THE NARRATIVISING OF BJP IN THE INC’S TWITTER POSTS

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Abstract: The platform of digital media is powerful, not just for promotion of products and services by corporates, but also for propagation of ideologies by political parties. Political parties have been increasingly using the platform of social media to spread their ideologies. The 2014 Parliamentary election campaigns in India as well as the 2016 election campaigns in the US are stellar examples of the phenomena. With the 2019 Indian general elections around the corner, political parties have become more active in their pursuit of influencing the audience through digital platforms. Through this study, the researcher aims to identify the narratives used by the current opposition party of the government - The Congress, in creating stories about how their opposition, the ruling party - The Bharatiya Janata Party needs to be perceived by the audience. The research will focus on how the Congress party wants the audience to view their opponent and how it can strategically benefit Congress in the upcoming elections. The researcher will use content and discourse analysis (in both messages and visual depictions) to understand the politics of representation and the selective mobility of political stances and contexts through posts uploaded by the official Twitter handle of the Indian National Congress. The researcher will analyse the tweets posted on the official Twitter handle of Congress following their victory in Assembly Elections in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh from December 11th to December 18th. To grasp how they create a memory in the minds of the audience. Through the analysis of these Twitter posts and advertisements, the researcher aims to learn about how political parties construct memories among the audience, regulate their thoughts, prompting them to take certain actions. This research will look to identify mobilisation strategies employed by the party with the use of narratives in digital media.

Index Terms: BJP, Congress, Indian Politics, Lok Sabha Elections, Narendra Modi, Social media, Twitter.

I. Introduction

Over the years, the means of political campaigning has evolved dramatically. While traditional ways of campaigning such as billboards, banners, rallying and delivery of speeches by key leaders are still very effective, the realm of political campaigning has added new dimensions to itself, with the evolution of technology. Political campaign strategists continue to use conventional media such as newspapers, radio, posters etc. to propagate their ideologies, practices and plans that are accessible to the common person in society. Political parties use their power in the television media by propagating their agenda through affiliated media channels. Yet, in the contemporary context, the power, reach and effect of such media is on the wane, with the entry of the digital media. Technology has made information transfer possible in fractions of a second and political parties have not only begun to realise its massive potential and reach, they have started planning and executing strategies that target the mass consumers of modern technology and very importantly, the internet.

The internet is a factor that is undeniably a major influence among people of all age groups in the current scenario. While the general public may still choose to consume content from traditional media sources, there is a rapid rise in internet consumers all around the world (Internet World Stats, 2018). The internet may still be viewed as a source of information and knowledge by some, but the rise in social media over the last decade has improved the space for political debate to an extent that any company, organisation or political party with great ambitions sense the need to make its presence felt in the social media scene. The social media therefore, has become a public sphere of its own, without the direct contact of people involved in debates, discussions and arguments on pressing issues. It is true, however, that social media formats also act as a space to create new friendships and bonds and to discuss about topics of common interest which may or may not be of critical importance in the society, requiring immediate public attention. Yet, with this rapid flow of information, opinions and views, people on social media platforms feel urged to create opinions on their own or affiliate themselves with certain standpoints or ideologies in order to avoid being left out(Noelle-Neumann, 1974)). Hence, there is a large amount of social media users who are yet undecided about their views on several aspects of society, culture and politics, but find themselves in a constant journey of forming new opinions as they come across new information and news, and as they discuss on topics with people who possess better insights. According to Global Digital Report 2018, the number of internet users worldwide in 2018 is 4.021 billion, up 7 percent year-on-year, the number of social media users worldwide in 2018 is 3.196 billion, up 13 percent year-on-year and the number of mobile phone users in 2018 is 5.135 billion, up 4 percent year-on-year. The rate of growth in social media users is skyrocketing and therefore, there is a need to study further about the impact of the internet world wide. India, being a developing nation still manages around 30% social media penetration as of 2017(Statista, 2019). To put into context the fact that India is the second largest populated country with 133.92 crores as of 2017, the 30% of social media consumers still amount for a very large number.

Twitter as a platform has been one that is known for the network of ideas and opinions compared to Facebook for example, which networks people. Twitter requires a user to tweet within a character limit which makes it a platform that needs more attention to the message being delivered. The key element that separates Twitter from other popular social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram is the feature that allows people to search for news and issues around the
globe and tracking all tweets that are speaking about that particular topic. The idea is for people to search for news and opinions which makes it a less friendly, perhaps more serious platform. Personal accounts of celebrities, politicians and eminent personalities that interact with the average Twitter user allows users to get in touch with the people in important positions and initiate discussions. It is hence important that Twitter is analysed as a key tool for political parties to implement their political campaigning objectives as Twitter acts as an avenue where opinions are formed, changed and enforced.

This research focuses on certain key elements that are relevant for India as a nation and for the citizens of the country. The 2019 Lok Sabha election is around the corner and the major political parties eyeing for power have begun their campaign to gain the trust of the voters. While the Bharatiya Janata Party swept aside the Congress government with a comprehensive victory in the 2014 elections, both parties have had their ups and downs since and it is crucial to study the activity of both the parties leading up to the elections. The use of social media for election campaigns was very important for the victory of Barack Obama in the United States Presidential elections for both his terms (Zavattaro, 2010) and BJP, the ruling party took a leaf out of his book and performed excellently on social media before their election victory in 2014 (Bhavthankar, 2014).

This research was aided by the input of Mr. Srivatsa, the campaign in-charge of the All India Youth Congress, who has several years of experience in managing social media for the Congress. According to him, the BJP had superior control of social media in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, and that the Congress have been on the back foot, in terms of mobilising the masses through social media interactions and marketing. Congress have been the chasing party in the department of social media as well and hence it is vital to analyse the type of narratives they employ in their social media posts. The research does not assume that social media is the driving factor in determining the result of an election. However, this research improves the scope of studying social media as an important factor for the future elections when the reach of social media expands in India. Regardless of the result in the upcoming elections, this analysis can help better understand the dynamics of political engagement at this moment.

The research analyses tweets that were posted by Congress from 11th December to 18th December, following their victory in three out of five states in the Legislative Assembly elections. The research analyses in depth, the tweets under the #CongressWinsBig which was a trending hashtag in India at the time of the election results. The aim is to understand the narrativising of BJP by the Congress during a period where they seemed to have gained significant momentum, rather than when they are on a back foot as it is very natural for the opposition to point out the flaws of the ruling government in any democratic setup. While this research does not analyse the portrayal of the Congress by the BJP, it could provide the basis for such a research in the future.

II. Methodology

2.1 Content Analysis through Narratology

A key way of critically analysing the tweets posted by the official Twitter handle of the Indian National Congress is through narratology. Narratology helps in critiquing the structure and function of narratives utilised by the Congress and its themes, conventions, and symbols. Through the tweets of the party’s official handle, there are constant attempts to create a narrative about the ideologies and functions of the opposition party - The BJP. By applying the study on various techniques to create narratives, this research aims to identify the tools used in the tweets in order to create a sense of consciousness among the social media consumers about the BJP and in turn influencing their opinions leading up to the upcoming election.

2.2 Semiotics

Tweets varying in forms such as text, image and video tweets are analysed through the narrative style and approach used by the party to propagate their agenda on Twitter as well as create an image about their opposition. Tweets in image and video format are also analysed through semiotic study. Semiotics is essential in the contextual analysis of social media messages because very often, the general audience does not consciously pay attention to the details such as symbols, colours, placement of objects etc in an everyday tweet or social media post. Therefore, it becomes important to deconstruct these elements of tweets and attempt to draw conclusions from the narrative angle and how they contribute to creating a certain image of the opposition party among the audience.

2.3 Contextual Analysis

The tweets are analysed with the context of the contemporary political statuses of both political parties under the scanner. The researcher keeps in mind the urgency and need for tweets that can shape public opinion as the General Elections are only less than five months away from the period of the tweets analysed. Both parties become increasingly active on social media to push their agenda and this period closing in on the elections thus becomes critical. The research also takes into consideration the political relationship between the two parties and their recent history on social media for ease in comparisons and analysis in order to attain further clarity on the need or motives behind the attempted creation of certain narratives.

Therefore, this research relies considerably on past studies on these political parties and their usual allegiances and methods that are constantly used as part of election campaigns. It also depends on previous researches on the role and activity of these parties on social media platforms as a whole and Twitter as an independent platform. The research takes into account the political ideologies of the parties that they openly propagate in order to analyse the different ways through which the Congress attacks or creates narratives about the ideals and values of the ruling party. The research also takes into consideration the history of the two parties with respect to each other, to provide further context to the Twitter battle they indulge in and the need for Congress to create narratives about their opposition party to effectively sway the neutral
votes. The research also uses data from verified sources to identify the scale of social media usage and its influence on voters.

With the combination of the above mentioned factors, the researcher aims to draw conclusions on the narrative techniques employed by the Congress to shape the opinion of voters on Twitter about the current ruling party - the BJP.

III. Review Of Literature

3.1. Politics and Social Media

This research works on the basis that social media is one of the factors that determine the choice of party made by citizens and therefore it is important to identify a link between candidates and the public that could eventually influence voting. A study that analyses this phenomenon is "Getting Personal? The Impact of Social Media on Preferential Voting" (Spierings and Jacob, 2014). This study looks into the connection between the number of followers a politician has on social media and links that popularity with the success in elections. This study states that the following that a particular social media account has impacts the minds of the audience and hence, it could be inferred that regardless of how politicians have worked to keep their promises, when it comes down to social media, popularity and personality matters more to the public.

3.2. Twitter as a key platform for opinion building

In this research, Twitter as an effective political tool to shape the image of the opposition government is under the scanner. Researches in the past show that Twitter is a medium that enables the creation of strong narratives despite the fact that it is medium that requires the users to post concise messages in order to influence the audience. One such study is "Tweet Me A Story" (Wright, 2015) which says that Twitter when used deliberately can be an effective means of social communication and an effective means of teaching concise writing with a creative twist for pedagogical purposes. It states that the use of minimal characters forces the writer to focus and hence each character matters. This study thus validates the research's claims that Twitter is a social media platform that sets its sights on creating stories through the use of powerful words and symbols and hence can be extremely influential in creating ideas in the minds of the audience.

3.3. Indian Politics and Twitter

While this research does not claim that social media in India is the only factor or for that matter, a leading factor in determining the results of an election, it does revolve around the idea that social media is becoming increasingly popular communication tool in the political sphere in the country. "Harvesting Social Media: The BJP Way - Social Media acted as a springboard for BJP to sweep the general elections 2014" (Dataquest, 2015) is the transcript of an interview where the Dr Arvind Gupta, Head of BJP's IT cell and a key member of Narendra Modi's 2014 general elections social media campaign spoke about the tricks that had to be pulled off in order to secure the majority in the parliament. Five years on, the strategies might not be as effective as the first time, this provides a foundation to work on, for the researcher in terms of the important tools that political parties utilise on social media in order to mobilise the public.

3.4. Importance of narratives

This research depends on the study of narratives to further the understanding of political imaging of the opposition party. Therefore the book "Introduction to Narrative" (Abbott, 2018) was used as a reference to understand the key elements of narratives and the impacts of narratives on the audience. The book showers light on what contributes to make any content good narratives and how they can create a long lasting memory among the audience. This book helps identify different styles and narratives and hence gives this research a better understanding of political narratives on social media.

3.5 Narratives in Politics

Narratives are part of most content, but the relevance of narrative styles and techniques in political messages need to be analysed with greater precision. "Narratives in Political Advertising: An Analysis of the Political Advertisements in the 2014 Midterm Elections (Vafeiadis, Li, and Shen, 2018)" attempts to look at three different narrative styles: Autobiographies, voter stories and testimonials. According to this study, negative attack ads and anonymous announcers were primarily used by candidates who lost the election, whereas winners employed more often autobiographical spots and included family members in the ads. The results of the study on 2014 Mid Term Elections are important as the focus of this research is to identify the methods used by the Congress to create narratives about the BJP in order to create an image for themselves. While this past study shows that negative advertising is not very successful, it has to be seen whether it would work in a different country and a different context.

IV. Analysis

4.1. The creation of narrative in the hashtag - #CongressWinsBig

The hashtag that was used by Congress following their victory in the legislative assembly elections in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh was #CongressWinsBig. This raises several questions in itself. The Congress did win in large states such as Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan that have been historically important states in any election scenario, but Congress claimed victory in the Assembly elections rather than the Lok Sabha elections which is certainly "bigger" in terms of the democratic structure of India as a state. Not only that, the Congress had only been victorious in three of the five states whose results were announced on 11th of December. Local parties had beatem both the Congress and the BJP in the states of Mizoram and Telangana. Adding to that, the Congress won comprehensively in the state of Chhattisgarh by 53 seats, which can certainly be regarded as a "big" win but won by a narrow margin in Madhya Pradesh.
with 114 seats to BJP's 109 seats. In Rajasthan too, the Congress could only secure 26 more seats than the BJP. While one could argue that the fact that Congress nicked the BJP in Madhya Pradesh on an intense day of counting makes it a sweeter and maybe a "bigger" victory for the Congress, the margin of victory is a mere indicator of how close these parties are in terms of popularity among the voters and the result does not in any way clearly suggest that the Congress have an upper hand going into the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. However, it is an acceptable argument that the Congress have gained some confidence going into the year of the elections looking back at the manner in which the party was swept aside by the BJP in the previous Lok Sabha elections. So, how exactly is this a "big win" for the Congress? Winning Legislative Assembly elections in three of the five states they contested in, of which only one they won by a large margin does not account for "big win" by any means. One could say it is still impressive or encouraging for the Congress, but they have achieved nothing spectacular to justify the hashtag #CongressWinsBig. The creation of narrative using a simple hashtag is vital in this case. The attempt made here is make the audience believe that the Congress have pulled off a "big" victory against the BJP and that they will be a force to reckon with in the upcoming elections. This idea needed to be reinstated with the audience due to the devastating blow dealt to them in the last Lok Sabha elections. It can be perceived that the intention of the Congress is to tell the audience that the BJP aren't as powerful as they might seem and can be defeated in a "big" way. The audience is led to believe that this is a turning point in contemporary Indian politics. This hashtag that carries a narrative, being used in multiple tweets becomes an important talking point among Twitter users.

"Democracy has won" is the first sentence that can be observed in the above tweet posted by the official Twitter handle of the Congress on the day the Legislative assembly elections had come out. Factualy, the Congress have won the election in three states out of five. However, the narrative which is at play here implies that either the Congress party is synonymous with the concept of democracy or the BJP is a highly undemocratic party. This tweet being retweeted 12k times and liked 25k times has been reasonably successful in spreading the idea that BJP are an undemocratic party. A key element of this tweet is the power of the tweet to urge the audience to self introspect. If assumed that the tweet was viewed by several neutral individuals, there is a question that the tweet expects them to ask themselves - Do I stand for democratic values? Independent India has been built around the concept of democracy and there is bound to be a chunk of Twitter users who, whether they support BJP or Congress, stand for democracy. The tweet urges the Indian citizens of Twitter to support the Congress ahead of the 2019 General elections by saying that if they require democracy to be functional in the country, Congress is the ideal party to get behind. In the next sentence, the tweet clearly draws a line between the values and principles of both the parties whether they may be true or not. The sentence blatantly implies that Congress are a party that stands for truth, love and peace - values that are associated as positive. While it is completely natural for a political party to portray itself in a positive light, it does so here by comparing itself with the opposition party which in this case is the ruling party. The Congress media team feels compelled to accuse the BJP as a party that spreads violence, hate and lies. While it cannot be concluded that this portrayal of the BJP is misinformation or mal-information due the lack of concrete evidence for and against it, it can be concluded that a negative narrative is being utilised in order to shape the image of the INC. Through this, one aspect of Congress' identity is slowly being revealed - their dependency on the failure of the BJP. The INC have been the most successful party in India's history and has a legacy that is understood by the citizens of India. The compulsion of the INC to form an identity based on the frailties of the BJP is very important to analyse. It is clear from this narrative created by the Congress that despite its long history in the nation, it believes that using negative narratives about the opposition is an effective means of propagating their ideologies. By relentlessly including BJP as part of its own party's ideologies and official communications, it is expected by the Congress for the audience to change their perception of the BJP as well as the Congress itself.

4.2. Use of narrative in the victory tweet of the Congress.

The INC have been the most successful party in India's history and has a legacy that is understood by the citizens of India. The compulsion of the INC to form an identity based on the frailties of the BJP is very important to analyse. It is clear from this narrative created by the Congress that despite its long history in the nation, it believes that using negative narratives about the opposition is an effective means of propagating their ideologies. By relentlessly including BJP as part of its own party's ideologies and official communications, it is expected by the Congress for the audience to change their perception of the BJP as well as the Congress itself.

4.3 Analysis of tweet trends between 11th December and 18th December 2018.
It can also be noted that the Congress attributes this as a victory to all the citizens of India, after cementing the idea that it was democracy that won, initially. The idea behind is simple - Indians must be democratic; INC is a democratic party. The Congress are essentially stating that if one is a true Indian, he/she believes in democracy and hence their best option is to vote for the Congress. A similar attempt to persuade the public was made when Congress prompted that if one is against the idea of hate, violence and lies, the INC is the party that they must put their faith in.

The Congress of course, have attempted to discredit the government throughout the period that the BJP have been at the helm, and that is something that can be commonly observed and expected from any opposition party in a functioning economy, but the need to rely on the failures of the government is a detriment to the Congress as a party with ambitions and ideologies. Throughout the course of the week, Congress continued to provoke the government by reiterating the issues that they have often picked up, such as the Rafale scam. The official Twitter account of the BJP put up 10 tweets with the hashtag #Rafalescam in the week of their legislative assembly victory. However, it is understandable why the Congress chooses to pursue that particular case due to the ambiguity surrounding it and the persistence may or may not pay off for the Congress. It can be noted that the validity of the Congress would certainly be enhanced due to the legislative election victories in vital states and that their claim would be easier to sell to the audience during a period when they have gained momentum. It would also be necessary here to include the #ModiLiesToSupremeCourt which was used 11 times during the same week pertaining to the Supreme Court hearing on the Rafale deal. Though this, portraying Modi as a liar would help gain support in painting a negative picture of the Prime Minister of the country and attacking the BJP led government. During this week, the INC went ahead with their popular hashtag #ChowkidarPureChorHai a whole of 14 times, which they have been employing for a long time before the key victories in the Legislative Assembly elections. Two tweets a day where the Congress evidently brands the BJP as thieves when they are expected to be the guardians of the nation enforces the idea among the voters especially during a time when the INC gained ground on the BJP leading up to the LokSabha elections. Two days after the election results, the Congress posted a video on Twitter with the caption - "It's getting clearer by the day, PM Modi only wants "yes men" by his side, it's no wonder honest, intelligent & dedicated people always leave him". The tweet here clearly focuses on an individual rather than the party by questioning his integrity. This may be common practice in a democracy - the strategy of showing the opposition leader as weak. However, the narrative aspect of the message provokes an impression of the government from a moral standpoint. The citizens are also encouraged to introspect and ask themselves whether they are honest, intelligent and dedicated individuals and if so, will they support the BJP for the upcoming elections? The attempt of the narrative is to create a consciousness among the voters that "honest, intelligent and dedicated" individuals must avoid the BJP in the upcoming elections. The tweet also portrays the BJP as dishonest and irresponsible - opposite of the adjectives used in the tweet. The integrity of the audience is questioned as they are compelled to ask themselves if they choose to be one of the "yes men" or if they prefer to be "honest, intelligent and dedicated" people who Narendra Modi rejects.

While in several tweets of the Congress, there is a clear indication that the BJP were targeted outright, one must not conclude that Congress focuses their entire social media space leading a charge against the BJP. In the week that followed the victory in the Legislative Assembly elections, Congress posted a number of tweets under #CongressWinsBig which contained information of the press conference held by Rahul Gandhi immediately after the victory. Among the whole of seven tweets which were quotes from Rahul Gandhi at the press conference, three of them spoke about Narendra Modi. In fact, the tweet among the seven that received the highest number of likes and retweets read - "Mr. Modi has taught me what not to do. He refused to listen to journalists and farmers. Arrogance is fatal for a politician: Congress President @RahulGandhi". The increased amount of interaction that this particular tweet got compared to other tweets where Rahul Gandhi explained his plans and ambitions for the states with regards to developments in agriculture and employment is a telltale sign that Twitter users do interact with tweets with negative publicity more than tweets with the manifesto of a party. While the sample size in this research may be too less to conclude this, it is highly relevant in the way parties, organisations and the common public must approach Twitter as a platform. A "Twitter war" is a term that one comes across very often in a digital space and there is an indication that such a concept is gaining popularity, although there isn't any concrete study supporting this argument. A Twitter face-off between the two major parties could be what social media users are looking for and if that is the case, the high interaction rates on tweets which propagate negative narratives about the opposition party can be explained. In general terms, the yearning for Twitter wars can be seen through the publicity that celebrity interactions on Twitter receives in other news media.

The Congress also ran the hashtag #IndiaTrustsCongress in that week which further employs a narrative that the entire country is on its side despite the fact that it is far behind in terms of Lok Sabha seats. However, the tweets under this hashtag does not involve the BJP or Narendra Modi. These tweets focused on the swearing-in ceremonies of the respective Chief Ministers of the states and the profile of the leaders who would take charge as a result of the victory. There were no digs taken at the previous government in this process. Furthermore, Congress also operated with the hashtag #CongressNeVachanNibhaya, which translates to ''Congress has kept its word'' stating that Congress had fulfilled their promises to the people. This was triggered after the decision taken to waive loans of farmers in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. This was certainly a statement of intent from the Congress party. The Congress are essentially stating that if one is against the idea of hate, violence and lies, the INC is the party that they must put their faith in.

On 12th December, an image of India's map was put out, with each state marked with blue where the Congress are in power, saffron - states where BJP are in power and grey which are represented by local parties. The tweet called it "India ka naya Swachh Bharat Abhiyan". The tweet captured the attention of the Twitter users as it garnered 10k likes and 2.4k retweets. What is the Congress suggesting with this tweet? The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan is a scheme that was initiated by
the BJP and while it may be difficult to evaluate how successful it was, it has received lesser criticisms compared to some other BJP initiatives such as demonetisation. The Congress used one of BJPs less controversial schemes to create the idea of cleansing the BJP from India.

The Congress used one of BJPs less controversial schemes to create the idea of cleansing the BJP from India. Through this tweet, the Congress are displaying their dominant performance in the Assembly elections, but the caption gives it a new angle. The objective of the INC may not just be to be elected as the party that could fulfil the promises of the voters, but also to be seen as the party which is the most powerful opposition to the government that needs to be removed from the country by any cost. The cleansing of "Bharat" is a vital narrative which leads the audience to believe that BJP is a party that needs to be avoided and more than simply increasing the number of "blue states", the aim must be to remove the "saffron states" for the nation to excel. Here, the Congress are not just appealing to citizens of the states in which BJP have control over, but also the neutral states as well, to resist the entry of BJP in the upcoming election. It urges the audience to take up the responsibility of removing the BJP from power, knowing that the best alternative is the Congress and that they would inevitably come to power if the domination of the BJP comes to an end. This image of the India map also denotes a binaric treatment of the contemporary political paradigm in India. The Congress effectively makes the nation a battleground for the war between itself and the BJP, portraying regional powers as insignificant in the large picture. A key element of the representation is that it attempts to depict a common goal of political parties to get rid of the BJP from the nation, allowing the opening of avenues for new alliances and coalitions ahead of the elections.

4.4 Analysis of retweets by Congress

Retweeting of tweets from political leaders from around the country also assisted the spread of narratives about the BJP. The concept of retweets becomes vital in this context, because on Twitter, regardless of how influential the sender of the original tweet is, if a popular personality with thousands of followers retweets it, which is a symbol of endorsing the particular content, then the message reaches thousands of people through him/her. In this case, the Congress Twitter handle, which currently has 4.94 million followers, retweeted the messages shared by their allied party leaders.
From the above tweets, it can be inferred that the regional allies of the Congress are rather celebrating the BJP’s loss in unity than congratulating the Congress for their victory. In each one of the tweets that were posted on the day of the election results, the world BJP can be seen and it is clear that the narrative is rather anti-BJP than pro-Congress. What does this mean for the image of the Congress? Is Congress seen as the most capable party to run the nation or the best alternative to the current ruling party? Mamata Banerjee's first thoughts suggest that her prime motive is to eliminate the BJP and played along the narrative of how this victory is for the people, suggesting that BJP is an anti-people party. HD Devegowda’s social media team exhibited their creativity through rhymes, something that would register in the minds of the audience. In the process, the account calls out BJP as an arrogant party which Rahul Gandhi previously already suggested they were, in the press conference the same day. HD Devegowda's account further takes a dig at the Prime Minister's habit of taking tours to foreign countries. He also points out that the BJP have so far been ineffective in making the nation “problem-free” and challenges them to do so until the Lok Sabha elections, at least. The narrative of BJP as an arrogant party enforces the idea in the minds of the audience that the Congress is a rather humble party that would work tirelessly to erase the problems that exist in the nation. The endorsement of these claims by local politicians certainly help further the reach of the narrative as well as reinforce it in the social media space and the Congress’ main account has retweeted it and made sure it has reached thousands of people online. MK Stalin's stand though, is very straight-forward. He admits that the upcoming elections are after all, a fight against the ruling government. While it is absolutely expected from an opposition coalition government leader, the strength of the alliance is at test here. The essence of politics is exemplified in this statement from MK Stalin that this political alliance is after all, one with a temporary goal - one to remove the power of the BJP and Narendra Modi. This tweet is more controversial than the other two, simply due to the use of the word "fascist". The word has crucial connotations with respect to the negative impacts of the ideology on the general public, especially seen from the historic lens. The ideology of fascism is one that is often associated with terror and hence this narrative portrays the BJP as a destructive force. To refer to the government as fascist, and the Congress retweeting it, making it evident that the party endorses the idea has significant consequences in terms of the way the audience view the BJP as a party. Not only has Congress portrayed the BJP as a non-democratic, anti-younger, anti-farmer party, by aligning with the thoughts of MK Stalin, they have signalled to the citizens on social media that voting the BJP in for a second term would have serious negative consequences to their country and thus it must be avoided under any circumstances.

V. Findings

1) Twitter, with its rising penetration rates among the Indian social media space has become a vital and ever-growing arena for political discourse and discussions and this can be observed in the way Congress uses the platform extensively for creating narratives about the BJP. The unique quality of Twitter which provides personalised accounts for political leaders combined with the feature of "retweet" not only makes the transfer of opinions quicker, it increases the validity of the information. Twitter accounts with a considerable number of followers are hence vital in order to spread the narrative that is created by the Congress about BJP. Twitter becomes an avenue for the initiation of dominant political narratives which then spreads across other conventional media platforms. An example of this phenomenon is the recent "Chowkidar" campaign by the BJP.

2) From the analysis of the tweets by the Congress, one thing is evident - the Congress paints the BJP in negative light and attempts to tarnish the reputation of the ruling government. Yet, the manner in which they do it is of key importance. The Congress have attacked the character and values of the party using strong words and symbols that question the integrity of the BJP and their members. The Congress aims to persuade the audience into believing that the BJP- the ruling party are undemocratic, dishonest, violent, anti-farmers, anti-youth, corrupt etc within a span of a week, in which the Congress themselves had won elections in key states. The use of hashtags like #ChowkidarPureChorHai, #ModiLiesToSupremeCourt, #CongressNeVachanNibhaya, #IndiaTrustsCongress, #WeAreOne, allows them to influence the public and gather support ahead of the LokSabha elections.

3) The Congress create an image for themselves by diminishing the image of their opponent - the BJP. The Congress are rarely seen to be propagating their ideology through the platform of Twitter, but are keen on not only criticising the government, but also to discredit the government in any way possible. From the analysis of the tweets, the Congress’ prime focus is to remove the power of the BJP and place itself as the best alternative rather than create a powerful image for themselves. It is to be noted, however, that the Congress chooses to disreput the BJP in selective periods, rather than posting about the BJP at all times. It also uses strategic binary treatment of the two parties in the national political scenario in order to propagate this.

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