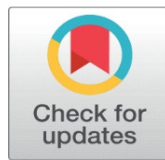
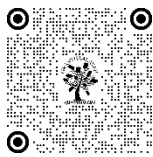


ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN INDIAN POLITICAL COMMUNICATION: A STUDY OF CORPUS LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL NARRATIVE ON TWITTER DURING KARNATAKA ASSEMBLY ELECTION 2023

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the political communication strategies applied during the Karnataka Assembly elections on May 23, 2023, with a specific focus on the Twitter (now X) as a platform. The Karnataka Assembly elections held notable importance for the then ruling Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP), as it aimed to consolidate its political influence in southern India in preparation for the upcoming 2024 general elections. The Indian National Congress, as the opposition party, perceived this as a favourable circumstance, as the voters appeared to be divided as a result of the presence of numerous influential local leaders who were not in sync with the ideology of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). This study utilises the Corpus linguistic methodology to examine the data obtained from the social media platform, Twitter, where political campaigning has become a significant strategy for achieving political mileage in India. This study conducts an analysis of the tweets shared by significant political actors throughout the campaign season for the Assembly elections, with a focus on examining the precise influence exerted by these tweets on the political discourse. The findings serve to reaffirm the resilience of the Indian democracy, as the electorate has demonstrated their capacity to differentiate and discern between matters of online debate and those that hold local significance. The study provides additional evidence to support the notion that the Twitter platform serves as a virtual space for political expression and the exchange of varied perspectives. However, it is important to note that these expressions and ideas may not necessarily translate into immediate influence on voting behaviour.

Keywords: Assembly Elections, Corpus, Karnataka, Political Communication, Political Actors, Social Media, Twitter

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1. INTRODUCTION

Politics may be seen as a discipline that combines both artistic and scientific elements, whereby the objective is to attract and persuade voters via the implementation of a well-crafted message plan. In a more precise context, the outcome of elections is dependent upon the efficacy of political communication strategies. According to Gervais et al.

(2016), the concept of political communication includes the transmission of political information between and among political elites, mass media entities, and the general public. According to scholars Denton et al. (1986), the concept may be defined as the strategies and motivations used by individuals who transmit messages with the aim of exerting influence on the political landscape. Pippa Norris (2015) stated that, political communication may be defined as a dynamic and participatory process that involves the exchange of information between politicians, the news media, and the general public.

India is a nation characterized by a significant degree of politicization. Political discourse is a pervasive topic of conversation and contemplation among individuals across the whole of the nation. The electoral process, spanning from the Block level through Panchayat, Assembly, and General elections, generates significant attention and engagement, such that even those who may not have a personal interest in politics cannot avoid its influence. Politics is an inherent and integral component of the democratic structure of India. Indian society may be characterized as a political society.

According to Joseph & Mahajan (1991), elections are a crucial component of the democratic process, as emphasized by liberal democratic philosophy. Moreover, it is said that elections provide voters the opportunity to actively participate in the political sphere, exercise their rights in choosing leaders, and articulate their policy preferences. Further the authors opine that the election process in India is characterized by a politically conscious and well-informed population. This constituency sees each election as an opportunity to evaluate the work of the incumbent governing party or the government.

The Assembly elections held in May 2023 in the state of Karnataka, located in southern India, were of great significance as they marked a turning point by preventing the governing Bharatiya Janta Party from expanding its influence in southern India. The Karnataka Assembly elections, also, hold significance due to their fragmented nature along caste lines, with numerous influential caste groups such as Lingayats, Vokkaligas, SC/ST, and Muslims being represented by various chieftains or satraps who garnered support from their respective castes. Nevertheless, each electoral contest revolves around policy matters and commitments. The concerns and commitments are effectively conveyed via proficient communications across several media. During the Karnataka Assembly elections, both the governing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the opposition Indian National Congress party strategically used many mass media outlets in order to appeal to the electorate. Social media platforms, like Twitter, emerged as significant arenas for political discourse, as politicians engaged in direct communication with their constituents and engaged in verbal confrontations with their adversaries.

2. RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

The recent Karnataka Assembly elections have provided an opportunity to conduct unique research that aims to analyze the political messaging used by different political leaders who participated in the electoral contest. This analysis will be conducted by examining the content shared on Twitter. This study aims to enhance comprehension of the mechanisms behind political dialogue within the realm of social media, with a specific focus on the platform of Twitter.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to scholars, Iyengar et al. (2008), it is noteworthy that Political Communication has a limited connection to the field of political science. The notion of political science has been significantly shaped by several multidisciplinary subjects, including sociology, anthropology, psychology, linguistics, journalism, public relations, and economics. Previous research has mostly focused on examining the social and psychological ramifications associated with voting habits. Several ideas developed by early scholars in the field of political communication have posited that voters are not capable of independently determining their voting choices. Instead, these theories suggest that voters' opinions are affected by individuals known as opinion leaders or "group leaders." The impact of media on voters' decision-making process was negligible. The influence of media on voting patterns has been comprehensively examined through the "two-step flow" model developed by Katz and Lazarsfeld. This model posits that individuals primarily acquire information through interpersonal communication with opinion leaders, who are active media consumers, rather than directly from mass media sources.

The impact of sociologists and psychologists in academia on political communication can be assessed by considering the influence of certain theories. For instance, the work of sociologist Erving Goffman (1974) on Framing Analysis, as well as early Modernist Theory and Freud's exploration of the pathological aspects of personality, has significantly influenced political communication theorists such as Lasswell, Habermas, and the scholars associated with the Frankfurt School. In addition to the perspective of sociologists regarding information dissemination, psychological scholars such as Festinger (1957), Hovland et al. (1953), and Zajonc (2001), as well as Petty and Cacioppo (1982), and subsequent information processing and learning theorists like Zaller (1992), Graber (1989), and Crigler et al. (1992), among numerous others, have directed their attention towards the role of emotions and their utilization as stimuli within the social context.

However, concurrently, another cohort of researchers was engaged in the examination of the media within the context of the political governance process. The individuals were academicians who showed a profound inclination for the domains of public relations. Bernays, Lippmann, and Bennette conducted research on the organizational structure of the media, as well as the rules and regulations that regulate it. They also explored the influential function of news dissemination in molding public opinion. The political system of India has deep roots and is characterized by a lengthy historical trajectory. For many decades, Indian politicians have engaged with the extensive electorates via conventional modes of communication. The scholarly investigation of political communication examines the relationship between mass media and political communication, hence enhancing public awareness of politics and voting patterns (Prasad et al., 2003). In contemporary times, it is more common for politicians to strive for a sense of connection with the general populace, particularly with those who represent the demographic makeup of their respective constituencies. As an example, the Prime Minister of India engages in direct communication with his expansive Twitter audience, consisting of over fifty million followers, on a regular basis. In contemporary times, it is no longer seen as appropriate for a leader to possess the exclusive privilege of being inaccessible and unapproachable to the individuals comprising his or her citizenry.

The use of social media platforms and access to a vast online database of voters provide political parties with a significant chance to analyze and comprehend the sentiments of the general public, hence enhancing their ability to assess the database effectively. The increased utilization of novel communication technologies for political and administrative purposes was observed during the tenure of the former Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh (unified at that time), N Chandrababu Naidu, in 1999. Naidu directed his focus toward the implementation of Participatory Communication by means of teleconferences and video conferences with district officials, thereby facilitating the establishment of e-governance (Murthy, 1999). The use of videos on a considerable scale during the 1984 8th Lok Sabha elections for the purpose of political advertising was seen as a pivotal element contributing to the resounding triumph of the Indian National Congress. According to Ghosh (1991), the complete influence of video was recognized at the 9th General Elections. The pivotal moment occurred in 2014 during the Lok Sabha elections when the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its allies in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) executed a substantial social media campaign. This strategic maneuver effectively generated a significant shift in public sentiment, resulting in widespread disapproval of the ruling United Progressive Alliance (UPA) and finally culminating in the electoral triumph of the NDA. The social media site Twitter served as a battleground for the furious exchange of verbal confrontations among lawmakers.

3.1. USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

The speed of communication, particularly in the realm of political communication, has increased in recent decades due to advancements in communication technology, hence transforming the foundations of communication. Politicians consistently endeavor to adjust their strategies in response to evolving societal dynamics, therefore using diverse media platforms to cultivate popularity and resonance among the populace. One notable illustration pertains to the extensive utilization of newspapers, magazines, and posters by politicians during the 19th and 20th centuries. However, as time progressed, politicians began to diversify their communication methods, incorporating television and radio. In the present era, the 21st century, politicians have further expanded their influence by embracing online media platforms and leveraging smartphones as a means of accessing new media or the Internet. The dynamic between politicians, journalists, and citizens has evolved into a multifaceted connection characterized by both horizontal and vertical dimensions. This is the context in which political elites' endeavor to advance their own interests, while both new and conventional media strive to collaborate in order to optimize their communication outreach. However, it is important to

note that they also engage in competition with one another to uphold principles of fairness (Votmer et al., 2011). The significance of the Internet in the realm of Political Communication throughout the early 1990s was minimal.

Therefore, the transition from conventional modes of communication to digital media in the 21st century resulted in a significant change in their strategies for engaging with their constituents. Social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook have facilitated a multifaceted and individualized type of communication exchange among users, resulting in the establishment of a power dynamic between the sender and recipient of messages. Undoubtedly, social media platforms have facilitated opportunities for individuals to engage in political discourse. Twitter emerged as a prominent platform for disseminating information during the pro-reform movements that transpired in response to the 2009 elections.

The significance and distinctiveness of social media reside in its provision of individuals with the ability to express disagreement and get immediate response or feedback, a capability that was not attainable via conventional media channels. The impact of social media communication on election campaigns has significantly influenced the current and future electoral processes in major democratic nations, leading to a transformative change in campaigning strategies. The advent of social media has given rise to a politically engaged demographic that can significantly influence the outcome of political contests, determining both victory and loss for political parties and leaders. Indeed, in contemporary society, the trajectory of a political leader or party is determined by the magnitude of their social media following. In an alternative perspective, leaders who possess a strong understanding of social media have effectively used various social media platforms to their benefit.

3.2. RESEARCH GAP

Although Twitter has been frequently used as a social media platform to study elections even in India, the academic contribution of new media as a tool of political communication has been limited in the context of India, especially through the corpus-based analysis tool method. A significant gap is quite visible throughout the literature review, especially in the study of election campaigning, which simultaneously uses the new media because it is linked and interconnected.

4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The objective of this research is to evaluate the impact of Twitter in the context of the Karnataka Assembly Elections that took place in May 2023. Additionally, this research aims to explore the potential of Twitter as a significant instrument in influencing voters' perceptions. The researchers tried to comprehensively examine the dynamics of political communication by conducting a corpus study of tweets by prominent political personalities during the Karnataka Assembly elections in May 2023. The selection of important politicians is determined by their popularity among voters and the number of tweets they get.

5. METHODOLOGY

The objective of this study is to do a comprehensive analysis of the Karnataka Assembly election that took place in May 2023, using corpus analysis techniques. During the study, data was gathered by monitoring the tweets of prominent political figures, namely seven from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), seven from the Indian National Congress (Cong), and one from the Janata Dal (Secular) (JD(S)), during the Karnataka Assembly elections. The sample size consists of a total of 29,280 tweets. The sample was chosen based on the popularity of significant political figures among voters and the number of tweets they made during the Assembly election campaign. The data analysis tool used in this study is the Corpus software. The research spanned over a duration of seven months, commencing on November 1, 2022, and concluding in mid-May 2023, specifically coinciding with the date of the election.

6. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research has been studied from the following parameters:

The whole corpus was analysed in accordance with the predetermined goals of the research. Several corpus methods have been used, including Collocates, Key Word in Context (KWIC), Type and Token Ratio, concordance/N-gram, Prominent word generation, and Cluster Words. The tweets were subjected to content analysis utilizing Antconc software. Table 1 shows the number of tweets of each politician during the campaigning of the elections.

Table 1

Table 1. Political leaders with their tweets			
SNO	NAME	PARTY	TWEETS
1	Amit Shah	Bharatiya Janata Party	1,756
2	Basavaraj S Bommai	Bharatiya Janata Party	3,094
3	Yogi Aditya Nath	Bharatiya Janata Party	1,858
4	Narendra Modi	Bharatiya Janata Party	2,182
5	Sudhanshu Trivedi	Bharatiya Janata Party	6,20
6	Anurag Thakur	Bharatiya Janata Party	2,432
7	Sambit Patra	Bharatiya Janata Party	4,035
8	Dinesh G Rao	Indian National Congress	9,34
9	DK Shivakumar	Indian National Congress	1,137
10	Priyanka Gandhi	Indian National Congress	316
11	Rahul Gandhi	Indian National Congress	356
12	Siddaramaiah	Indian National Congress	1,686
13	Jai Ram Ramesh	Indian National Congress	3,001
14	Supriya Shrinete	Indian National Congress	3,827
15	HD Kumar swamy	Janata Dal (Secular)	2,046

Fifteen notable political personalities, from major political parties (both at the national and state level) such as Congress, BJP, and JD (S), effectively used Twitter as a platform to shape public opinion and sway people towards supporting their respective political parties. The cumulative number of tweets was 29,280. Among the aggregate number of tweets, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) accounted for 15,977 tweets, while the Congress party had 11,257 tweets in its possession. Additionally, 2,046 tweets originated from figures affiliated with the Janata Dal (Secular) leader listed in table 2.

Table 2

Table 2. Parties with their total number of tweets	
<i>Total No of Tweets (BJP+ Congress+ JD (S) = 29,280</i>	
Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP)	15, 977 tweets
Congress (Congress)	11,257 tweets
Janata Dal (Secular)	2,046 tweets

6.1. USE OF VARIOUS LANGUAGES BY THE POLITICAL LEADERS

In order to establish a personal connection with voters and foster trust in their election campaign, politicians often choose to communicate in the local language and accent. However, based on the data, it is evident that national politicians

used English or Hindi language to establish a connection with the electorate in Karnataka. The regional leaders exhibited a greater level of comfort while communicating in their own native languages and dialects, to make a favourable impression on their constituents. The chief spokesman of the Bharatiya Janata Party, Dr. Sambit Patra, used the English language to a significant extent by posting a maximum of 2274 tweets. This strategic approach allowed the party to effectively communicate its perspectives to the public. Jairam Ramesh (1708) and Supriya Shrinete (1239) from the Congress party were second and third, respectively, in terms of English-language tweets.

According to the data, Supriya Shrinete, the official spokeswoman of the Congress Party, had the highest number of tweets in the Hindi language, with a total of 2396 tweets. Following her, Dr. Sambit Patra, the spokesman of the BJP, had 1683 tweets, while Yogi Adityanath, the Chief Minister of the state of Uttar Pradesh in northern India had 1655 tweets among the chosen leaders. Basavaraj S Bommai, the BJP CM used the Kannada language, specifically 2362 instances. The table 3 demonstrates a conspicuous trend whereby English emerges as the predominant language with a count of 10,794, followed by Hindi with 9,672, and other regional languages with 8,814. Nevertheless, an analysis of the Twitter activity of prominent state leaders such as Siddaramaiah (1423 tweets), HD Kumar Swamy (2003 tweets), DK Shivakumar (921 tweets), and Basavaraj S Bommai (2362 tweets) reveals a noticeable upward trend in the utilization of regional language. This trend serves the purpose of fostering a sense of regional identity and facilitating the development of interpersonal connections.

Table 3

Table 3. Use of Language in the Tweets of the Political Leaders						
SNO	NAME	PARTY	ENGLISH	HINDI	REGIONAL	TWEETS
1	Amit Shah	BJP	656	572	528	1756
2	Basavaraj S Bommai	BJP	721	11	2362	3094
3	Yogi Aditya Nath	BJP	177	1655	26	1858
4	Narendra Modi	BJP	1495	340	347	2182
5	Sudhanshu Trivedi	BJP	308	302	10	620
6	Anurag Thakur	BJP	1272	1044	116	2432
7	Sambit Patra	BJP	2274	1683	78	4035
8	Dinesh G Rao	Congress	299	9	626	934
9	DK Shivakumar	Congress	216	0	921	1137
10	Priyanka Gandhi	Congress	35	260	21	316
11	Rahul Gandhi	Congress	91	246	19	356
12	Siddaramaiah	Congress	260	3	1423	1686
13	Jai Ram Ramesh	Congress	1708	1151	142	3001
14	Supriya Shrinete	Congress	1239	2396	192	3827
15	HD Kumar Swamy	JDS	43	0	2003	2046

The state of Karnataka is characterized by its diverse -cultural and linguistic composition. The state is third in the country in terms of the percentage of people speaking more than one language. The capital city of Bangalore is renowned as the hub of information technology in the country. Consequently, individuals from all regions of the country migrate to Karnataka in pursuit of economic sustenance. According to the 2011 census conducted by the Government of India, the literacy rate in the state of Karnataka was recorded at 75.36 percent. This finding suggests that a significant portion of the population possesses proficiency in English, in addition to Kannada, the official language of the state, as well as other regional languages such as Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Konkani, Saurashtri, Hindi, and Malayalam. Due to its global character,

English is widely spoken in major urban centres such as Mysore and Bangalore. Figure 1 shows the tweet of Basavaraj S Bommai in Kannada language.

Figure 1



Figure 1. Basavaraj Bommai tweet in the regional language#

#Screenshot from official Twitter account

A screenshot of a tweet sent by Basavaraj S Bommai expressing gratitude towards the electorate for their participation in the voting process. A translation of his tweet: *"My heartfelt thanks to all Kannadigas who enthusiastically participated in the festival of democracy and exercised their right to vote."*

6.2. WORD FREQUENCY

The quantification of word frequency is a crucial method for characterizing the attitude or discourse of a given corpus. According to Baker (2010), the frequency of a phenomenon might serve as a measure of its markedness. The occurrence rate of terms inside a text indicates a potential inclination towards a certain perspective, whether positive or negative, and signifies the nature of the discourse present in the text. Therefore, its significance cannot be underestimated.

Table 4

Table 4. The words most frequently used in the Tweets of BJP leaders

RANK	FREQUENCY	WORDS
1	3200	Narendra Modi
2	1994	India
3	497	Development
4	316	Mann ki baat

5	204	<i>Growth</i>
6	202	<i>Congress</i>
7	168	<i>Rally</i>
8	157	<i>Infrastructure</i>
9	146	<i>Bjp ye bharavase</i>
10	141	<i>Leadership</i>
11	133	<i>Women</i>
12	128	<i>Poorna bahumata</i>
13	107	<i>Health</i>
14	106	<i>Security</i>
15	102	<i>Roadshow</i>
16	89	<i>Democracy</i>
17	66	<i>Janasankalpayatre</i>
18	64	<i>Education</i>
19	61	<i>Corruption</i>
20	61	<i>Double engine sarkara</i>
21	53	<i>Amrit mahotsav</i>
22	47	<i>Agenda</i>
23	47	<i>Empowerment</i>
24	47	<i>Justice</i>
25	35	<i>Investment</i>

Table 4 presents an analysis of the relative frequency of phrases used in the election campaign by BJP leaders across many tweets within the corpus. The frequency of terms used in conversation may serve as an indicator of the prevailing political narrative during an election. The present corpus analysis examines the frequency of the term “BJP” and reveals a notable prevalence of an optimistic mindset. The Karnataka Assembly elections presented the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) with an opportunity to secure victory and establish a foothold in the southern region of India. Significant consequences were anticipated, particularly given the upcoming Telangana Assembly election which is another state in southern India ruled by non-BJP and non-Congress government. The impact of these ramifications would undoubtedly be experienced. Therefore, no risks could be taken and every phrase used was carefully considered. Hence, the frequent occurrence of terms such as Narendra Modi (3200 times) and India (1994 times) signifies a positive outlook towards progress and advancement.

Furthermore, the frequent use of the term “Narendra Modi” almost 3200 times serves as an indication of the prominent influence exerted by the prime minister as a leader and as an individual. The political landscape of India is characterised by a strong emphasis on individual personalities. The term “Narendra Modi” also conveys the notion of Modi being seen as a “target of a malicious campaign by the Congress” (Frontline, June 2, 2023). The frequent use of the term ‘India’ for a total of 1994 times serves to promote the concept of Rashtravaad, which may be seen as a kind of nationalism. The term ‘development’ has consistently been used in tweets. The terms “poorna bahumat” (absolute majority) and “double engine ki sarkar” (government at both the central and state levels) have been derived from the BJP platform, and the party has consistently advocated for their implementation in various Assembly elections.

The Karnataka Assembly election campaign, however, failed in motivating people to support the saffron party. The frequent use of the term 'Congress' (occurring 202 times) pertained to the critique directed at the principal opposition party. Politicians also try to adhere to political correctness while composing tweets, since Twitter is seen as a forum used by those with higher levels of education. The controversial vocabulary is intended for the live audience that assembles to hear them at political campaign events. The inclusion of the proposal to outlaw both the Popular Front of India (PFI) and the Bajrang Dal, a right-wing organization, in the Congress manifesto has put the long-standing political party in a difficult position. Despite being a significant blunder on the side of the Congress party, the matter failed to garner much support from the electorate and hence did not get any mention in the tweets either. Despite its popularity on prime-time television news discussions.

Table 5

Table 5. The words most frequently used in the Tweets of the Congress leaders		
RANK	FREQUENCY	WORDS
1	1102	<i>Rahul Gandhi</i>
2	741	<i>Bharat jodo yatra</i>
3	310	<i>Narendra Modi</i>
4	292	<i>Adani</i>
5	124	<i>Bs bommai</i>
6	116	<i>Democracy</i>
7	104	<i>Parliament</i>
8	67	<i>Constitution</i>
9	65	<i>Amit shah</i>
10	62	<i>Corruption</i>
11	62	<i>Reservation</i>
12	61	<i>Campaign</i>
13	58	<i>Congress for progress</i>
14	54	<i>Attack</i>
15	53	<i>Operation voter</i>
16	50	<i>Social justice</i>
17	49	<i>Amit malviya</i>
18	44	<i>Dk shiva kumar</i>
19	44	<i>Promises</i>
20	42	<i>Gst</i>
21	42	<i>Jobs</i>
22	39	<i>Farmers</i>
23	32	<i>Modani</i>
24	32	<i>Unity</i>
25	32	<i>Violence</i>

Table 5 presents the relative frequency of terms observed in the tweets of the Congress Leaders within the corpus. The members of Congress were exercising caution and deliberation throughout the Assembly elections. Congress chose a cautious approach by placing focus on local concerns and drawing attention to corruption within the current administration. Therefore, it is evident that terms such as social justice, Congress for development, and Constitution are often used, so demonstrating a sense of unity with marginalised groups like as Dalits, Tribals, backward castes, and Muslim individuals. Once again, personality has a significant influence in the realm of Indian politics, as shown by the extensive use of Rahul Gandhi and his Bharat Jodo yatra. While the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) often invoked emotions such as Jai Hanuman and Bajrang Dal, the Congress party maintained a distance from any kind of “religious rhetoric.” Therefore, it is evident that there is criticism directed at the policies and widespread corruption inside the current administration. The primary objective of the tweets was to enhance the image of Rahul Gandhi as a politically astute and well admired leader. The Congress effectively addressed the issues of farmer suicide and *hizab-halal-azaan*, therefore influencing the people’s perspectives. The use of terms such as promises, jobs, and unity had the dual purpose of emphasising the shortcomings of the previous administration and motivating the members of the Congress party to wholeheartedly engage in the next battle.

Figure 2

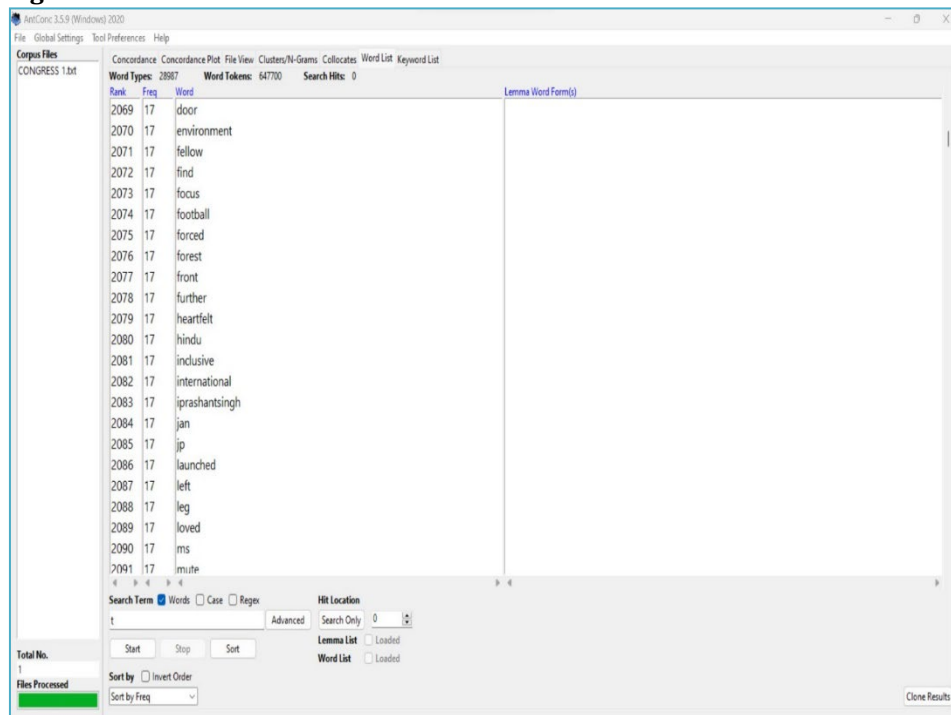


Figure 2. Screenshot of word frequency of Congress Politicians (Antconc software)

The Janata Dal (Secular) conducted their campaign with a focus on regional identity and the welfare of farmers. During a certain period, the two heads of the political party, namely former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda, and his son HD Kumaraswamy, were considered potential kingmakers in the situation that none of the political parties were able to secure a majority. However, the political party saw a decline in support among its traditional voter base. Table 6 presents the relative frequency of terms seen in the tweets of the JD(S) leaders within the corpus. In order to facilitate the research, the tweets authored by HD Dewe Gowda, the former Prime Minister of the nation and the head of Janata Dal (Secular), have been collected. Most of the tweets have been seen to be written in the local language, namely Kannada. Topics such as farming, jobs, job opportunities, investment, and infrastructure have prominently featured in the tweets. He also expressed criticism against the Modi administration in relation to businessman Gautam Adani.

Table 6**Table 6.** The words most frequently used in the Tweets of the Janata Dal (S)

Rank	Frequency	Word
1	1012	<i>Narendra modi</i>
2	764	<i>India</i>
3	755	<i>Amit shah</i>
4	750	<i>Rally</i>
5	742	<i>Infrastructure</i>
6	738	<i>Congress</i>
7	690	<i>Rahul gandhi</i>
8	490	<i>Leadership</i>
9	488	<i>Women</i>
10	417	<i>Leadership</i>
11	404	<i>Women</i>
12	389	<i>Campaign</i>
13	382	<i>Jobs</i>
14	371	<i>Farmers</i>
15	309	<i>Modani</i>
16	302	<i>Corruption</i>
17	288	<i>Education</i>
18	189	<i>Double engine sarkara</i>
19	156	<i>Agenda</i>
20	143	<i>Empowerment</i>
21	132	<i>Justice</i>
22	132	<i>Investment</i>
23	66	<i>Muslim</i>
24	64	<i>Hindu</i>
25	32	<i>Antinational</i>

Narendra Modi, being the star *pracharak* (main campaigner) of the Bharatiya Janata Party, evidently received the highest level of attention in the tweets of leaders from the Bharatiya Janata Party, Congress, and JD (S), with a combined total of 15 leaders. The tweets on Narendra Modi have elicited a variety of responses, including both critical and favourable perspectives. The examination of tweets reveals that there is a significant disparity between Rahul Gandhi and Modi, indicating that Rahul Gandhi has a considerable distance to go in order to catch up with Modi.

Figure 3

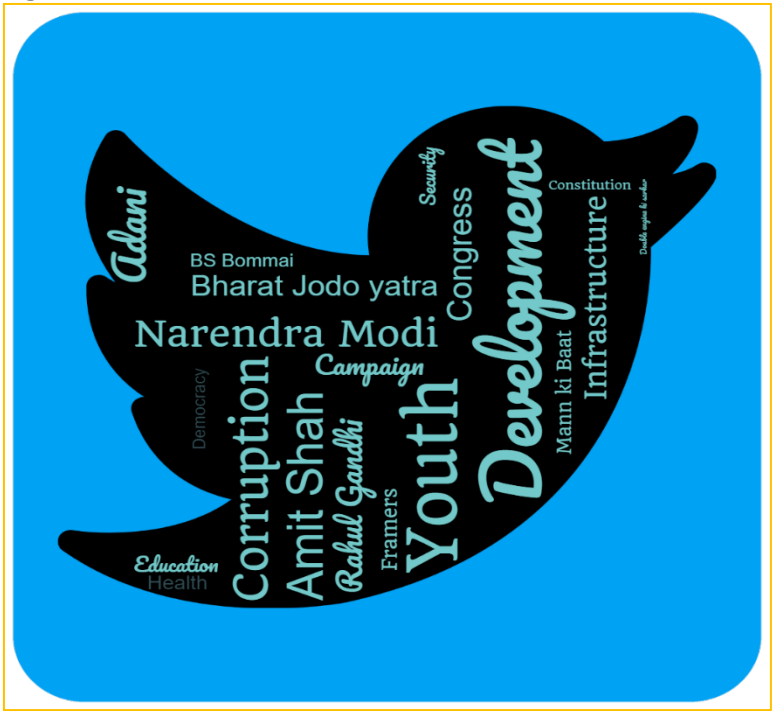


Figure 3. Word Cloud of top 20 words in all tweets

6.3. TYPE TO TOKEN RATIO

The Type to Token Ratio (TTR) is calculated by dividing the count of unique words (types) in each text or voice by the total count of words (tokens) in the corpus. Based on the findings of D. Thomas (2005), a high type-token ratio (TTR) is indicative of a broad vocabulary repertoire, whereas a low TTR reflects a limited variety of vocabulary.

The ratio of word types to word tokens was calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Type to Token Ratio (TTR)} = \frac{\text{Total word tokens} \times 100}{\text{Total word types}}$$

The overall number of word types in this dataset is 55,221, whereas the number of word tokens is 1,576,847. The application of a formula reveals that the tweet corpus exhibits a Type-Token Ratio (TTR) of 3.5%, a very low value that suggests a subpar score. This finding provides further support for the notion that the corpus text analysed in this study had a lower level of lexical richness. Additionally, it confirms that the conversation primarily centred around a limited number of terms and was primarily focused on certain topics as illustrated in figure 4.

Figure 4

Rank	Freq	Word
1644	62	shakti
1645	62	then
1646	62	trust
1647	62	ve
1648	62	voters
1649	62	ಒಬ್ಬ
1650	62	ಜನಪದ
1651	62	ಮೊದಲ
1652	62	ಯಶವ
1653	62	ಶ್ರೀಳ
1654	61	corrupt
1655	61	decision
1656	61	doubleenginesarkara
1657	61	effort
1658	61	group
1659	61	guarantees
1660	61	house
1661	61	next
1662	61	nothing
1663	61	old
1664	61	rights
1665	61	saddened
1666	61	several
1667	61	share
1668	61	sustainable
1669	61	true
1670	61	upcoming
1671	61	webinar
1672	61	शत
1673	61	थ

Figure 4. Screenshot of Type to token ratio (Antconc software)

6.4. COLLOCATES

The term “collocates” refers to words that have a higher frequency of occurrence in proximity to another specific phrase within a given corpus, compared to other words. The application of collocation is achieved by examining the statistical frequency of word co-occurrence. Collocates are categorized as a subset of set phrases due to their shared distinctive characteristics (Clear, 1992). The determination of the subject and emphasis of the corpus seems to be based on the analysis of neighbouring keywords associated with the node words, namely Narendra Modi, Rahul Gandhi, and the Karnataka elections. The statistical significance of the associations between the five-word collocates of “Modi,” “Rahul Gandhi,” and “Karnataka elections” were examined using a widely used and adaptable five-word standard approach. The findings of this analysis indicated interesting connections. A significant number of denotative words are seen to appear in the corpus on more than 10 occasions.

The Karnataka Assembly elections of 2023 have proven to be of great significance and have yielded conclusive outcomes. Undoubtedly, the influence of Narendra Modi had a significant role in shaping the discourse. However, it is noteworthy that the high-profile Hindutva matter and the Bajrang Dal failed to get widespread support among the electorate. The tweets do not exhibit the same sentiment. There has been a prevalence of terms such as “foresightedness” (15), “clashes” (13), “Pakistan” (12), “attacking” (12), “caste” (11), “inspiration” (10), “lie” (10), “campaign” (9), and “Adani” (9) in the tweets. A significant disparity exists between the content seen in tweets and the statements made in real-life situations. The conveyed sentiment is that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) exhibits a sense of optimism and caution in their use of language.

The observation does not hold true for the terms used to depict Rahul Gandhi in the tweets. The tweets pertaining to Gandhi were mostly characterised using terms such as “Fake,” “Expelled,” “Stooping,” “Rejecting,” “Protected,” “Pressurise,” “Gimmick,” “Questioning,” “Attaching,” and “Demean.” The electoral triumph of Congress in Karnataka has significant implications both in terms of electoral influence and symbolic representation. It might be said that the Bharat Jodo Yatra led by Rahul Gandhi had a significant role in shaping the prevailing discourse that ultimately contributed to the victory in the Assembly elections.

Figure 5

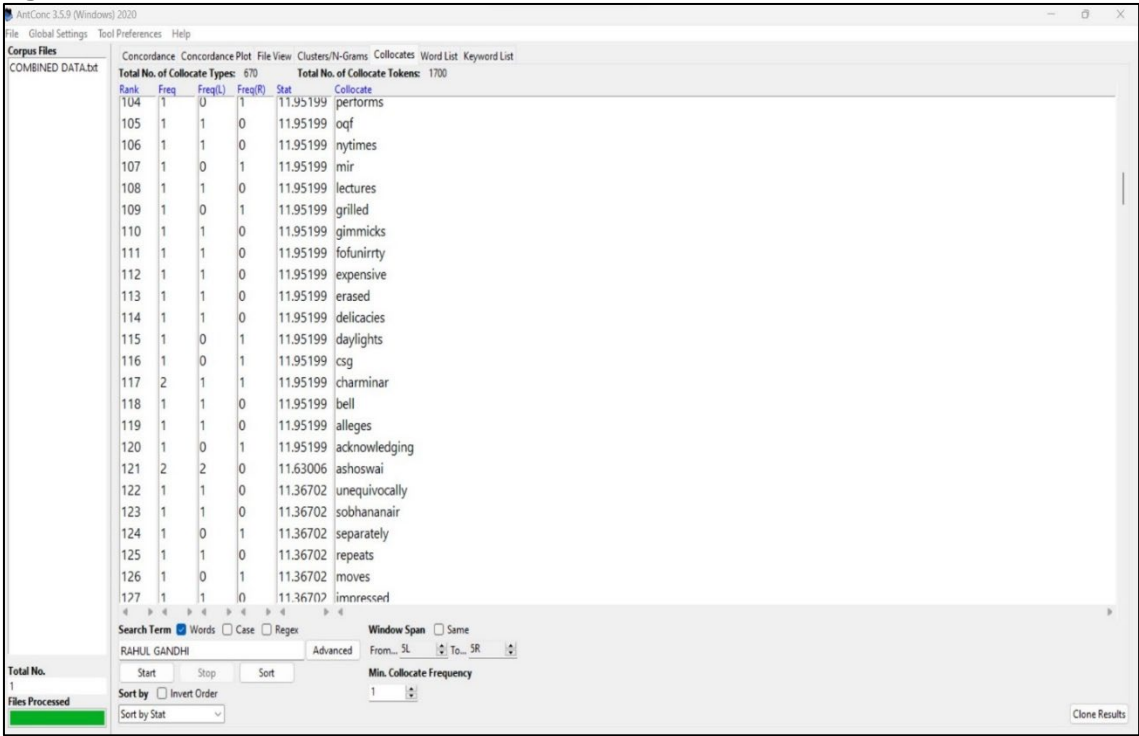


Figure 5. Snapshot of Collocates of Rahul Gandhi (Antconc software)

The state saw a resounding triumph for Congress as a result of a cohesive alliance among prominent figures and a focus on pertinent regional concerns. Indeed, it is plausible that Congress may use a similar approach in the next state Assembly elections. Once again, the tweets analysed inside the corpus tagged as “Collocates” provide a drastically contrasting conclusion. Predicting a favourable outcome for the Congress party is challenging due to various factors. In particular, the Karnataka election serves as a significant variable. Within this context, as reflected in figure 5, the term “Narendra Modi” emerges as the most frequently utilized word, signifying the election campaign. Additionally, words such as “vote,” “manifesto,” and “confusion” are employed to convey the narrative surrounding the elections. Table 7 shows the collocates of the given three variables.

Table 7

Table 7. Collocates of Rahul Gandhi, Narendra Modi & Karnataka Elections		
S. NO	VARIABLE	PROMINENT COLLOCATES
1	Narendra Modi	Foresightedness (15) Clashes (13) Pakistan (12) Attacking (12) Caste (11) Inspiration (10) Lie (10) Campaign (9) Adani (9) Gandhi (8)
		Fake (13)

2	Rahul Gandhi	Expelled (13) Stooping (12) Rejecting (12) Protected (12) Pressurize (12) Gimmick (12) Questioning (11) Attaching (11) Demean (11)
3	Karnataka Elections	Narendra Modi (16) Result (11) Confusion (11) Crime (10) Results (10) Vote (08) Manifesto (8) Parliament (7) Corrupt politician (7) Scam (6)

6.5. N-GRAM

An N-gram refers to a sequence of “n” consecutive objects, often words, that form a collocation. According to Wiechmann et al. (2006), a bigram refers to a collocation consisting of two words, whereas a 4-gram denotes a collocation including four words, and so on. In contrast to word clusters and collocates, which need the researcher to provide the node word, N-grams are exclusively determined by the corpus analysis programme via filtering. Consequently, there is a reduced space for biased perspectives (Gilquin, 2010). The researchers have selected 4-word sequences from each variable in order to get insight into the intended meaning conveyed by each variable. Out of a total of 1,576,844-word strings (N-grams), 861,640 exhibited phrases such as “cheap popularity Modi Gandhi,” “*chehra aur Charitra BJP*” “*chief DK Shivakumar slams BJP*,” and “*citizen BJP Karnatka Bhavishya*.” These phrases suggest that a significant portion of the discourse was focused on expressing dissatisfaction with the state government. The researchers have taken 4-word strings of each variable to understand what message each variable is trying to convey. 861640 out of 1576844 total words strings (N-grams) showed strings like “*cheap popularity modigandhi*”, “*chehra aur charitabjp*”, “*chief dkshivakumar slams bjp*” and “*citizen bjpgkarnatkabhavishya*” that indicate that the larger portion of the discourse was towards expressing their resentment over the state government.

6.6. CONCORDANCE

According to Biber et al. (1998), concordances are valuable tools for examining the meanings of words within an authentic context and uncovering patterns and meanings that may not be readily apparent otherwise. The Key Word in Context (KWIC) metric has significant value in the analysis of qualitative data corpora. A sample of 100 concordances was randomly selected, focusing on the node words “Narendra Modi,” “Rahul Gandhi,” and “Karnataka elections.” The findings indicate that although Rahul Gandhi is associated with negative words in terms of word frequency, a closer examination of the concordance reveals that he tends to express more aggressive and constructive viewpoints compared to the BJP or Narendra Modi. Among the 170 utterances, he successfully elicited the anticipated reaction from both himself and his party.

Figure 6

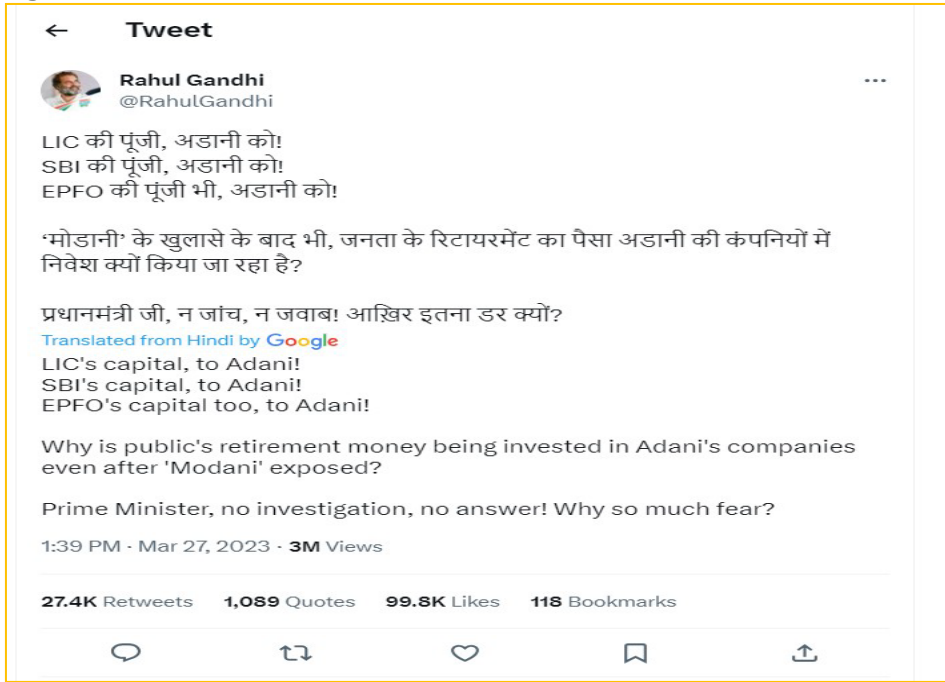


Figure 6#. Rahul Gandhi tweet on Modi-Adani

#Screenshot from official Twitter account

He establishes the tone of the text by strategically using appropriate language choices in accordance with the context. Rahul Gandhi received commendation from several political figures for his criticism of Narendra Modi and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) via the use of epithets such as 'Modani,' 'Feku,' and 'Fascist.' During the Assembly elections, he initiated a campaign known as 'local for outspoken.'

Despite Prime Minister Modi's unilateral campaign for his party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the Karnataka assembly elections, the voter expressed significant dissatisfaction with the BJP led Bommai government in the state. The state government had significant challenges due to reasons like corruption, caste division, and the influence of the Muslim community, which posed significant obstacles to the Bommai government. Furthermore, Indian voters have shown a marked differentiation in their selection of governments at both the national and state levels. Therefore, the consistent emphasis by Modi on development, infrastructure, and roads failed to resonate with the electorate at the state level, particularly in Bengaluru where the transit system is in a state of disarray. The inability of Prime Minister Modi to accurately assess the prevailing sentiment in support of the Congress party, despite his high approval rating, is difficult to comprehend. The emphasis placed on the concept of a dual-engine government failed to resonate with the populace of the region, since they had already formed a negative opinion towards the governing faction.

Figure 7

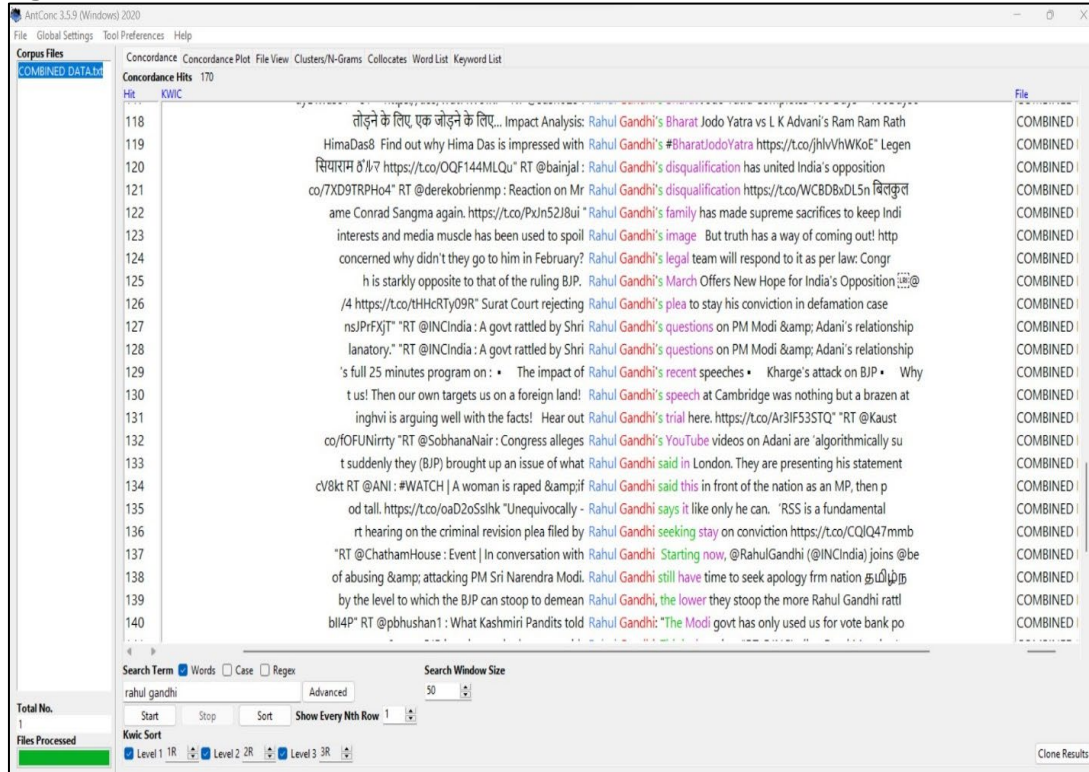


Figure 7. Snapshot of Concordance of Rahul Gandhi (Antconc software)

Figure 8



Figure 8#. Narendra Modi Tweet on Congress

#Screenshot from official Twitter account

7. CONCLUSION

Based on statistical data from 2022, the number of Twitter users in the country is around 24 million, which is a very small proportion when compared to the whole population of India, which stands at 1.4 billion individuals. According to statistical data, those within the age range of 25 to 30 years constitute the largest proportion of Twitter users, accounting for around 28.9% of the total user base. In the nation, the age range of 35 to 49 years is the second most prevalent demographic on the Twitter platform. To clarify, most Twitter users tend to be individuals in the middle age demographic. The significance of these data lies in the fact that they pertain to the voting-age population, which amounts to 53 million individuals. Specifically, the age group of 18-19 constitutes 2.2% of this population, as reported by the Indian Express on April 26, 2023. The new or the first-time voter has a fervent and resolute disposition, hence possessing the potential to have a pivotal influence. According to the *Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike* (BBMP), a total of 135,000 voters between the ages of 18 and 19 used their voting rights for the first time in Bengaluru.

These data are especially pertinent since Twitter, despite its relatively smaller user base, plays a crucial role in determining the success or failure of political parties. Twitter has developed as a prominent platform for engaging with the intensified political discourse, particularly during election periods. Political leaders use Twitter primarily as a strategic tool for generating news content, hence facilitating the intended ripple effects. The research reveals that political leaders use certain vocabulary and linguistic strategies to appeal to a particular segment of the electorate that has a pre-existing political consciousness and the ability to form opinions. The terms like development, social justice, poverty, Bharat Jodo Yatra, and Narendra Modi have symbolic significance, primarily catering to the sensibilities of the Twitter-savvy voter, aiming to maintain their engagement and political acumen. A significant portion of the population does not use Twitter, and for this demographic, various forms of rhetoric or language are employed to evoke emotional responses. It is this segment that distinguishes itself by actively participating in the electoral process by casting their votes. Hence, Twitter serves as a social media platform in India that facilitates the creation of political resources and, to some degree, enables the engagement of the vote bank on crucial matters. Numerous external forces outside the realm of Twitter have significant influence on the electoral outcomes of a nation such as India.

In retrospect, prior to 1999, the Karnataka electorate did not consider Narendra Modi or Amit Shah to be of substantial importance. In 2014, a significant transformation occurred, resulting in a paradigm shift in the approach to conducting elections in the country. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) consistently maintained a perpetual state of election readiness, actively engaging in each electoral battle with a very assertive approach. The Congress party, faced with a succession of election failures in the years after 2014, seems unlikely to achieve the same level of success as it did in 1999.

Returning to the topic of Twitter, it is noteworthy that Narendra Modi (@narendramodi) garnered the highest number of mentions among all personalities throughout the electoral period on the twitter as a social media platform. The candidate who received the greatest number of mentions in the tweets was the current Congress chief minister, Siddaramaiah.

In the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) effectively used social media platforms to gain significant traction, ultimately resulting in a resounding triumph. Until that point in time, the potential influence of social media as a platform for shaping public opinion had not been recognised. Twitter has emerged as a dominant medium, commanding significant attention from all political parties. Twitter challenges the prevailing notion that social media platforms serve only as sources of amusement.

The potential effect of Elon Musk's restriction on the number of posts a user may read remains to be seen in the context of Indian political communication dynamics.

Disclosure Statement

The social media platform known as Twitter has undergone a rebranding and is now referred to as X. Nevertheless, the research encompasses a certain time frame during which Twitter functioned in its original capacity as a social media platform. Consequently, the writers have refrained from altering the terminology.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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None.

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