

**USE OF FACEBOOK AS A KEY CAMPAIGN TOOL IN HARYANA ASSEMBLY
ELECTIONS 2019: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY**

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Abstract:

In electoral politics, social media is considered a better tool for communication on national issues which resonate nationwide. Therefore there has been plenty of research on use of Facebook during parliamentary elections but not much on assembly elections. This research leaves the bandwagon and runs on a fresh track by focusing on use of Facebook by political leaders in 2019 assembly elections in Haryana. This research details why and how politicians are using Facebook for election campaigning in state with a huge rural population. Statistics for analysis of Facebook usage are derived from online media monitoring tool, Fanpage Karma. The Research brings out interesting reasons and consequences of this interface between a modern communication tool and a predominantly rural electorate.

Keywords: Facebook, Haryana, election, campaigning, political communication, voters etc.

1: Introduction: Foot and Schneider (2006) note that the history of campaigning could be understood as the diffusion of technology into the political sphere. Social media has made a profound impact on communication of all sorts. Though the medium was invented for personal communication originally, it has rapidly turned into the newest means of mass communication. Political parties naturally espouse the information and communication technologies (ICTs) popular among electorate. A novel repertoire of campaigning practices steeped in the logic and affordances of social media has emerged over time. India too has witnessed sharp rise in number of social media users among its populace. Following the global course, political campaigning has insinuated itself into the general framework of social media communication in India too. Social media, specifically Facebook has garnered a huge following in India creating an electorate which dramatically differs from previous ones which held traditional media in higher esteem. There have been robust studies exploring variables of usage of Facebook as key campaign tool in parliamentary elections but there is much to learn on the progression of such trend in assembly elections. This research delves into this understudied domain of Facebook's role in assembly elections campaigns with the state of Haryana in focus.

2: Social media and Political Campaigning: In the light of concepts like third age of political communication (Blumler and Kavangah, 1999), hybrid media system (Chadwick, 2007) and political individualization (Calenda and Meijer, 2011), social media is thought to have played a big part in shaping political communication and campaigning as we see and understand these exercises today. Diffusion of social media is such among population at large that politicians are required to join as well (Druckman et al, 2009; Gueorguieva, 2009). Social media landscape has shifted drastically over the years. Web 2.0 is much more than electronic brochures (Kamarck, 1999) or virtual billboards (Sadow and James, 1999) as web 1.0 was described, due to wide connectivity and interactive potential. Most of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Youtube were invented for closeted communities. But they evolved into instruments of mass communication, rapidly realizing concepts like global village (McLuhan, 1962) and network society (Manuel Castells, 1996). Use of social media is now commonplace in campaigning due to their rapid proliferation and they are fast turning into an integral part of political campaigns. Outreach to public has become all the more important as voters have become increasingly volatile. Voters are now open to influence of alternative discourses and they are mobilized by unconventional tools. Thus impression management

is extremely important for politicians to win voters (Enil, 2016). The ability to broadcast contents to millions of people instantaneously through social media platforms allow campaigns to carefully manage their candidates' images based on rich sets of analytics in real time and at almost no cost (Murse, 2019). Social media are at the core of political campaigning efforts across the world (Larsson, 2019) and politicians who are not tech-savvy risk being left behind (Panagopoulos, 2005). Campaign practices are simply migrating to an online context and social media strategies have become firmly integrated into political practice and PR policies of politicians (Graham et al. 2014). New media has become more and more influential in elections. In his thorough overview of internet politics, Chadwick (2006) claims that social media not only affects existing political institutions but also shapes new norms, rules and procedures in politics. Gurevitch's observations of the changing roles of agenda-setters from politicians and journalists to the public-have come true through the advent of social media (Bali and Jagan, 2017).

3: What Makes Facebook Different: Networked technologies such as Facebook have introduced new affordances for amplifying, recording, and spreading information (Boyd, 2011). Widespread reach and connectivity, interactionist functionalities, mixture of private matters with public ones, genuineness of interchanges and the very regular way in which they can be written and uploaded on Facebook with a smartphone makes Facebook into a channel which blends smoothly into day-to-day life routines of public and politicians alike.

3.1 The Reach: Among all social networking sites (SNS) in India, Facebook is the top of heap. There are almost 497 million active social media users in India currently (Degenhard, 2023). From March 2019 to March 2020, Facebook's share in Indian social media market was 84.94 percent across all platforms like mobile, desktop and tablet (Statcounter, 2019). So when we talk about social media in Indian context, we are talking overwhelmingly about Facebook. Facebook is three times as likely to be used as a site for news in India than Twitter (Aneez et al, 2019). The state of Haryana had 18.39 million voters in 2019 (ECI, 2019). According to Facebook Ad Manager, political parties could reach 6.8 million voters in Haryana using Facebook (Ananth and Mandavia, 2019).

3.2 Perfect Alternative to Mainstream Media: It is undeniably true that social media such as Facebook are altering ways in which politicians communicate with public as they are no longer captive of gatekeeping tendencies of traditional media. They are now able to broadcast their message to anyone who wants to hear them. It precludes the possibility of distortion. In the era of mass communication, politician needed media to get their message across to citizenry while news outlets needed them as sources of news considered essential to citizens and key to legitimize a news outlet's role in democracy (Broersma & Graham, 2016). Both political and media elites were to a large extent shielded from citizens and were able to negotiate the political and public agenda merely among themselves (Brants and Voltmer 2011). Social media like Facebook have broken that information power equilibrium. Voters now base their opinions on information derived from a diverse set of sources including mass media and social media and through cross-referencing. According to Garrett (2019), in the month leading up to presidential Election Day 2016 in US, 21 per cent Americans used Facebook to get political updates while websites of prominent news organizations like Fox News, CNN and MSNBC News were used only by 6.3, 4.8 and 3.2 percent Americans respectively for the same purpose. Social media is renegotiating the relationship between political class and citizens. An unprecedented level of connectivity and abundance of information on the social media platforms like Facebook have empowered users and created a "pull environment" in which users control what information they consume and who they talk to (Nielsen & Vaccari, 2013). If a big public story is broken on online media platforms like Facebook and received well by users, mainstream media are pressured into publishing these popular public discussions. Citizens can also now bypass traditional media and promote their own varied views. Online voices can frame the issues with their own interpretation.

3.3 Interactivity: Reciprocity is embedded in the fabric of social media platforms like Facebook as Facebook posts are engaged with by means of redistribution, interaction or acknowledging types of

feedback (Larsson, 2019). Debating potentialities of Facebook dovetail perfectly with argumentative Indian (Amartya Sen, 2005). Various studies have suggested that social networking sites such as Facebook could help strengthen civic engagement by offering increasing connectivity, interactivity and cross-ideological exposure (e.g., Chadwick, 2014; Hanson et al., 2010; Kushan and Yamamoto, 2010). The direct communication offered by Facebook is valued by a public deeply suspicious of edited and orchestrated interviews. When a candidate writes himself, readers feel a personal connect and are more likely to respond. The interactive format backed by Facebook indeed provides the means whereby a debating-space in which many voices can talk to each other is enabled. Social media such as Facebook also holds the promise of bridging the democratic-deficit by facilitating a less mediated form of dialogue to take place between elected representatives and citizens as well as bolster political participation.

3.4 Redistributive Scope: Redistributing describes how users can employ the sharing mechanism of Facebook. Through redistribution, an information item can get maximum exposure among the potential audience in a short duration through many nodes (Kalsnes et al, 2017). An important characteristic of social media platforms like Facebook is the swiftness with which current events and specific matters can gain traction throughout an extensive network of followers or friends, a trait which is described in popular language as ability to go viral (Klinger, 2013). A candidate can post information and that information can be re-circulated by followers and friends of followers in rapid time. Its scattergun effect can alert people to the fact of an event that they were previously unaware of (Ross and Burger, 2014). Giving precedence to issues of viral content, politicians design their social media activities to get network-enhanced word of mouth (Nahon et al. 2011:1). Possibility of redistributing of posts by Facebook users is one of the most attractive functions of Facebook for politicians.

3.5 Informal Structure: Social media like Facebook have caused what Serfaty (2012) calls informalization of politics. This informalization ushered in by social media is transforming the contemporary relationships with power and authority. Voters appreciate the immediacy and flexibility afforded by these informal structures (Ross and Burger, 2014). On social media, politicians allow themselves to be shown as regular people thinking that mixing political oratory with personal sentiment can lead voters to consider them as one among them as well as good representative for their constituency. Politicians can genuinely dialogue with citizens and not only listen to their voices but act on their views (Dean, 2014). These digital advancements point to a shift in how public and politician engage with each other and could mark a shift in the balance of political power. Facebook can deliver an enhanced democracy by simply making the contact between politicians and public easier.

3.6 Participatory Format: Facebook could motivate people who are habitually less interested in politics to get more involved. A big motivational driver for politicians to use Facebook is to drum up public participation in the campaign. The candidate's page is co-built and co-produced by each comment, be it from opponents or supporters. Co-production becomes an essential part of political participation (Serfaty, 2009). It thus becomes a political form of crowd-sourcing. The scale of participation on fanpage discussions bestows on them aura of a public debate and to be part of a rich online debate is as big a political participation as being physically present in a rally. People are not likely to modify their behavior in accordance with messages of mass media unless these messages have been transmitted by acquaintances (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955). The political contents posted on user's timeline on SNS such as Facebook, often come from such acquaintances and therefore add heft to the message and the politicians uttering them. People generally put more stock in opinions forwarded to them by friends and feel more like participating in a political enterprise at their prompting rather than a far-off politician. Hence Facebook becomes imperative for politicians looking to generate participation for their campaign.

3.7 Convenient Campaigning Device: For politicians, being on Facebook is a part of their accessibility as political leaders. It puts politicians at the same level as the people they are trying to connect with. Politicians are time-poor and they are always weighing up the strategic importance of spending time doing one thing over other. The always-on character of internet allows politicians to

share plenty of information on campaign trail. Politicians upload videos of their speeches and campaign activities on their Facebook pages. Facebook is a conducive tool to build visibility and profile and deliver frequent messages. For popular politicians, Facebook is a way to demonstrate their popularity among supporters through hordes of reactions and comments, which helps to validate their position.

3.8 Source of Precious Data: Facebook is also instrumental in forging perception about the opinion climate. Not only issues are brought up and frames are shaped by online voices but also estimations about the general voting result are made based on online sentiments (Zhang, 2016). Campaigning on Facebook has been found to be a reliable indicator of success at the polls in the U.S. (Williams and Gulati, 2008). Comments and reactions are precious primary data that could reflect offline sentiments. Politicians can profile their supporters and get copious data to assess the campaign impact.

4: Social Media in Indian Politics: Social Media's use as an effective tool for electioneering is a relatively new phenomenon in India. Social media had been used since 2011 on considerable scale for mustering support for social and political movements. But cyber electioneering was pioneered by BJP with its much-vaunted use of social media as the public mobilization tool per excellence in the parliamentary election campaign of 2014 for which it was rewarded handsomely by voters. As a result, 2019 parliamentary election saw greatly improved online engagement by all political parties. According to Chaturvedi and Laghate (2019), for the Indian general elections of 2019, the digital ad-spend grew by 100 to 150 per cent in comparison to 2014. Since 2014, social media's role in political campaigning has grown so big that Election Commission had to announce before 2019 general election that all political ads on social media would have to be pre-certified by, all candidates would have to furnish details of their social media accounts and campaign expenses on social media would be included in election expenditure account. EC also placed the content posted on social media by candidates and political parties under the provisions of model code of conduct (PK, 2019). This authenticates the great importance ceded to social media in the political communication context of India. Rodrigues (2019) claims that social media and data analytics would be the main actors in upcoming Indian elections and their use would be unprecedented as both major parties, BJP and Congress, now use social media.

5: Research Questions: The research is primarily guided by these three questions, how much did the leading politicians use Facebook during the campaign for Haryana assembly election, 2019, what led both the political parties of Haryana to prefer Facebook as a major campaign tool and what was the voters' response?

6: The State of Haryana: Haryana is one of smaller states of India containing 2.09 percent population (Census, 2011) and 1.34 percent territory (MOSPI, 2017) of the country. But this small state wields considerable influence due to its relative economic prosperity. It leads the chart among passenger-car and two-wheelers manufacturing states in India (Bhargva, 2015). It is also the third largest exporter of software among all Indian states and a preferred destination for IT services (IBEF, 2020). The state has modern urban areas like Gurugram, the millennium city, and Faridabad, declared the eighth fastest growing city in the world by City Mayors Foundation (Sen and Yadav, 2017). But the state has a majority rural population at 65.12 percent and projects a profoundly rural character. Orthodox institutes like Khap panchayats continue to hold sway in parallel with state machinery (Makkar, 2013). Caste identities still play an important role in determining voting preferences of state electorate (Alexander and Padmanabhan, 2019). The politics of the state also straddles between the modern and traditional.

7: Research Methodology: This is a descriptive and analytical paper which depends on data gathered from Facebook fanpages of dominant political leaders of Haryana. This paper has analyzed a huge corpus of data on activities of these leaders on their Facebook fanpages during the period

from enacting of model code of conduct on October 21, 2019 to the last day of campaigning on November 18, 2019 in Haryana. The data for research has been acquired through the online monitoring tool Fanpage Karma. The research entails overarching mapping and content analysis of Facebook posts and corresponding meta-data. All measures were invoked to ensure the rigor of analysis and interpretation of data.

8: The Prominent Parties and Leaders in Haryana: This research has focused on the Facebook activities of the six top leaders of the four main parties: two each from the two national parties in the fray- BJP and Congress and one each from the two regional parties-JJP and INLD. From the ruling BJP, activities on the official Facebook pages of state chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar and then state BJP president Subhash Barala have been analyzed. From the opposition Congress, the Facebook activities of former CM Bhupinder Hooda who is Congress Legislative Party leader and Kumari Selja, the then state president of Congress have been analyzed. From JJP, the official Facebook page of Dushyant Chautala, the president and co-founder of the party and from INLD, the official Facebook page of Abhay Singh Chautala, the former leader of opposition, have been analyzed. It is relevant to mention here that in the aftermath of elections, BJP forged an alliance with JJP to form government in Haryana but JJP has been put in the opposition category in the context of this research as both parties had fought elections separately.

9: Haryana Assembly Elections 2019: 2019 Haryana assembly elections were fought close on heels of parliamentary elections 2019. The incumbent BJP was the front-runner as it had won all 10 parliamentary seats from the state with a whopping 58 percent vote share. The opposition Congress was resurging after former CM and prominent Jat leader Bhupender Singh Hooda had been handed reins of party amid perceptible anger in the dominant Jat community brewing since the Jat quota-stir. Indian National Lok Dal or INLD of former CM Om Prakash Chautala was also in the fray but party's claim to power had been impaired as senior Chautala was in prison along with his elder son and a dispute in his family had seen his grandson Dushyant Chautala forming a new outfit, Jan-nayak Janta Party or JJP. The new outfit had captured attention after a surprise second-place finish in Jind bypoll barely a few months before assembly election.

10: Data Interpretation and Findings: The research comprises of a thorough analysis of data sourced from Fanpage karma. The data is in the form of number of followers, posts, reactions, comments etc.

10.1: The Number of posts by top contestants during election campaign:

No.	Name of Fanpage	Number of Posts
1	Manohar Lal	463
2	Subhash Barala	220
3	Bhupinder Singh Hooda	131
4	Kumari Selja M.P.	257
5	Dushyant Chautala	244
6	Abhay Singh Chautala	354

CM Manohar Lal Khattar tops the chart with 463 posts during the research period. Being the incumbent, he had the most at stake. Interestingly, he is followed by Abhay Singh Chautala with 354 posts who, with a worn out INLD, had most to gain. Kumari Selja shared 257 posts, the third highest in the list. CM Khattar shared a prodigious 15.9 posts a day. The number of average posts per day stood at 12.2 and 8.8 for Abhay Chautala and Kumari Selja respectively. In all, 1669 Facebook posts were sent out by these contestants over the 29 days. Per day, they collectively shared 57.5 Facebook posts. What led the top politicians to such pervasive use of Facebook in their election campaigns in a largely rural state where elections are generally fought on local issues and caste-calculus? Here are the reasons:

10.1.1: The Broad Internet Penetration in the state: Internet penetration in Haryana was 49 per cent, which was considerably higher than the national penetration of 36 percent at the time of elctions

(IAMAI, 2019). The state of Haryana had approximately 2.39 crore telecom subscribers. 2.36 Crore of them subscribed to wireless telecom devices among which mobile phones are predominant. Haryana's share in total telecom subscribers in India was 1.97 percent, while its population share is 2.09 percent in 2019. Haryana's share in wireless subscribers was slightly more at 1.98 percent. The state's share in rural telecom subscribers was further up at 2.23 percent. The number of base transceiver stations (BTS) in Haryana was 44735 which was 2.43 percent of total BTSs in India in 2019. 21784 Base transceiver stations in Haryana were 4G-LTE. That translated into 48.69 or almost half of all base transceiver stations in Haryana. This also meant that Haryana had 2.4 percent of India's total 905415 4G-LTE base transceiver stations (Telecom Statistics India, 2018). All these statistics prove that Haryana not only has good internet penetration but the speed of internet is also comparatively good. The state is also undergoing a rapid urbanization process. The urban population of the state reached almost 9 million in 2011 from around 3.8 million in 1991 (Censusindia.gov.in, 2011). This urbanizing trend directly translates into a better and easier access to internet which further means better and easier access to Facebook.

10.1.2 Social Media: A Conducive Tool to Reach Large Number of Voters: The state had over 18390525 voters spread over 90 assembly constituencies in 2019 (ECI 2019). The voting percentage in assembly election 2019 was 68.47, which translates into little over 12 million votes. In 2019 election, the state had 19578 polling stations. The Badshahpur constituency in Gurgaon had the highest 362 polling stations. On average, every constituency had 217.5 polling stations. The average assembly constituency size in Haryana was 204339 in 2019. Badshapur assembly constituency of the state had 396281 registered voters (Elections in India). York Central parliamentary constituency in the United Kingdom had 74801 registered voters in UK general election 2019 (bbc.com 2019). We can easily carve out 5 UK parliamentary constituencies out of Badshahpur assembly constituency of Haryana in terms of the number of voters. Reaching out to such large electorate personally is impossible. To reach all of them via subordinates and henchman is possible but prohibitively expensive and time-consuming. Using conventional media like Television and newspapers will also cost a fortune. Television attracts its largest viewership during the prime time spot of 8.30 to 9 PM. During this time of the day, only 5 percent of the Indian youth which forms a staggering 33 percent of the total TV audience, watches news channels (BARC 2019). As per Indian Readership Survey (IRS), 425 million people read a newspaper daily in first quarter of 2019. As a percentage of population, this means 39 percent of the people are consuming news through a newspaper (Singh, 2019). And this is the cumulative number so no single newspaper will have this wide a reach. One will have to advertise in a plurality of newspapers to reach 39 percent populace and that would mean incurring serious expenditures. Facebook fanpages on the other hand provide a bigger reach than any single newspaper at virtually no cost. It also helps newly-formed parties like JJP overcome the resource crunch.

10.1.3 The multidimensional capability of Facebook: While television provides a platform to advertise only through visuals and graphics, newspapers and magazines can only publish textual and pictorial advertisements. Facebook on the other hand, is a medium where one can share a picture, a text and a video. One can also go live and address all online followers, answer their queries and get instant feedback from them.

10.2 The reactions, comments and shares on the posts

No.	Name of Fanpage	No of Posts	Total Reactions, Comments and Shares	Number of Likes	Number of Comments
1	Manohar Lal Khattar	463	528195	417570	51939
2	Subhash Barala	220	198992	156615	17948
3	Bhupinder Singh Hooda	131	454665	346337	32357
4	Kumari Selja M.P.	257	627110	547327	30357

5	Dushyant Chautala	244	1730397	1362597	128061
6	Abhay Singh Chautala	354	422517	368552	19128

The Young Turk, Dushyant Chautala got the highest number of reactions, shares and comments on his posts. His 244 posts during the campaign generated 1730397 reactions, shares and comments. Per post, he was able to generate a traffic of 7091.79 on his Facebook page. This number doesn't include the number of reactions, comments and shares on the posts shared by followers. It would be a very grueling task to create such an engagement 244 times in a period of 29 days on any other platform.

10.2.1 The Voluminous Reach Offered by the Medium: Dushyant was able to carry his message very effectively to a large audience due to the availability of a platform like Facebook. While in comparison with the state's population of 2.54 crore, 1730397 reactions might seem insignificant but as we look deeper, a new picture begins to emerge. Although the population of the state was 2.54 crore, the number of registered voters in 2019 was 18057010. Out of total registered voters, only 68.43 percent actually came out to vote which means only a little over 12 million votes were cast. As per the election results the average victory margin per constituency was 15946 votes and the combined margin between the votes of victors and first runner-ups across all 90 constituencies was 1435174 votes. By adding around 800000 more votes in its 2014 tally, Congress was able to more than double its seat share from 15 to 31 and give BJP a tough fight. Dushyant Chautala's JJP polled 14.80 percent of total votes which would roughly translate into around 1700000 votes and he was able to win 10 seats and become a kingmaker in the face of a fractured mandate. These statistics underscore the significance of getting over 1.7 million responses in the month immediately before the election day. Dushyant was able to capture almost entire votebank of INLD by striking a chord with mostly young and rural voters through ingenious use of Facebook. Abhay Singh Chautala who was leading INLD in the absence of party's chairperson Om Prakash Chautala, garnered only 422517 responses on his 354 posts, the second lowest among all six leaders. He could only get 1193.5 reactions, comments and shares per post. INLD ended up with a paltry 2.44 percent vote share and just one seat. INLD imploded as it failed to adapt to new means of political communication and lacked a face young voters could identify with. Congress legislative party leader Hooda was able to get 454665 responses on his 131 with an average of 3470.72 responses per post. Responses per post for CM Manohar Lal Khattar, Kumari Selja and Subhash Barala were 1140.80, 2440.11 and 904.50 respectively.

10.2.2 The Precious Feedback from Voters: Facebook has increased the participation of common masses in political process due to the nature of the medium. It allows people to respond to political activities without the fear of repercussions. The medium offers distance and inconspicuousness due to large traffic and thus becomes an appropriate platform to voice honest opinions which might be hard to express in real life platforms. The voters now have an avenue to give honest and instant feedback without any filtration or moderation due to the medium. The comments and reactions are precious data for candidates as they can gauge the public mood and design their campaign strategies accordingly. The role of gate-keepers has been made absolutely redundant by Facebook. While all comments on the posts and Facebook lives are not genuine but by winnowing the comments of genuine individuals from social media bots and fake accounts, one can gather invaluable primary data. That data can help the contestants in formulating new campaign strategies and assessing the success of current ones.

10.3: Number of Followers

No.	Name of Fanpage	Number of Followers
1	Manohar Lal Khattar	620490
2	Subhash Barala	130449
3	Bhupinder Singh Hooda	938137
4	Kumari Selja M.P.	133014
5	Dushyant Chautala	755611

6	Abhay Singh Chautala	390871
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10.3.1 The Significance of Facebook Arithmetic: Bhupinder Singh Hooda tops the list with almost a million followers. In a state where 12 million people vote in an election and where winner BJP accumulated around 4.4 million votes and the main opposition Congress got around 3.3 million votes and the difference was of a little over one million votes, having almost a million followers is a big advantage. Assuming that most of the followers are from Haryana, a message gets circulated at a much faster pace and at virtually no cost. It makes mobilization of workers, dissemination of information pertaining to date and venue of important campaigning events and publicizing of contents of important political speeches and messages by sharing of text, pictures and videos much easier. While social media has not completely superseded the traditional means of political communication like rallies, door to door campaign etc, it has certainly taken out of equation some of the cacophonous aspects of the campaign. That cacophony has now shifted from streets to the Facebook posts and comment sections. The real life campaigning has got a lot quieter with the advent of smart campaign tools like social media.

10.3.2 Different Uses of Facebook by Top Contestants: Out of 10 top performing posts of Hooda in last three weeks of campaigning, 9 were the ones that livestreamed the rallies where he canvassed for the local candidates and one which livestreamed the launch of party manifesto. While these posts garnered 63600 likes and 8571 comments in total, all ten videos cumulatively got 1956000 views. These 10 live video posts were shared by 13880 people. There is no data accessible to ascertain how many times the shared posts were viewed. Dushyant Chautala collected 284000 likes on his top 10 posts in final three weeks of campaigning. His posts were commented upon approximately 11889 times. 7 Of his top 10 posts were live Facebook videos which were viewed by 1848000 followers. Unlike Hooda, most of Dushyant's top posts were about meeting and acknowledging common workers and voters, road shows, snippets from newspapers, personalized messages of festival-greetings and for galvanizing the base. Manohar Lal Khattar got 62200 likes and 3690 comments on his top 10 posts during the same period. His posts were shared 6634 times. His six video posts were viewed by 1553000 followers. His top posts had a lot more diversified contents. He shared pictures and posters of campaign, news articles, parts of interviews given to news channels, comments of PM Modi made during a rally and PM's statements on his government's performance etc. This analysis describes the differences in use of Facebook by top three contenders in chief ministerial race for Haryana. Hooda used the platform to magnify the message he was sending out in rallies in support of Congress candidates. Congress campaign was thus centered simply on canvassing votes for its candidates with Hooda in the front. Dushyant used Facebook more creatively by sharing propaganda videos of the party, pictures of the crowd coming to listen to his message and of the yellow-green paraphernalia of the newly formed outfit to accentuate its identity and symbol, more pictures of supporters to show its fast expanding base to legitimize its claim as a serious player in the game and greetings in the form of personalized posts to create an emotional bond. CM Khattar also used Facebook in myriad ways to reach out to voters. He used newspaper clippings to defend his government's record on employment. He also used PM Modi's speeches to cash in on PM's popularity. He also advertised his government's decisions on important issues by sharing newspaper articles and posters. He shared snippets from famous TV show Aap Ki Adalat in which he was interviewed by renowned journalist Rajat Sharma.

10.3.3 A Perfect Milieu for Widespread Usage of Facebook for political Communication: The state had 8942668 voters under the age of 40 years in 2019 as per the Election Commission data. 3.82 Lakh voters were in the age group of 18 to 19 with many of them first-time voters in 2019. 4067413 voters were in the age group of 20 to 29 years (Indiatoday.in October 21 2019). At 8.9 million, almost half of the state electorate was in the under 40 age group. Social media has bigger penetration among the young voters as they are more tech-savvy. Traditional methods of political communication cannot suffice to induce the younger voters. Since the launch of Jio SIM on 5 September 2016, the price of internet data has plummeted in India. According to a recent BBC report, India has the cheapest mobile broadband prices in the world (Roy, 2019). According to a market report by IDC, the average selling price of smartphones in India stood at Rs 11263 in Q2

2019 (Timesofindia.com 2019). In the chart of states with highest per capita income, Haryana stood at fifth place with a GSDP per capita of 250700 in 2019. Among the top four, Goa, Sikkim and Chandigarh had very small populations. The fourth one Delhi had a population of more than 15 million. Among all states with a population of more than 20 million, Haryana had the highest per capita income in 2019 (MOSPI, 2019). Relative prosperity of the state and availability of cheap smartphones and data equipped the major part of state's youth with access to internet and social media. Most of the Facebook users were young people of all castes and communities. Due to the affordable prices of medium, the class is not a barrier to access and as it is a virtual platform, caste was not an exclusionary factor; Facebook homogenized them as users of the same platform to receive political information and voice their opinions. Facebook is a platform which allows political leaders to strike a personal chord with voters by sharing with them pictures of their families celebrating a local festival, visiting common people, having a cup of tea or meal with them, greeting them on festivals with pictures of festival-celebration at their home. On their pages politicians also foreground the backstage topics such as everyday activities of a non-political nature (Jackson & Lilleker, 2011), personal affairs, feelings (Herkman, 2012: 136). This is an astute campaigning technique as it democratizes the relationship between electorate and political leaders.

10.3.4 A Usable Medium by Even by Technologically Unsound Voters: The user interface is extremely simple on Facebook. Even the technologically unsound voters can use it once they get an account made by someone. In every household, the younger members usually create an account for the elder ones on Facebook. Once they have a Facebook account, they can remain permanently logged in on their smartphone as it is their personal property which they carry with themselves all the time in their pockets. Even the illiterate users can scroll down the Facebook timeline. They will not understand the posts solely comprising of text but they can understand the pictorial and video contents of the post. They cannot post a comment but they can express their opinions in the form of a rich variety of reactions and by sharing. Those who don't understand Hindi and English but know local dialects can now read posts in their language due to the availability of translation services of Facebook. The social network is available in India in multiple languages. Facebook also has a translation application for improving existing translations into regional Indian languages or help the network translate to other languages (Karnik and Balachandran, 2015). The users can rely on voice to text features of Facebook and various voice-typing apps which they can download with the help any better educated member of family, to type.

10. Conclusion: The 2019 Haryana assembly election campaign saw intense use of Facebook by all leading politicians. Internet penetration was quite good in Haryana as almost half of state's population had access to internet in 2019. Only the union territory of Delhi and Kerala had better internet penetration than Haryana (IAMAI 2019). The presence of almost 50 percent voters under the age of 40 and the growing penchant among voters of all age-groups to source political information from Facebook, provided a solid rationale for politicians to move their campaign activities online. The urban population of the state was also significantly growing at the time of 2019 assembly elections. This urbanizing trend also translated into more urban voters who are better connected to internet and Facebook and politicians could reach them more conveniently using the social network they used most profusely. The rural voters were also not that far behind in using Facebook to keep abreast with political updates. Easy user interface, lack of any great technical prowess to use the app and affordable data and smartphone prices have meant that the rural populace was catching up with urbanites in using Facebook. Several of communication tribulations of the political class have also been taken care of by Facebook. The growing population has meant the growth in number of voters per constituency. Reaching each of 204339 voters per constituency in Haryana personally would be a nightmare for even the most resourceful of candidates. The expenditure limit for a Lok Sabha candidate in Haryana is 70 lakh while for a Vidhansabha candidate, it is 28 lakh. Vidhansabha candidates are usually less resourceful than their Lok Sabha counterparts and therefore they need economical means of campaigning more acutely. For the beginners like JJP, Facebook was a boon as it helped Dushyant Chautala immensely in overcoming lesser finances and associating himself with young rural voters and becoming a representative of their aspirations. The sheer number of followers

of all top contestants on Facebook depicts its importance in campaigning. There is no such alternative campaigning avenue which remains open day and night, which doesn't have any gate-keepers to distort the message, where a candidate can approach the target audience individually and receive their feedback at no cost at all. The medium's range of services is unmatched with any other campaign tool. It allows the contestants to share a political message in the form of a live video, a recorded video, a picture, a poster, a newspaper clipping or a textual post. It eases up the organizational workload of contestants. It makes circulation and propagation of slogans, issues, campaign faces and schedule of important campaign events much easier. The effectiveness of catchy campaign slogans can be amplified enormously through Facebook. The term Chowkidar can bear testament to that. Thanks to Facebook, a voter doesn't have to be physically attending a rally or watching it live on television at home to be a part of it. He can be travelling in a train carriage or waiting in a queue and simultaneously watching the rally live on his Facebook timeline. Similarly a politician doesn't have to arrange for a huge media contingent at the rally venue to take his message beyond the present crowd. A political banner might get a few thousand eyeballs but a Facebook post can get millions of them. Facebook has certainly enhanced the level of voter participation in election campaign. Through the official page of all top contestants, voter now have a somewhat direct access to them. They can express their opinions more candidly on Facebook by speaking from behind the digital screen of the app. Overall, Facebook's wide reach, targeted advertising capabilities, high engagement levels, data collection, and amplification make it an essential tool for political campaigns looking to connect with voters, build support, and win elections.

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