 illustrates that the INC outperformed in employing youth faces in their election campaign on New Media platforms. According to the poll, the INC employed young faces for the election campaign through its OFA in 32% of total postings, whereas 68% of the posts did not include a youth face.

Interpretation

Status of OFA of the NPPs in the 2024 GE

The 2019 election campaign was exceptional if the GE 2014 was a significant turning point for political campaigning on social media. The situation of the NPPs' OFA during the general election of 2024 was the primary focus of this study. For this reason, a content analysis of the OFAs from the BJP and INC was done using 12 factors. This research aimed to offer an overview of NPPs' OFA. One of the characteristics of our content investigation revealed that election-related Facebook postings were generally written in Hindi and English. It indicates that the BJP and INC were more focused on Hindi users. This might be because the Hindi belt had more seats. Both parties sought to contact with English speakers as well. According to the statistics, while looking at the broader picture, NPPs prioritized Hindi and English in their Facebook posts. While the NPP's state unit launched an electoral campaign in their own language on Facebook. Another criterion was employed to assess the substance of these Facebook postings. There were a variety of Facebook posts in their OFA. According to the study, both parties posted in text + picture

format, where "photo" refers to memes, graphics, photographs, and so on. According to the content analysis results, NPPs made extensive use of images and memes in their Facebook postings.

Using this format, the BJP showcased new accomplishments, a performance report card, the success of their government, and a campaign against the opposition parties. Other NPPs followed suit, even as the INC utilized this platform to criticize the policies of the governing administration. Memes were crucial to the NPPs' New Media campaigning. The opposition party and its candidates were made fun of in these memes. Text with videos was another way to submit messages; these movies included campaign videos, state-of-the-leader videos, and making videos.

This more than one-minute video was produced to highlight the parties' achievements, a strong will for development, criticism of opposition parties, and promotion of their manifesto. These were high-quality HD videos created for the election campaign in New Media. Due to the space limitations on Facebook, the easiest way to take users to another website is known as an external link. The content analysis found that NPPs were using text with hyperlink in their posts. These hyperlinks provided access to various articles, research papers, newspaper clippings, videos, YouTube, and website links. The user just had to click it once. All NPPs had some target voter groups other than the vote bank. The study reflects that though political parties were posting messages to woo the all voters but their focus were in the youth also. They tried to raise their issues prominently. This fact shows how the NPPs closely fought GE 2024 among the youth. Another important parameter was finding out the publicity used in the NPPs' Facebook posts. This parameter was divided into four criteria: political promises, campaign for the party candidate, youth-related, and campaign against the opposition party. After studying the official Facebook accounts of both parties, it was observed that the BJP's official Facebook account focused on political promises, but also in youth related issues. As far as the official Facebook account of the INC was concerned their post were targeting youth-related issues aggressively. The defending political party, which means the BJP, came with its report card and future strategy for development. Opposition parties were similarly showing their thoughts and plans in front of voters. The BJP was more focused on its accomplishments as a ruling party, such as all development works and schemes, India's diplomatic leadership, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision, and so on. On the other hand, opposition parties were playing their role by refusing the BJP's report card, manifesto, and all claims. All NPPs opposed the BJP's policies, facts and figures, and statements, even the role of PM Narendra Modi. Interestingly, the study finds that the BJP was the only NPP that had adopted the best technique to attract young voters in their favour. Data says that just less than half of the posts had content for the youth. Another follow up inquiry was about the youth-related concerns addressed in the posts. For this, seven criteria were chosen, including policies related to youth welfare, education, health, sports, employment, skill development, etc. The research shows that the both NPPs raised the Employment and skill development issues more prominently in their posts. According to research, the BJP prioritised youth employment, education, and skill development over health. Employment was a core issue for youngsters, and the BJP also tried to touch on this issue. The BJP came with employment data, followed by entrepreneurship. The BJP includes employment opportunities with ongoing development projects in infrastructure development, setting up industries, FDI, etc. The BJP emphasised a new education policy and the establishment of new IITs, AIIMS, IITs, NITs, and other new institutions. Skill India, Digital India, Make in India, Mudra Yojna, and other entrepreneurship schemes were the major triumphs of the BJP government, and the BJP was roasting this issue in their favour as a skill development initiative. Similarly, sports were also an issue where the BJP advocated for the execution of initiatives such as the Khelo India Initiative, schemes for athletes, performance in international sports

activities, and improving sports facilities, among others. On the other hand, the INC focused heavily on job issue. The INC brought up the issue of youth unemployment on its official Facebook page. The INC emphasised the decreasing level of education and the education system. By providing a fact sheet, the INC also attempted to contrast the current state of education with that of the UPA administration. The INC tried to trap the BJP on employment, health, skill development, and youth policy matters. Another parameter was to see whether the NPPs used the #hashtag in their official Facebook posts in the 2024 GE. The research found a massive war between the BJP and the INC, and the hashtag was a weapon for them to poke each other. But BJP was more on fire than the INC. The BJP's bio on the platform includes the hashtag '#viksitbharat by 2047', 'Modi ka parivar', which has been a central theme of BJP's Lok Sabha campaign this year. while INC was also highlighting various issues raised by the party, such as "#Yuva Nyay, #Nari Nyay, #Kisaan Nyay, #Shramik Nyay and #Hissedari Nyay. s #Bhartibharosa, #Pehlinaukaripakki" These issues were central to Rahul's renowned Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, which has been regarded as crucial in reviving the party this election.

Similarly, when it was analysed whether NPPs tried to communicate with the youth in New Media campaigns on Facebook, it was observed that both party were doing that in same capacity. Another parameter was to analyse whether the NPPs' Facebook posts from its official Facebook account directly appealed to the youth to vote for their party. The research says that both were attempting to persuade young voters to vote in their favour. Here the picture looks quite different from 2019 GE; the research data shows that this time INC was also very interactive and appealing to young users to vote in their favour. Another study parameter was to analyse the use of youth icons by NPPs during the GE 2024. The study reflects that both parties were doing this in same manner as well. This data shows that the INC which was fighting as a prominent member of INDI Alliance, adopting good strategy by learning from past GE. Earlier they were leg behind by the BJP in 2019 GE, but this time they almost there in the race.

ii. Feedback from the Users

Another part of content analysis was determining the state of user responses. The researcher determined some criteria. The number of likes, comments, and shares were analyzed during the content analysis process. It was discovered that 75% of the BJP's postings received more than 1,000 likes. This implies that the users understood the content of the party's posts. Because most Facebook users were young, it might be claimed that these posts were more popular among the younger population. The study explores how the BJP encourages young people to vote in its favor. It is also logical to suppose that the BJP's posts had a wide reach. On the other side, the INC was looking behind the BJP. The INC postings also received more than 1000 likes in 60% of the posts, indicating that the INC was still fighting the BJP. Similar to how it applied to the BJP, this idea also applied to the INC: youthful users enjoyed their postings. Many people expressed gratitude for all of the INC's concerns or promises made during the 2024 GE. The comment section was the scene of an intense debate. For the NPPs, it was similar to combat. The claims made by the INC were refuted by the BJP or supporters of the ruling government; personal remarks about Rahul Gandhi and other notable figures were exchanged; remarks regarding the INC's policy were made; jokes about the INC were present in the comment section; and a discussion of some pressing issues was discovered during the content analysis. However, leaders of the INC and other party members also left comments on the BJP's tweets. BJP policies, personal remarks about Narendra Modi, unemployment, poverty, anti-incumbency concerns, etc. were all discussed. It implies that voters now have a forum to express their political opinions and bring questions to politicians thanks to the New Media. It served as a forum for NPPs to get user input. "Share" was another option used in order to comprehend customer

comments. This indicator measured the number of posts people shared during the 2024 GE by focusing on the share option. Three categories were used to group the responses: 0-100, 100-200, and more than 200. The BJP's OFA postings were discovered to have received more shares than INC's. This indicates that users were responding favourably to posts from the BJP's OFA. Supporters and other users spread their thoughts, which was encouraging because posting content is crucial. It might be conceivable that some Facebook friends shared the post with their friends after viewing it. Some Facebook friends may visit the official BJP Facebook page after viewing that post. In the end, the users' dissemination of their posts proved advantageous to the BJP. It enabled the BJP to connect with as many individuals as possible. Sharing posts is like a chain. A post is shared by another user when it is shared by one person. INC also received a sizable portion of shares. It indicates that a considerable amount of people was also seeing the INC's Facebook posts. With the exception of the BJP, the INC gave a considerably better performance than the other NPPs. The INC's Facebook postings were seen by the greatest amount of individuals. It may be assumed that consumers found their material to be more captivating or remarkable. This user input area demonstrates unequivocally that the NPPs were receiving answers from Facebook users and their followers. There was a fierce battle in every segment, with the BJP emerging victorious and the INC appearing stronger in some. It was believed that the majority of Facebook users are youthful. During the general election of 2024, it's probable that impressionable minds were monitoring the official Facebook accounts of national political parties. It is also conceivable that it may be transformed into NPP votes.

Conclusion

Social media improves communication, allows for more focused campaigning, and speeds up the spread of information, all of which have a significant influence on general elections. The goal of the present study is to have a better understanding of how National political parties sway young voters using the Facebook platform. The BJP and INC's official Facebook profiles were studied by the researcher for this. The study's findings demonstrate that both parties devised a campaign to sway younger voters. They made an effort to target younger voters with more relevant Facebook posts. To get the attention of every voter, the campaign made heavy use of both Hindi and English. According to the research, the majority of postings were meant for all voters, but they also had the intention of influencing young voters between the ages of 18 and 29. The political party targeted mostly first-time voters in their election campaign approach. Young voters and supporters of both parties used the Facebook post comment feature to show their support. The primary factor in the BJP's win could have been its ongoing efforts to win over new and younger supporters. The BJP made an effort to understand the youth's needs. NPPs attempted to attract youth attention to their future roadmap, showed visual manifestos, and made fun of one other using memes. Video posts were used to broadcast speeches and demonstrations in support of the party made by well-known party officials at the same time. Creative videos were displayed in the party's favor. According to the study, the 2024 general election was contested on the platform of new media. Both the BJP and the INC were active in targeting youthful users to their advantage. Youth-appropriate techniques were developed, and an IT team was established. The contest between both political parties was interesting during the 2024 GE. The study concluded that the NPPs used Facebook posts to persuade young people to vote for them in the 2024 general election. This meant that the NPPs engaged in direct communication with the young, addressing their concerns and encouraging them to vote for the party.

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