

# Youth Votes and Digital Strategies: The Role of 'X' in Shaping India's 2024 General Election

Dr. Chander Shekhar

Independent Scholar & Senior Journalist

## Abstract

The 2024 Indian General Election saw an unprecedented reliance on social media, particularly "X" (formerly Twitter), as a strategic tool to influence young voters. This study employs **qualitative content analysis** to examine election campaign strategies used by the **Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)** and the **Indian National Congress (INC)** on their official X handles. The research is based on **12 key parameters**, including engagement formats, messaging themes, propaganda tactics, communication strategy and voter mobilization efforts. The findings reveal that both national parties actively leveraged X to shape youth political perceptions, amplify campaign narratives, and engage with first-time voters. The study highlights how digital political communication played a crucial role in shaping voter sentiment, with BJP and INC employing targeted strategies to maximize outreach and engagement. This research underscores the growing significance of new media in India's electoral process and its implications for future political campaigns. The study reveals that both parties used X to shape youth opinions, engage first-time voters, and amplify political messaging.

**Keywords:** BJP, INC, X, National political parties, Youth, New media, General elections.

## Introduction

India's general elections, held from April 19 to June 1, 2024, witnessed a 66% turnout, with 640 million votes cast. As the world's largest democratic exercise, involving over 900 million registered voters, the elections led to a historic political shift, the most significant since BJP's rise to power in 2014. Social media plays a crucial role in Indian politics, especially among the youth, who use it to discuss good governance and engage in elections. It enables swift and effective outreach, helping political parties and candidates connect with a vast electorate. In the 2024 Indian general elections, political parties strategically utilized X (formerly Twitter) to engage and influence young voters, recognizing the platform's extensive reach and popularity among the youth. The BJP effectively used X to disseminate their political messages, achievements, and campaign updates, aiming to resonate with the younger demographic. Their digital strategy included regular updates, interactive content, and direct engagement with followers. While the INC leveraged X to connect with young voters by addressing their concerns and aspirations. Their approach involved interactive sessions, policy discussions, and real-time responses to voter queries, aiming to build a more relatable and youth-centric image. According to the expenditure report submitted by the party to the Election Commission of India, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) spent ₹1,737.68 crores on the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, allocating ₹884.45 crore for general party propaganda, ₹853.23 crore for candidate-related expenses, and ₹611.50 crore on media advertisements, including print, electronic, SMS campaigns, and digital promotions (PTI, 2025). According to statistics from Google's Ads

Transparency Centre, the BJP spent ₹41 crores on Google ads since the Model Code of Conduct was enforced, while Congress spent ₹30 crores in the same period (Madhukalya,2024). On X, all parties experienced steady growth, except for AAP, which saw a drop of approximately 1,200 followers in January. The BJP gained 120,000 followers in both January and February, with a slight increase to 170,000 in March. Congress' follower count on X grew by more than 59,000 in January, nearly 70,000 in February, and over 108,000 in March. TMC's account added around 1,600 followers in January, 1,800 in February, and 6,400 in March, according to data from analytics firm Social Blade (Singh, 2024). To reach a wider audience, parties have created state and language-specific accounts on X, targeting voters at a micro level. These accounts use music, snappy video edits, and crisp messages to boost support (Sharma, 2024). The BJP spent over ₹50 crores on Facebook ads during election, while Congress and its affiliates spent ₹7.17 crore (Madhukalya,2024). The youth now use new media as a forum to talk about good governance. It motivates people to actively participate in voting today. It facilitates the efficient and quick outreach of political parties and candidates to a sizable electorate.

### **X (Formerly Twitter) as a Political Tool**

X served as a primary platform for young voters to access information about party manifestos, candidate profiles, and real-time election news, facilitating informed decision-making. In the 2024 Indian general elections, X (formerly Twitter) became a crucial battleground for national political parties to influence young voters. In the 2024 Indian general elections, social media platforms have become crucial in shaping the political landscape, and X (formerly Twitter) plays a pivotal role in connecting political parties with young voters. National political parties in India, recognizing the power of digital communication, have strategically used X to engage with the youth demographic, which is a key segment of the electorate. Through targeted campaigns, real-time interaction, and digital outreach, these parties are not only promoting their political agendas but also trying to create an emotional connection with voters, especially the younger generation that is increasingly digital-savvy. The use of hashtags, viral trends, live debates, and influencer endorsements are among the tools these parties employ to sway young voters. In a nation as diverse as India, where social media is a tool for both information and mobilization, understanding how national political parties leverage X in this way is essential to grasp the evolving dynamics of the 2024 general election. With India's massive youth voter base, parties like the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Indian National Congress (INC) adopted aggressive digital strategies on X to engage, mobilize, and persuade young and first-time voters.

### **The role of new media in modern political campaigns**

New media has fundamentally transformed the landscape of political campaigns, reshaping how political leaders and parties interact with voters, communicate their messages, and mobilize support. Traditional methods of campaigning, such as television advertisements, newspapers, and public rallies, remain relevant, but the rapid rise of digital platforms has introduced a new era of political engagement. The ability to connect with millions of people instantly has made platforms like X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube powerful tools for influencing public opinion and shaping electoral outcomes. One of the most significant aspects of new media's impact on politics is its ability to facilitate direct and real-time communication between politicians and citizens. Unlike traditional media, where messages are often filtered through journalists and news organizations, social media allows political leaders to speak directly to their audience. They can post updates about their policies, respond to public

concerns, and counter negative narratives without intermediaries. This direct engagement fosters a sense of closeness and transparency, making voters feel more connected to the leaders they support. The 2024 Indian general election was a prime example of how new media has become a digital battleground for political parties. The election witnessed an unprecedented reliance on online platforms to engage voters, particularly the younger demographic. Campaign strategies included live-streamed speeches, interactive Q&A sessions, and carefully crafted posts designed to trend and capture public attention. Political parties launched targeted advertising campaigns, ensuring that their messages reached specific voter groups based on age, location, and interests. The use of artificial intelligence and data analytics further refined these efforts, making digital campaigning more strategic and effective than ever before. The impact of new media on voter behaviour cannot be underestimated. In the past, people relied on newspapers and television debates to form their political opinions. Today, a large portion of the electorate, especially young voters, turn to social media for political news, discussions, and candidate evaluations. The accessibility and interactive nature of these platforms allow individuals to engage with political content more actively than ever before. Political debates now unfold in real-time, with users expressing their opinions, challenging opposing views, and influencing public sentiment.

### **Significance of the Study**

The 2024 general election in India showcased how deeply new media has embedded itself in the political process. Campaigns were fought not just on the ground but in the digital sphere, where the battle for public perception was as critical as securing votes. As technology continues to evolve, new media's role in politics will only grow stronger. Future elections will likely see even greater integration of digital tools, artificial intelligence, and immersive technologies to enhance voter engagement. While new media has undoubtedly democratized political communication, making it more inclusive and interactive, it also requires responsible usage to ensure that democracy is upheld in the digital age. This paper aims to analyse the strategy employed by the National Political Parties (NPP) through their official X handles during the election, focusing on how they engaged with young voters, shaped political discourse, and mobilized support. Through a detailed examination of campaign tactics, content strategies, engagement metrics, and the impact of digital outreach, this study explores how NPPs utilized X to maximize its influence. The findings will help assess the effectiveness of new media campaigns and their implications for future elections and policymaking.

### **Literature Review**

Balasundaram (2024) examines socio-economic factors affecting political engagement and how social media empowers young voters by reducing reliance on traditional influencers. It highlights social media's impact on political communication, youth participation, and candidate strategies, shaping electoral outcomes in Kerala. Jumle (2024) observe that personalities, especially Modi, emerge as central to the digital discourse at the level of country-wide trending hashtags as against non-personality centric themes. Kumar (2024) explores the impact of Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMA) on Voter Citizenship Behavior (VCB) in India, with Brand Relationship Quality (BRQ) as a mediator. The study highlights how SMMA strengthens voter relationships and influences engagement, offering insights for political social media strategies. Raju (2024) highlights how social media is reshaping India's electoral process, with the 16th Lok Sabha as a key case study. Inspired by global trends, Indian political parties actively use platforms like X, Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, and WhatsApp to engage and mobilize voters.

(wifdelh.org, 2024) emphasised that social media enables politicians to share their manifestos instantly, sparking discussions as users repost and engage within their circles. This creates an information chain, increasing awareness of current events while giving people a platform to express their views. (Bhushan,2024) emphasizes the strategic use of social media by political leaders to engage voters in real time. Both leaders utilized their vast social media followings to livestream public events and engage with audiences. Prime Minister Modi, with an impressive 98.5 million followers on X, has effectively leveraged his massive online presence, while Rahul Gandhi, with 25.9 million subscribers, also used the platform to enhance his outreach. It is crucial to explore how national political parties attempt to sway young voters during the general election through their official X platform. This study addresses this research gap and examines the strategies, content, and engagement tactics used to influence young voters.

## Research objectives

- To analyse the status of national political parties' official X handle during the election campaign of the general election.
- To examine the content strategies used by national political parties on new media platforms to engage young voters.

## Research questions

- What is the status of national political parties' official X handle activity during the general election campaign?
- What types of content shared by political parties on new media resonate most with young voters?

## Research Methodology

The primary focus of this study was the content of X (formerly Twitter) posts made by national political parties during the 2024 general election. The data was gathered using a qualitative approach. A sample from the Indian National Congress, the nation's oldest national political party, and the Bhartiya Janta Party, the nation's largest national political party, was selected through the technique of purposive sampling. Based on specific criteria, a checklist was created and sent to several experts for approval. The recommendations were taken into consideration while creating the final checklist. A content analysis was conducted from the start of the 2024 GE model code of conduct to the last day of voting (16 March–1 June 2024). Four posts from the OXHs of both NPPs were taken every day. 624 posts were selected as sample.

## Data Analysis

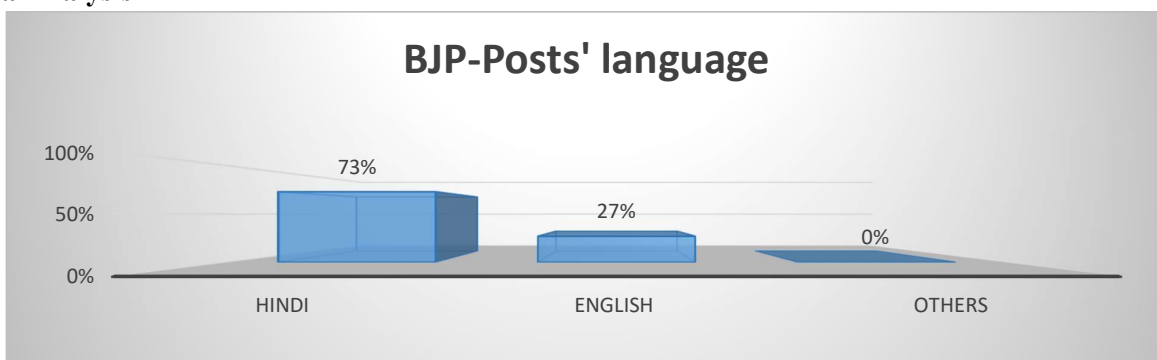
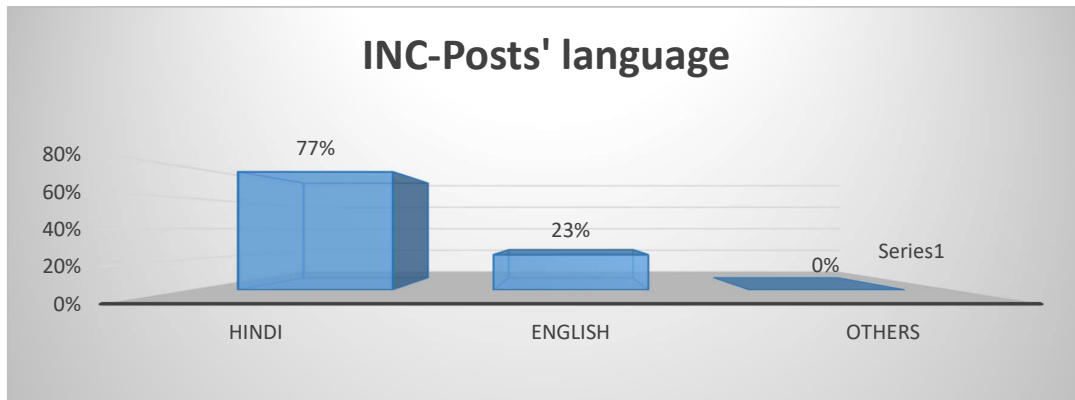


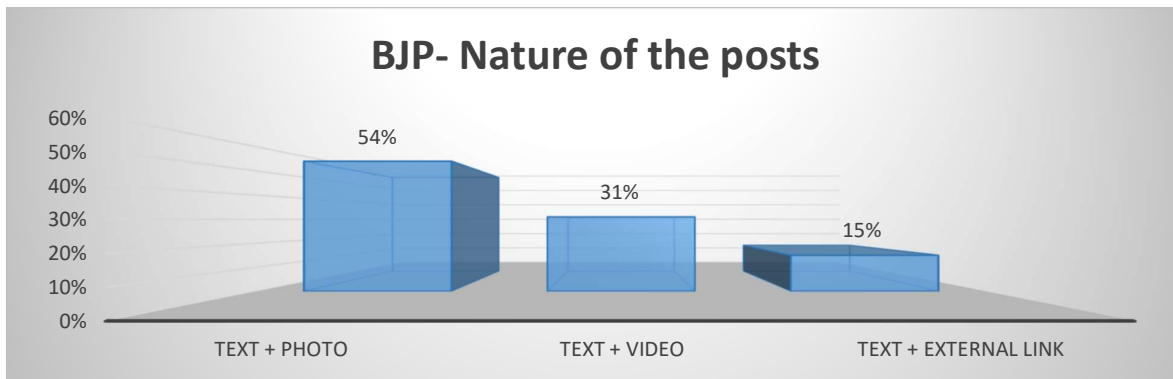
Figure 1.1: BJP-Posts' language

Figure 1.1 displays the language used in the BJP's X posts during the 2024 general election. The study found that 73% of the BJP's OXH posts were in Hindi, while 27% were in English. No posts were made in regional languages.



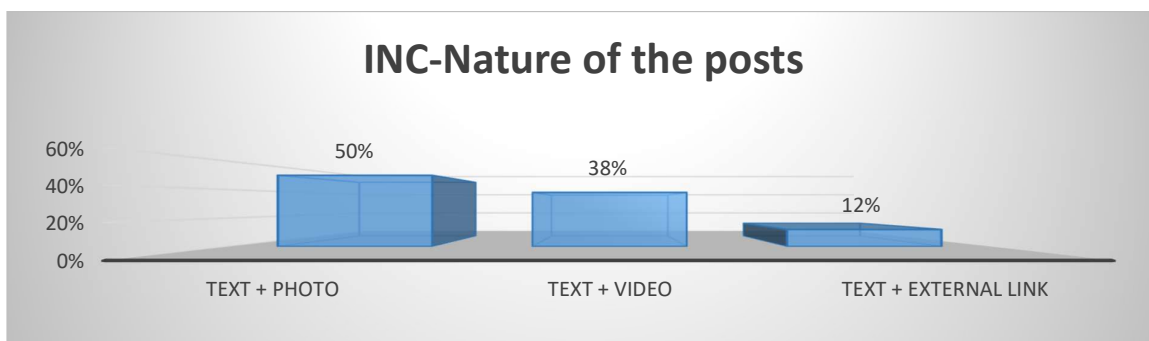
**Figure 1.2: INC-Posts' language**

Figure 1.2 depicts the language employed in the INC's X posts during the 2024 general election campaigning. The study revealed that only 77% of posts were in Hindi, 23% in English, and none in regional languages.



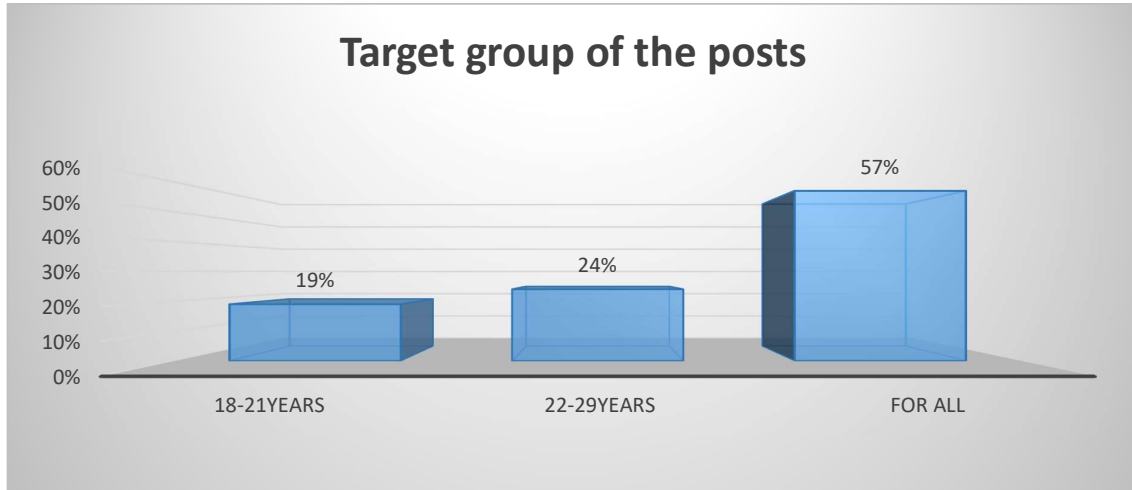
**Figure 2.1: BJP- Nature of the posts**

Figure 2.1 shows the structure of the BJP's X posts for the 2024 general election. Figure shows that the BJP's OXH shared 54% of its posts in text + photo format. A text + video style was used in 31% of posts, while the text + external link kind of posts was 15%.



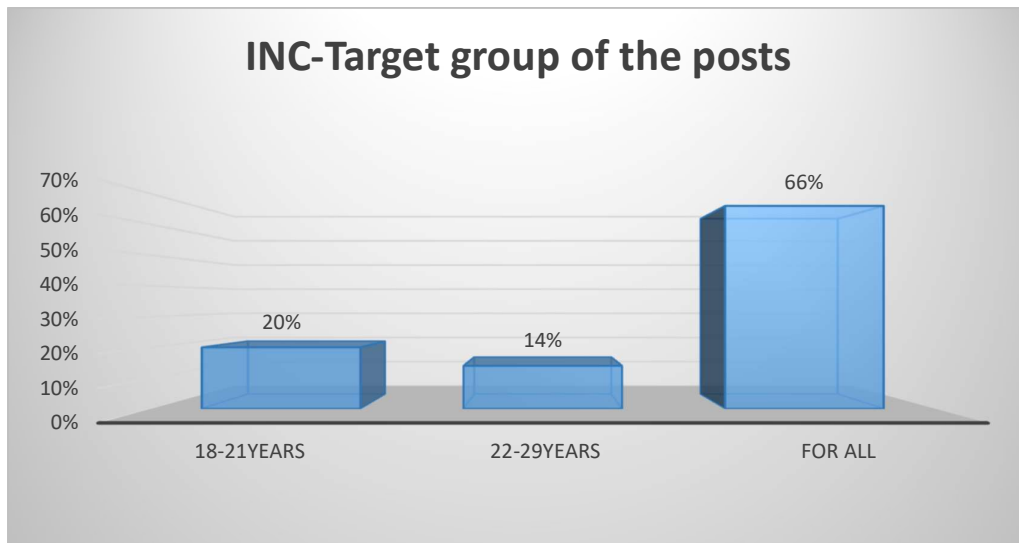
**Figure 2.2: INC- Nature of the posts**

Figure 2.1 demonstrates that 50% of INC's OXH posts were in Text+ Photo format, 38% in Text+ Video format, and 12% in Text+ External link type.



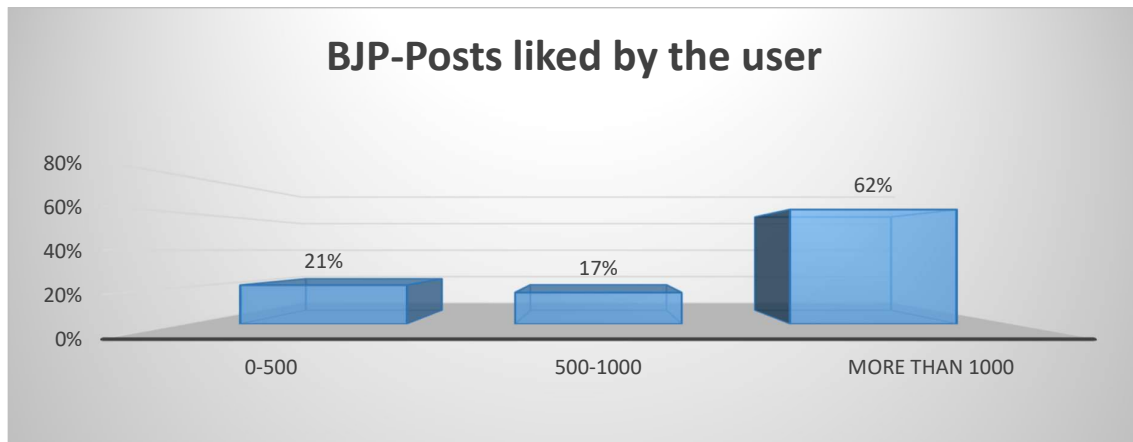
**Figure 3.1: BJP-Target age group of the posts**

The third component of the content study was to determine the target age groups of the NPPs' X posts during the 2024 GE. Figure 3.1 shows that 19% of the BJP's OXH posts targeted voters aged 18 to 20, 24% posts targeted voters aged 21 to 29, and 57% posts targeted all voters.



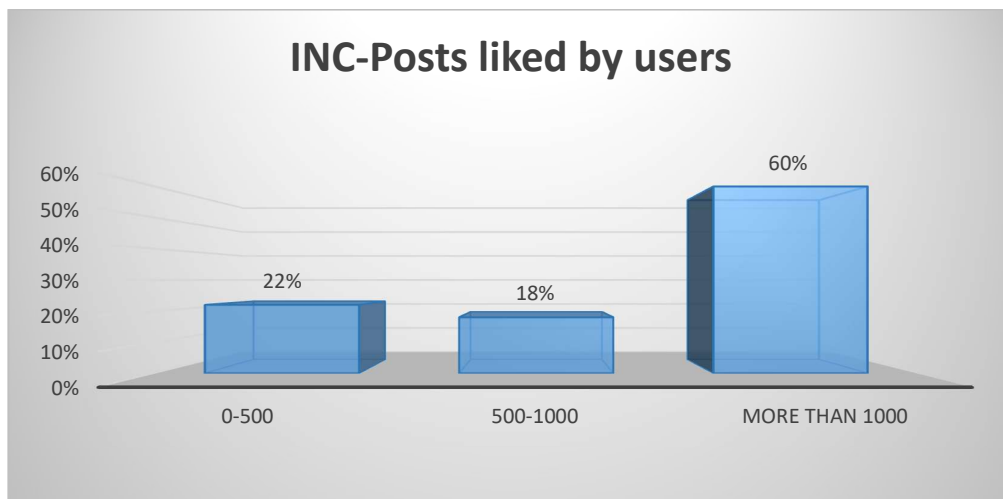
**Figure 3.2: INC-Target age group of the posts**

Figure 3.2 displays the target age group of the INC's election-related X posts in the 2024 general election. During the content analysis, it was determined that only 20% of posts from the INC's OXH were directed at voters aged 18 to 20, 14% at voters aged 21 to 29, and 66% at all voters.



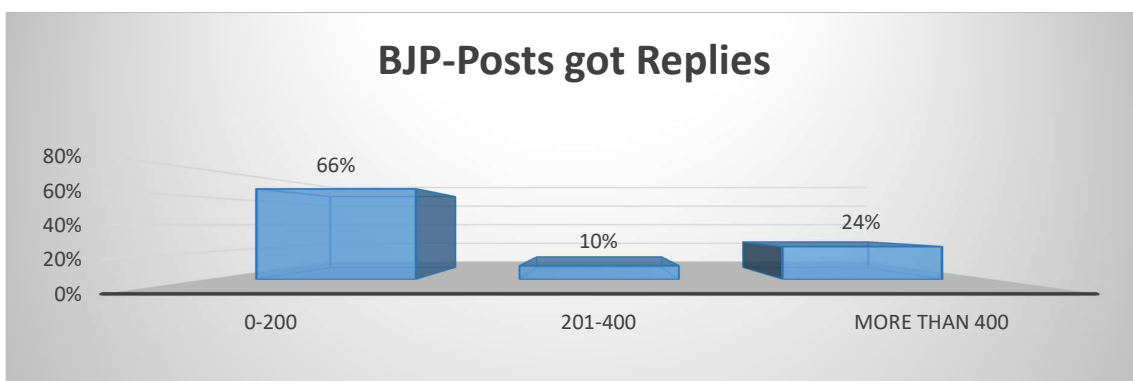
**Figure 4.1: BJP-Number of likes posts got**

The fourth content analysis parameter is to consider how many likes posts received. Figure 4.1 demonstrates that just 21% of the BJP's OXH postings got 0–500 likes. 17% of posts got 500–1000 likes. On the other hand, 62% of all posts got more than 1000 likes.



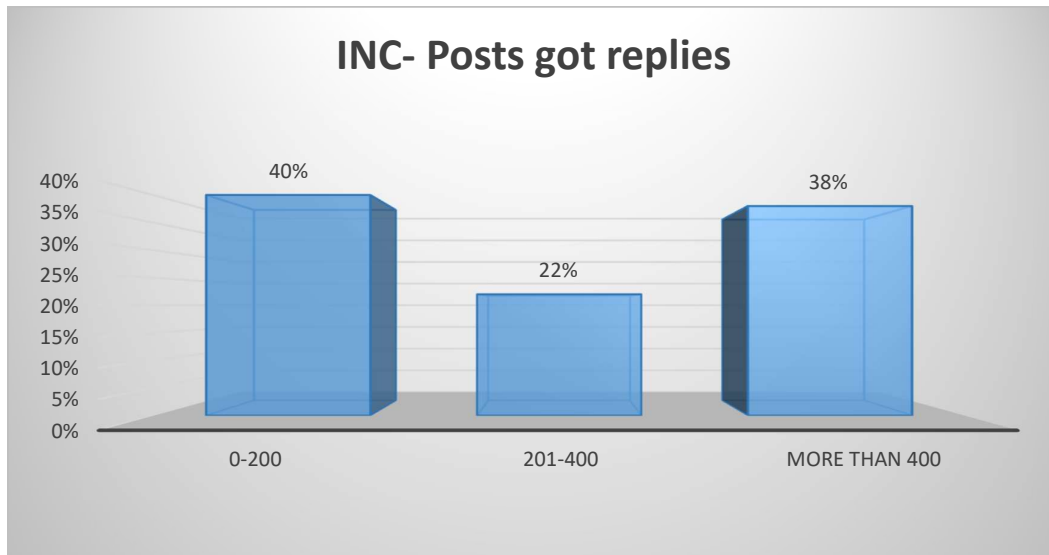
**Figure 4.2: INC-Number of likes posts got**

Figure 4.2 reveals that 22% of the INC's OXH posts got 0–500 likes. 18% of posts received 500–1000 likes, while 60% received more than 1000.



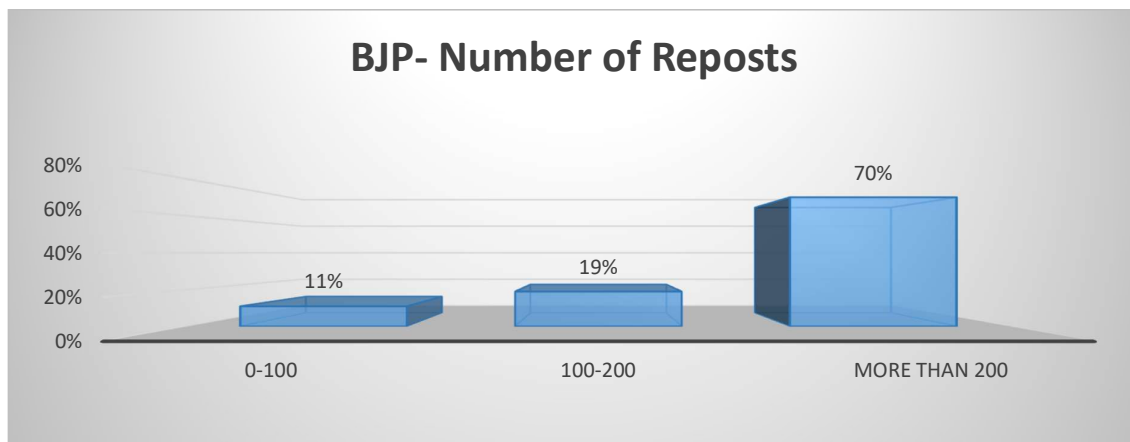
**Figure 5.1: BJP-Number of replies the posts got**

The sixth important criterion was the number of responses received to NPPs' posts during the 2024 GE. Figure 5.1, shows that just 66% of the posts received 0-200 replies. 10% of posts got 200-400 replies, while 24% received more than 400 replies.



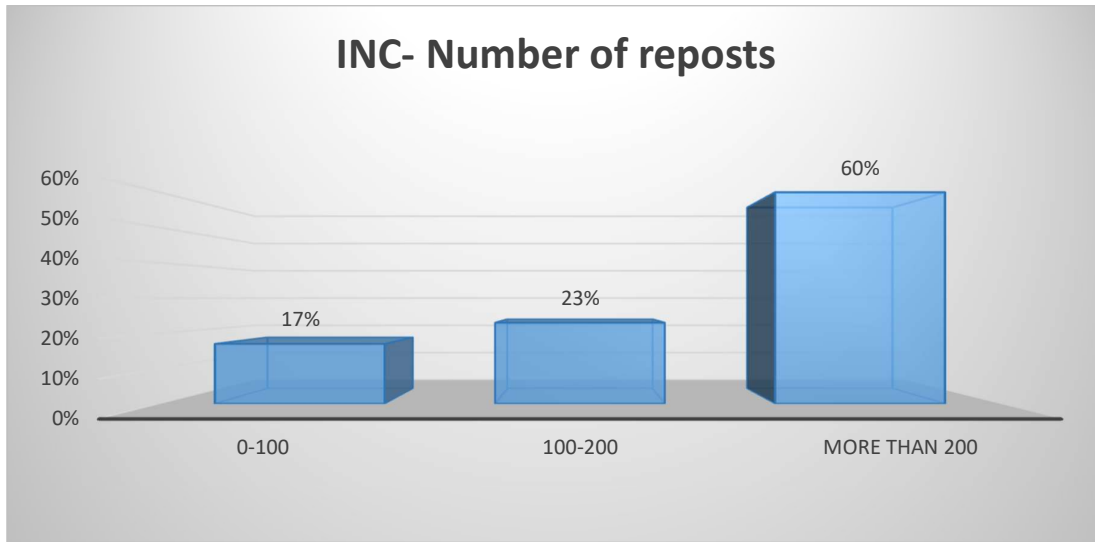
**Figure 5.2: INC-Number of replies the posts got**

Figure 5.2 shows that just 40% of all posts on the INC's OXH received 0-200 replies. 22% of postings got 200-400 replies from voters, while 38% received more than 400 replies.



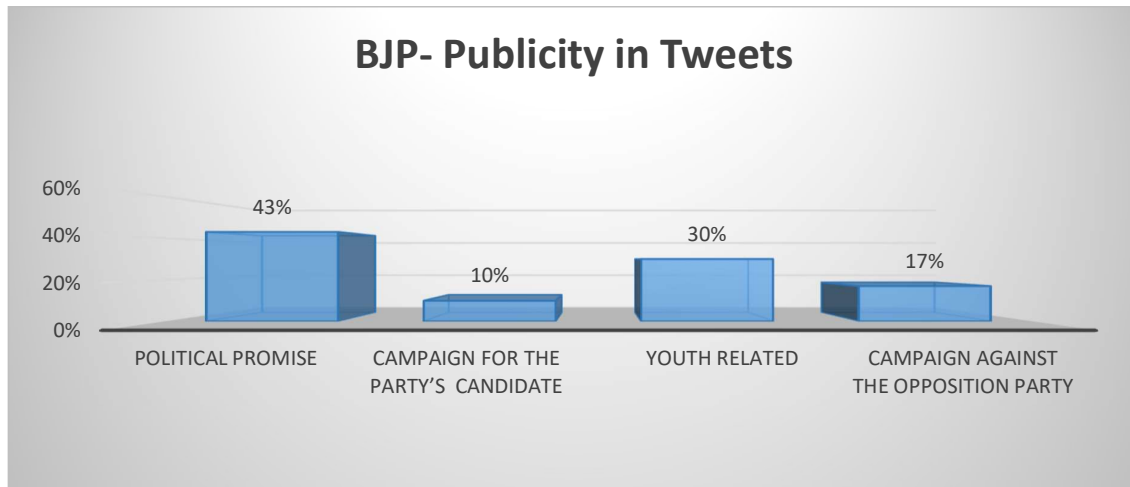
**Figure 6.1: BJP-Number of repost**

Figure 6.1 displays the number of reposts on the BJP's X posts throughout the GE 2024. 11% of the BJP's OXH posts had 0 to 100 reposts, 19% had 100 to 200 reposts, and 70% had more than 200 reposts.



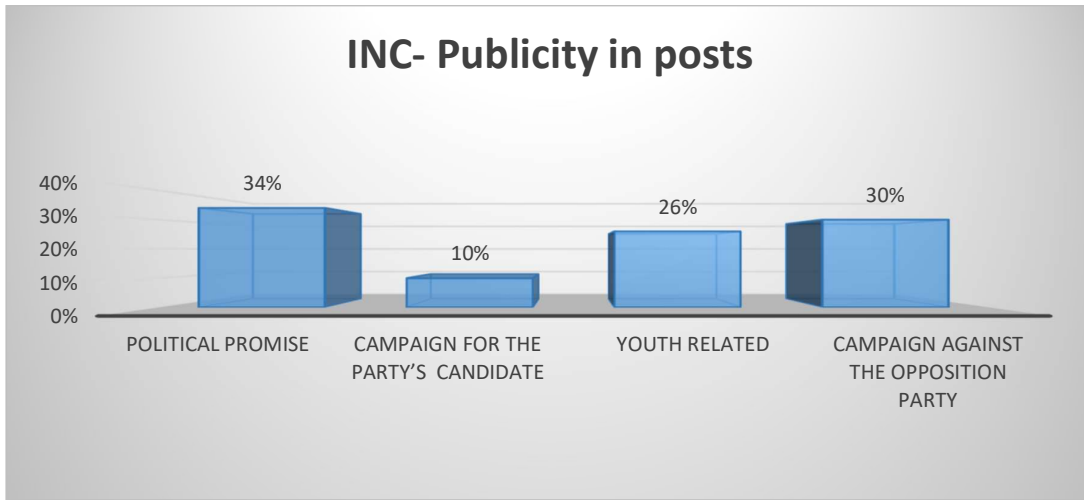
**Figure 6.2: INC-Number of reposts**

Figure 6.2 depicts the amount of reposts in the INC's X posts during the GE 2024; after analysing the INC's OXH, it was revealed that only 17% of total posts received 0 to 100 reposts from users, 23% received 100 to 200 reposts, and 60% received more than 200 reposts.



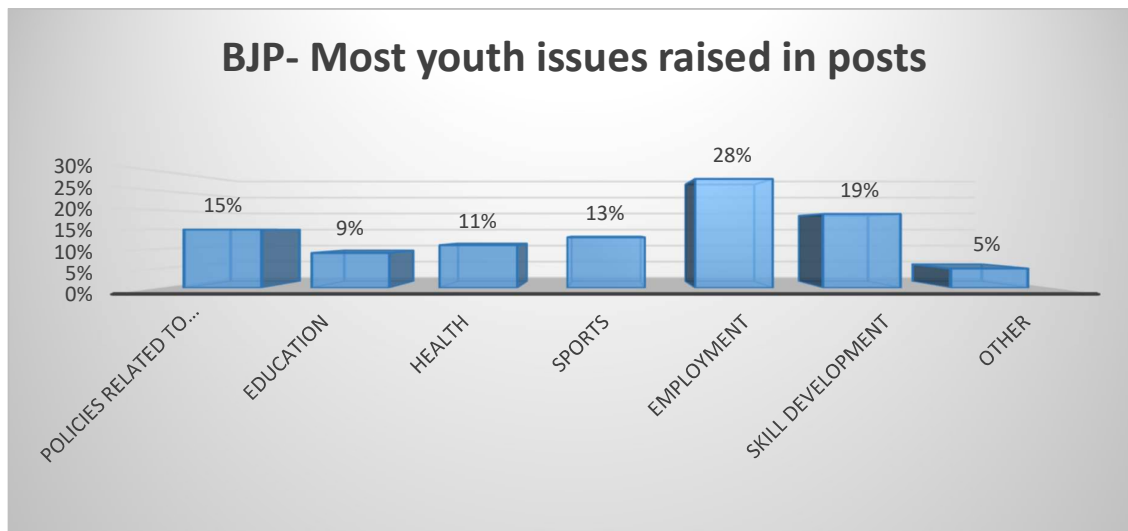
**Figure 7.1: BJP-Publicity in the posts**

Figure 7.1 indicates publicity in the BJP's X posts during the 2024 general election. After doing a detailed statistical study, it was shown that 43% of the BJP's OXH posts were found on political promises. 10% were involved in the campaign for the party's candidate. While 30% of the posts were youth-related. The campaign against the opposition party accounted for 17% of the posts.



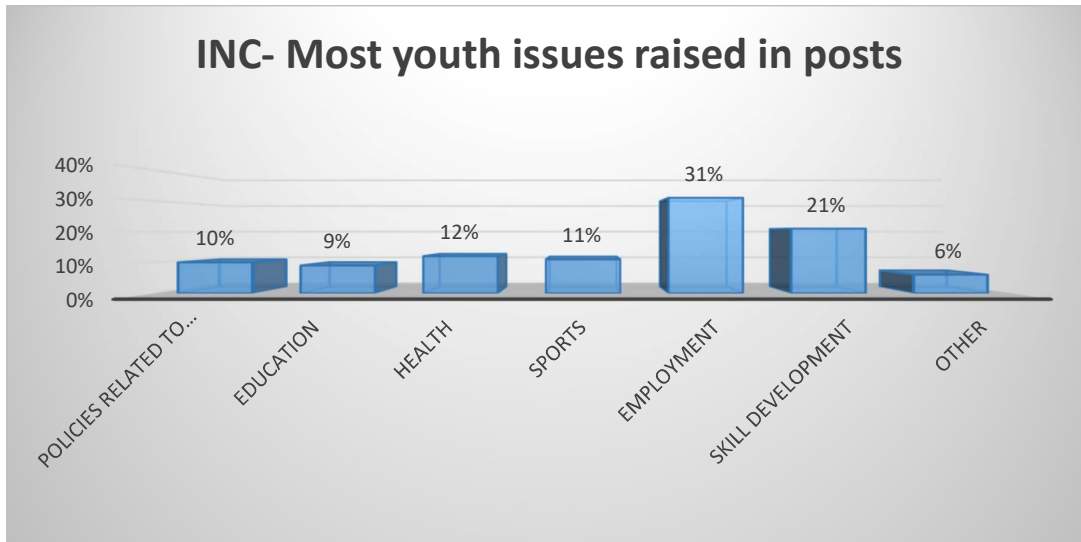
**Figure 7.2: INC-Publicity in the posts**

Figure 7.2 shows that just 34% of the INC's OXH posts were based on political promises. 10% of posts were dedicated to the campaign for the party's candidate, 26% to the youth, and 30% to the campaign against the opposition.



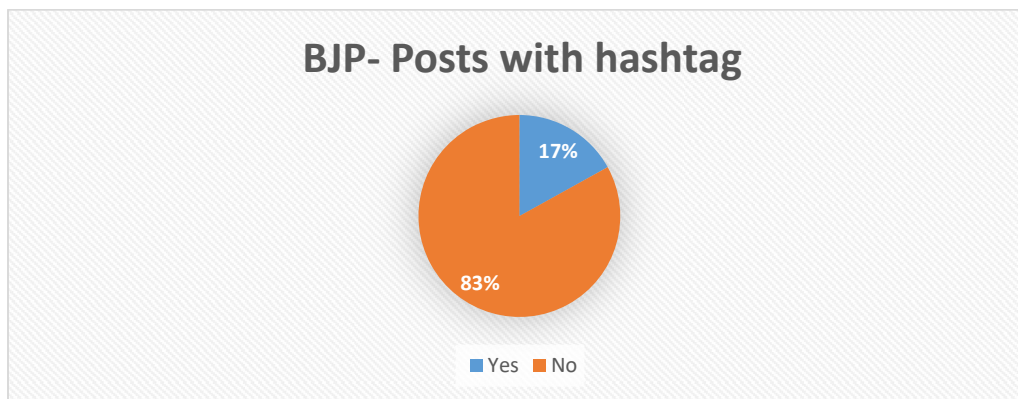
**Figure 8.1: BJP- Most youth issues raised in the posts**

Figure 7.1 shows that the BJP's 30% share of the posts were youth related, which are divided into seven categories. Figure 8.1 depicts the seven most pressing youth concerns mentioned by the BJP in election campaign-related X posts during the 2024 general election. 15% of measures aimed at youth welfare, 9% education, 11% health issues, 13% sports, 28% employment, 19% skill development, and 5% other issues.



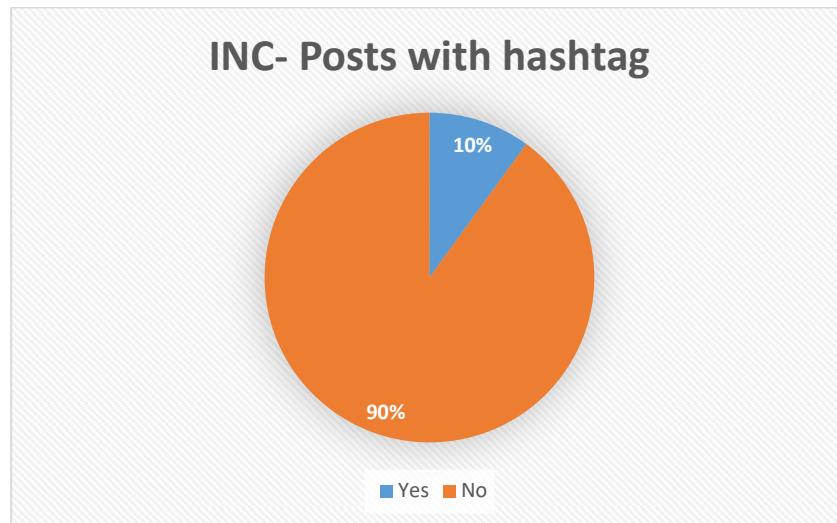
**Figure 8.2: INC- Most youth issue raised in the posts**

Figure 7.2 illustrates the BJP's 26% of posts were related to youth, which is further broken into seven segments. Figure 8.2 depicts the top seven youth-related issues raised in INC X posts during the 2024 general election. 10% of posts addressed youth welfare policies, 9% education, 12% health issues, 11% sports, 31% employment, 21% skill development, and 6% other issues.



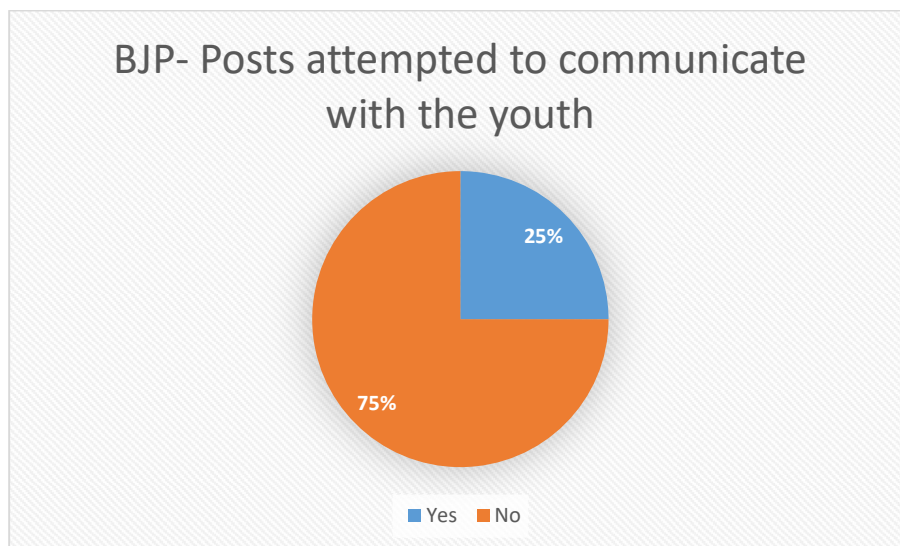
**Figure 9.1: BJP-Hashtag used in the posts**

The hashtag (#) function works similarly to a hyperlink in that it develops an algorithm and directs you to any X campaign's trending post. Using hashtags is a strategy to promote your postings. You may also use X Search to analyse your posts. If you include a hashtag in your post, it will be shared with specific people who follow it or engage in related activities on X. Figure 9.1 demonstrates the hastiness used in the BJP's X posts. After analysing the BJP's OXH, it was determined that 17% of all posts during the 2024 GE included a hashtag. While just 83% of total posts lacked a hashtag.



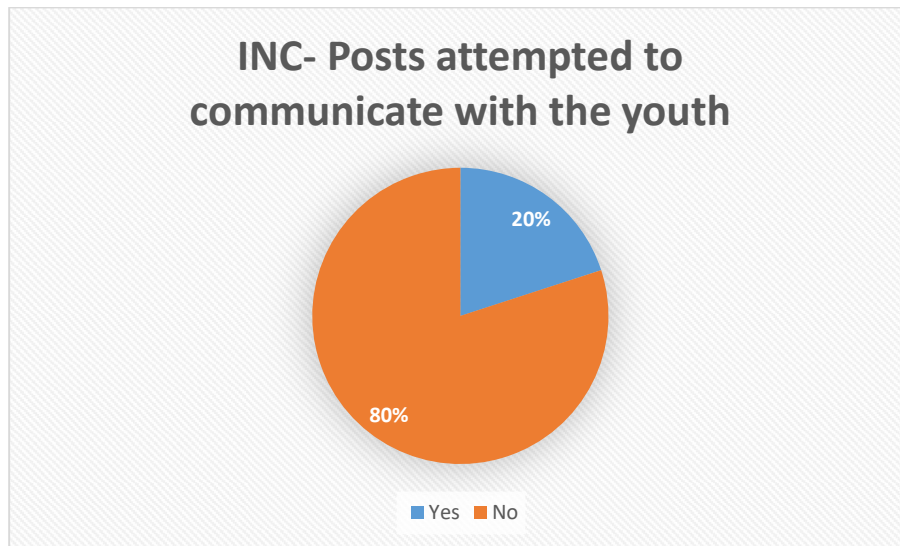
**Figure 9.2: INC-Hashtag used in the posts**

Figure 9.2 illustrates that just 10% of the INC's OXH posts used a hashtag, whereas 90% did not.



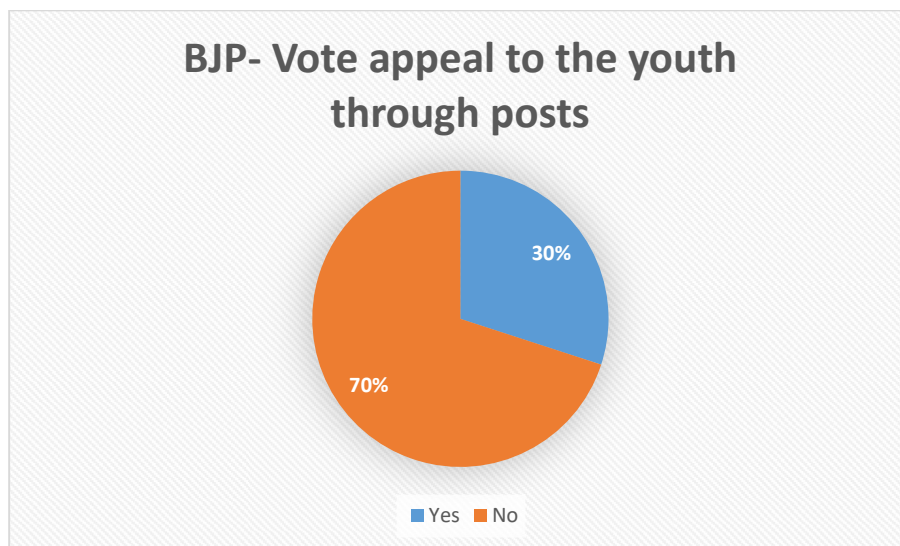
**Figure 10.1: BJP-Posts attempted to communicate with the youth**

Figure 10.1 shows that only 25% of the BJP's OXH posts were targeted to communicate to the young people. 75% of the remaining posts had no direct engagement with young people.



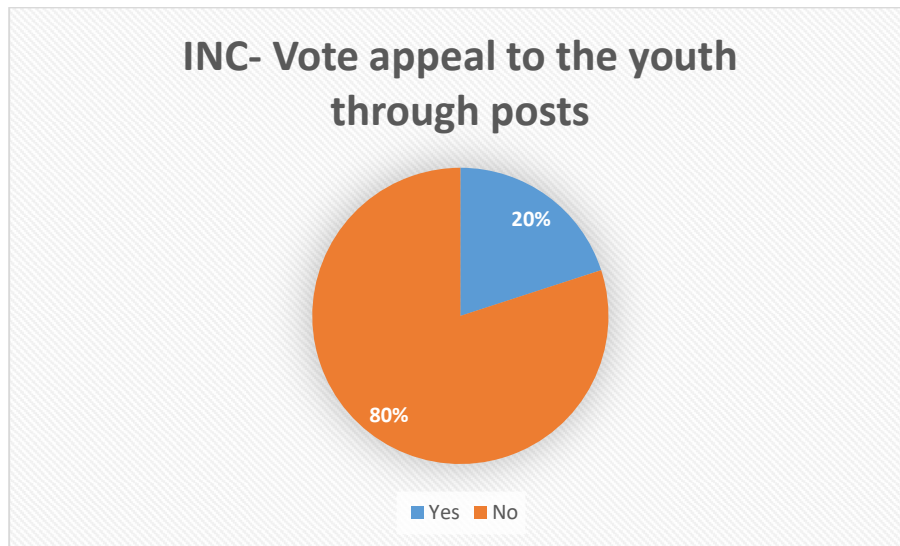
**Figure 10.2: INC-Posts attempted to communicate with the youth**

Figure 10.2 demonstrates that just 20% of the INC's election-related X posts were meant to communicate to the younger voters, while 80% of the remaining posts had no direct engagement with young people.



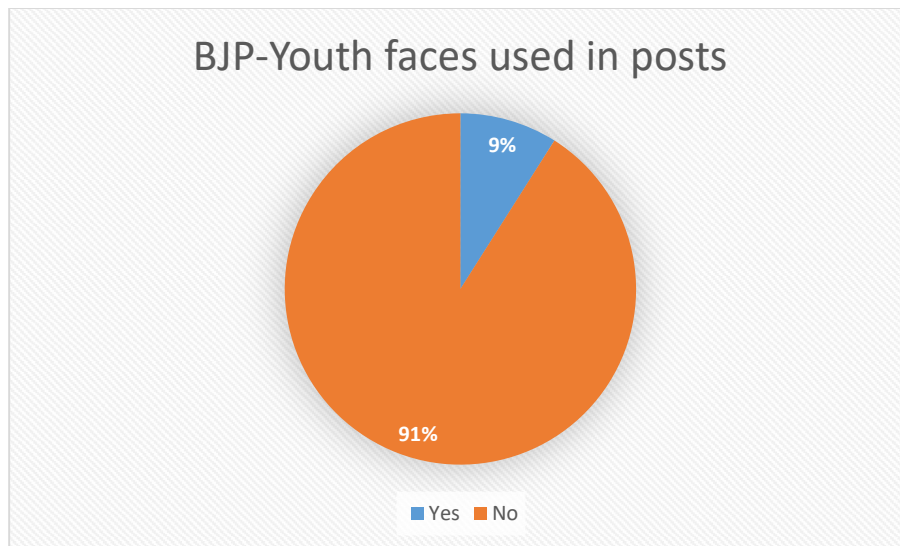
**Figure 11.1: BJP-Vote appeal from youth in FB posts**

Regarding the BJP's OXH, Figure 11.1 shows that 30% of posts expressly appealed to young users to vote for the party, 70% of votes-related posts had no direct appeal.



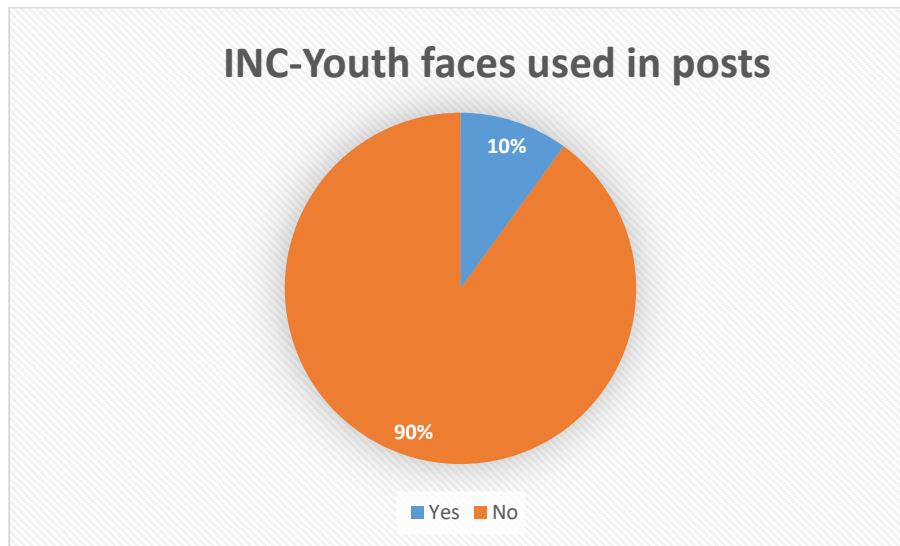
**Figure 11.2: BJP-Vote appeal from youth in FB posts**

Figure 11.2, on the other hand, shows that INC's OXH was concerned that 20% of posts specifically urged young people to support the party. 80 posts did not urge youth to vote.



**Figure 12.1: BJP-Youth faces used in promotion**

Figure 12.1 displays the current state of the BJP's promotional X posts using youth faces in the 2024 general election. According to the survey, just 9% of total posts in the BJP's OXH included youth faces, while 91% did not.



**Figure 12.2: BJP-Youth faces used in promotion**

Figure 12.2 shows that the INC outperformed in using youth faces in their election campaign on New Media platforms. According to the study, the INC used youthful faces for the election campaign through its OXH in 10% of total posts, whereas 90% of the posts did not feature a young face.

### Interpretation

- **Status of the NPPs' Official Twitter Handles**

The objective of this research aimed to study the status of NPPs' OXH (Official X Handle) at the time of 2024 GE. This objective was also focused on the posts the NPPs posted to attract young voters. To conduct this study, a content analysis was done on 12 parameters. The ruling Bhartiya Janata Party and the oldest NPP, The Indian National Congress, were selected for content analysis. The first parameter examines the post's language. While conducting content analysis, the study found that both parties were trying to attract Hindi preferring users. It is understandable because both parties had a strong hold on the Hindi belt and Hindi belt has higher number of LS seats. It might be possible that both parties could not afford to post in different languages on national platforms, so they broadly limited themselves to Hindi and English. The second point of this content analysis was to find out the nature of the posts. The study reveals that both parties were mostly sharing posts in text + photo and Text+ Videos through their OXH. Photo refers to memes, pictures, and visuals with text. Meme was used very often in the 2024 GE. The videos were shot films, ads, rally videos, jokes, animated videos, etc. Their duration ranged from one to thirty minutes. The BJP trailed in the use of posts with external links, whilst the INC prioritized posts with text and video. where some stuff was posted with a video link. The BJP was likewise well-positioned to use the text+ external link style posts. A text detailing the topic with one hyperlink directed viewers to a new webpage which had an article, a speech, a YouTube link, a story, research, newspaper clippings, and videos on that page. Due to X's limited size, this was the ideal option for political parties to take their followers to a different location where they could read infinite articles or view long-form videos. The study also discovered no significant difference between the two NPPs regarding the targeted X user groups. The BJP and the INC had the highest number of posts for all users; that was the inclination of both the NPPs on all users. No party wanted to ignore this section which was more than 29 yrs. old, because the number of such voters was higher than the above mention other categories. Of course, youth was important for the NPPs

because the numbers of young voters could change the result's fate. Especially the first time voters, i.e. 18-20 yrs. old, were immature and yet to develop political understanding, so they were more on target of NPPs. If both groups (18-20 and 21-29 years) of young users have been considered, even then, this figure reaches 43% of the BJP and 34% of The INC. It is clear from the research that the BJP paid more attention to attracting young users than the INC. More posts were done to match their expectation to create a belief among the youth. One of the primary questions addressed in this study is the type of publicity in the NPPs' posts during the 2024 general election. According to the data analysis, the BJP and the INC had the most posts about political promises. That indicates most of their posts focused on their respective parties' policies, the ruling government's successful projects and anti-incumbency, Ideas for a new India, and future development policies. The BJP's OXH had 30% of posts related to youth, and 26% of posts in the INC's OXH were available during the Content analysis. It means the second largest interest of the BJP was youth voters. Attractive posts were being created for them. There were posts related to the campaign against the opposition parties also. The BJP was raising issues against the INC and other NPPs. Some posts were a counterattack on opposition parties. The BJP was comparing their success to the INC's government. Even the INC was also doing the same in their posts. Some graphics, animated videos, shot films, and pictures were found in both parties' OXH. The INC's second largest interest was running a campaign against the opposition party. The posts mostly contained blame games and dissatisfaction with the ruling party. Only a small percentage of posts related to the campaign for the party's candidate were available in both NPPs' OXH. It was a YouTube link to a rally in support of the party's candidate in the posts. Research shows that NPPs have made the most political promises in their OXHs. It was clear that the main focus of the NPPs was political posts. In this, especially, all the parties put their development plans and the road maps of success. Mainly public lucrative promises were made. The ruling party, the BJP, counted its actions. Along with this, a blueprint was presented about the plans to be brought in the future. On the other hand, the INC kept the work done during its government in front of the voter through posts; apart from this, they kept their thoughts about what they would do if they came to power. 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, #Pehlainaukaripakki" These issues were central to Rahul's renowned Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, which has been regarded as crucial in reviving the party this election.

Rallies in favour of the party candidate were broadcast live on X. Research shows that the BJP did more youth-related posts while the INC was slightly behind. Apart from this, research says that The INC was more attackers of opposition parties than the BJP. In this, too, the posts of the INC showed that most of the posts were against the BJP. When questions were raised on the policies and plans of the ruling government, actions were described as unfair and inadequate. Another important parameter of this content analysis was understanding the NPPs' communication with the youth. The research reveals that 25% of posts of the BJP's OXH were targeted to communicate with the youth, and only 20% of posts were posted through the OXH of the INC. It means more than one-fourth of the posts were used to communicate with the youth. The supplementary question tried to determine how many posts directly appealed to the youth to vote for the party. Here, the BJP had more mileage than the INC. Every third or fourth posts directly appealed to young voters to vote. It can be assumed that other NPPs also tried to do the same things. The

research revealed that both parties did not use much youth faces. It indicates that the BJP placed more faith in PM Modi's image and appeal among young voters. On the other hand, The INC also depended on Rahul Gandhi's Image as a youth leader.

#### • Feedback from the Users

The outcome of this objective would only have been completed with knowing the status of feedback that these posts got. To conduct this study, three parameters were examined: likes, replies, and reposts. This study revealed that the BJP's posts were getting more user responses. Some concerns about jobs, poverty, or education may affect the user's psyche. Because there were a lot of young X users, it's logical to infer that they liked the INC's posts as well. Data shows the BJP ahead in the "more than 1000 likes" category, but the INC also looked comfortable. The BJP was getting normal responses to their posts, but the INC was getting more responses than the BJP. The INC got more replies to their posts because of many debates in that section. Both parties' supporters had too many conversations there. There were some remarks on both parties' policies and personal comments on their top leaders like Narendra Modi, Rahul Gandhi, Amit Shah, J.P. Nadda, Sonia Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi, and others.

#### Conclusion

The conclusion of the research study highlights the significant role of X (formerly) in influencing youth voters during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Both major national political parties—BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) and INC (Indian National Congress)—leveraged digital platforms extensively to reach young voters, but their strategies differed. Both parties invested heavily in digital campaigns, hiring IT experts and sending election-related messages daily in innovative ways. Youth issues were a major focus in their campaigns. Focused on sending photos with text and videos with text to engage youth. Some posts included external links leading to articles or videos. A major trend in BJP's campaign was the use of memes—a mix of images and text often used sarcastically to target the opposition. Overall, BJP had a more aggressive and strategic approach in engaging youth voters. Preferred posting videos with text messages rather than using photos. However, compared to BJP, INC lagged behind in effectively communicating with and mobilizing the youth. The study suggests that INC needs to adopt a more aggressive digital campaign strategy in future elections, especially to attract first-time voters. Future elections will increasingly rely on new media specially on X platform and evolving digital campaign techniques. The landscape of electioneering is shifting towards innovative online engagement methods, meaning parties must continuously adapt to emerging trends. The 2024 elections marked a shift towards digital electioneering, where BJP outperformed INC in reaching young voters. Going forward, political campaigns will rely even more on new media strategies, including social media, memes, and video content, making digital engagement a crucial aspect of electoral success.

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