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## Social Media and the Lok Sabha Election-2014

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### **Abstract:-**

*In a modern democracy, social media have been used by governments to involve masses in decision-making, and by civil societies to engage people in particular issues. However, social media can also be used to broaden political participation by helping people to communicate with their representatives. The Lok Sabha Election 2014 has been very different from the past Lok Sabha elections. Before Lok Sabha election 2014, elections have never created so much buzz especially among the younger generation of the country. For wooing the voters especially youngsters, Indian National Congress (INC), Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) and other political parties of India have used social media as an election weapon to achieve the vote bank.*

**Key Words:-** Social Media, Lok Sabha Election-2014, Voters, Youth.

**Introduction:-**The Lok Sabha election 2014 was the first social media election in India. Taking a leaf from the President of USA Barak Obama's campaign during the President elections-2012,

Indian political parties have used tools to crunch the insurmountable amounts of information social media generates. The political parties of India have left no stone unturned to take the attention of the people especially the youth.

While considering the role of social media in elections, we are not able to ignore the social sites which have become pioneering platform for politicians to build a strong bond with their voters. The Lok Sabha election 2014 saw a high social media impact considering the rise of social media into main-stream politics.

### **Objective:-**

The main objective of the study is to analyze the role of social media in Lok Sabha election 2014.

**Methodology:-**The present study is analytical in nature and the data for this study has been obtained from the secondary sources.

### **Social Media and Lok Sabha Election 2014:-**

The country (India) saw in the Lok Sabha election 2014 social media as an agent used by

all the political parties. During Lok Sabha election 2014, social media users played a vital role because of which the results were unexpected. Social media includes Facebook, Twitter, Orkut, Whatsapp, Google+, YouTube, etc. With the help of these social media sites, people have seen that in addition to criticism and analysis of the programmes and policies of political parties including the qualities and leadership of the politicians involved in the elections were closely scrutinized.

During Lok Sabha election 2014, the total number of electorates was 814.5 million, whereas, in the last Lok Sabha election 2009, the total number of electorates was 713 million. This shows that 101.5 million new electorates were added since last Lok Sabha election and majority of them were first time electorates and youth. It should be noted here that in Lok Sabha election 2014, about 23 million voters were in the age group of 18-19 years, 72 million voters were in the age group of 18-23 years and 125 million voters were in the age group of 25-40 years. This shows that India is a young country and majority of the youth are connected with the social media.

On various occasions, the young generation of India has shown to the world that

they have the power to change the course of events. The anger and the protest of the young generation through social media was vibrantly reflected during the 26/11 terrorist attack on Mumbai, Jessica Lal murder case, the rape cases in Mumbai and Delhi and the most important example of the use of the social media by youth is the Anna Hazare Movement when the youth of the India thronged JantarMantar in Delhi to protest against the corruption. In other words we can say that the Anna Hazare Movement was well fed by the social media.

According to the report of Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), 93 million Indian people are associated with “Facebook” and 33 million with “Twitter”, out of which 91 million reside in the urban areas. Similarly, 19.8 million people from rural areas are connected with the social media through mobile service and are making use of “Facebook”, “Whatsapp”, etc. The people living in remote rural areas do not have access to Internet facility, but still they make for the deficiency by SMS method through their mobile phones to keep in touch with social media exchange of ideas.

Hence, keeping in view the increased role of social media to interact with the users

and ultimately to attract their support, all Indian political parties hired specially trained IT professionals. Before Lok Sabha election 2014, it was predicted in a report by the IAMAI that the use of social media could influence a vote swing in favour or disfavour by 3-4 percent.

According to a report, out of 543 Lok Sabha constituencies of Lok Sabha election 2014, 160 seats fall in the area where social media is frequently used by the people. It was also predicted that if in these constituencies the social media succeeds in creating a swing of 3-4 percent in favour of a particular party, it could lead that party nearer to formation of the government at the Centre and the results of the Lok Sabha election 2014 has cleared that social media succeeded in creating a swing of 3-6 percent instead of 3-4 percent, that was earlier predicted. Due to this swing, Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) has won 149 seats out of 160 seats that fall in the area where social media has been frequently used by the people.

Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) leaved no stone unturned while boosting the image of their own party. During Lok Sabha election 2014, Bhartiya Janata Party has used Google Handout to address various questions about the party

movements; Google hangouts are useful in encouraging real time feedback from the public.

Moreover, Bhartiya Janata Party has used social media sites to create the “Modi Wave” during Lok Sabha election 2014 which had broken the back bone of opposition parties especially Indian National Congress (INC). The “Modi Wave” effect during Lok Sabha election 2014 helped the Bhartiya Janata Party to won with majority on its own guts.

**Conclusion:-** Keeping in view the important role of social media in influencing the electorates, the political parties had earmarked 2-5 percent of their budgeted expenditure for social media campaign. During Lok Sabha election 2014, all the political parties whether national or regional has used the social media as an election tool in their favour. Social media is a fast emerging as a battle ground for the political parties and every political party is bent upon influencing the social media users, especially the youth to its side by using it. This is a beginning with regard to using social media for electioneering and it is hoped that it has miles to go in the future elections in India.

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