

Thematic Analysis of Branding Linkages in the Video and Textual Content: A Study of Facebook and Twitter Handles of Narendra Modi

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Abstract

Is anything in common between Nehru's, Indira's, Gandhi's and Modi's communication strategy? All the four political leaders have been taller than the parties they led. All of them dominated the political discourses of their times. All of them used main stream media of their times to pitch their policy decisions. All of them made iconic fashion statements. Indira's saree swag, Gandhi's love for Khadi, Nehru's jacket and Modi's half sleeves Kurta- set them apart from the crowded league of the politicians of their respective eras.

If we further broaden the horizon of comparison, rhetoric seems to have yielded rich dividends for a number of Indian political leaders. If Lal Bahadur Shastri will be remembered for "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan"; "Tum mujhe khoon do, mai tumhe azadi doonga" will evoke the visuals of Subhash Chandra Bose; "Swaraj Mera Janmsiddh adhikar Hai" will trigger the thoughts of Bal Gangadhar Tilak; "Bharat Chhoro" will put in the forefront the ideology that Mahatma Gandhi epitomized. On similar lines, Indira Gandhi's "Garibi Hatao, Desh bachao" immortalized her.

The Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be remembered for a number of slogans and hashtags (#) coined and released through various social media handles. #MannkiBaat, #SwachBharatAbhiyaan, #MadeinIndia, #Atmnirbharbharat, #SkillIndia, #AzaadikaAmritmahotsav, #ParikshaPecharcha, #Examwarrior, #NaMo, #Vocalforlocal, #HarharModi, #GharGharModi, #Chaipecharcha are some top recall taglines Narendra Modi will be associated with.

So, is political communication/marketing all about generating top recall punchlines and delivering them with effervescence?

The current paper undertakes a thematic analysis of 111 social media posts of Narendra Modi between March 2021 to Oct 2021, from Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/narendramodi/>) and Twitter (<https://twitter.com/narendramodi>) handles using NVivo. On the political front, assembly elections in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Puducherry and Assam; Farmer's Protest and Covid were the key highlights of the timeframe.

The analysis is conducted on the transcriptions of 70 Facebook and Twitter video posts, out of which 42 Video posts are from Facebook and 28 Video posts are from Twitter handles of the political leader. In addition to these, 21 textual posts from Facebook and 20 textual posts from Twitter are also analyzed to arrive at the findings. The findings of the study are presented in the form of frequency tables, word clouds as well as hierarchy charts.

The methodology deployed for data collection is convenience sampling. In all a total of 1338.42 minutes of audio-visual content and 1000 words of textual content from the two social media handles of Narendra Modi have been analyzed. The paper draws from various studies on branding and applies them to political markets to develop a framework of political branding and its elements. An attempt has further been made to arrive at the branding attributes of the themes identified from the analysis of the content. The study aims to fulfill the following research objectives: (i) To identify the major themes and categories in the textual posts on Facebook and Twitter handles of Narendra Modi; (ii) To identify the major themes and categories in the video posts on Facebook and Twitter handles of

Narendra Modi; (iii) To outline the branding strategies deployed by the political actors; (iv) To identify the characteristics of social media posts that contribute to brand perception of political actors; (v) To understand the relationship between the themes, categories and the branding linkages of textual posts on Facebook and Twitter handles of Narendra Modi; (vi) To understand the relationship between the themes, categories and the branding linkages of video posts on Facebook and Twitter handles of Narendra Modi.

The findings, reflect health, personalization and religion as the dominant themes in terms of counts in the leader's Facebook textual posts. In terms of category wise weighted percentage, (i) content strategy, signified by the choice of persuasive verbs, (ii) nationalism, (iii) credibility, (iv) regional connect emerged as the key attributes. The sum of the weighted percentage from branding elements perspective revealed content strategy, followed by political product and collaborative stakeholder community as the dominant narrative for the timeframe under study.

In the thematic analysis of the transcriptions of Modi's Facebook video posts, content design/strategy dominates on all the three accounts- theme wise count, category wise weighted percentage and branding elements weighted percentage. Nationalism, personalization, issue ownership, regional connect, collaborative stakeholder community and political product offerings (i.e. policy, party and leader) again dominated the political discourse for the timeframe of the study.

On Twitter, in the textual posts segment, content design, governance followed by nationalism topped the theme wise counts. In terms of category wise weighted percentage, the thematic analysis points to development, finance/economy and governance as dominant trends. Credibility and political product were the leading branding elements for the segment.

Finally, the analysis of the transcriptions of the video posts on the leader's Twitter handle underscores, content design, nationalism and personalization as the dominant count wise themes. Category wise segmentation points to content strategy, issue ownership and nationalism as the key aspects. As for the branding elements in the segment, political product, content strategy, credibility and collaborative stakeholders' community are found to be the dominant trends.

Keywords: Narendra Modi, Political Branding, Facebook, Twitter, Political Communication, Political Marketing, Political Product, Thematic Analysis, BJP, social media.

I. INTRODUCTION

Emergence of Narendra Modi as the tech savvy selfie clicking leader of the India with a near-total lack of availability for the mainstream media is directly linked to the rise of social media handles as a tool of political communication. The political discourse unleashed by Narendra Modi on social media handles are crafted to cater to the young demographics of India. Sports, Bollywood and South Cinema, development, and religion are some of the dominant themes of the communication. Personalisation, segment marketing, policy mentions, mentions of the iconic historical figures and nationalism are some of the key ideas that the leader seems to be engaging with to achieve branding.

The qualitative study conducted by Pal, Chandra and Vydiswaran (2016) examines the three aspects of political discourse through

Twitter. Firstly, the paper looks at social media and electoral politics; secondly, it examines the role of social media in political communication; and finally, it deciphers the image politics in India. The paper claims that Twitter has the power to create, reinvent and rebrand political leaders. Research in 2010s established that the political aspirants who used social media during the election campaigns garnered more votes than those who did not. This marked a digression from the earlier claims that online campaigns motivate already existing and engaged supporter base. The study uses hand coded thematic classification of individual tweets to analyse @narendramodi tweets over four timeframes while identifying nine themes- BJP, Hindutva/Hinduism/Tradition, Elections, Youth, Development, Congress, Education, Sports and Policy. In terms of following behaviour of @narendramodi, majority of the

accounts being followed were that of laypersons, followed by BJP politicians, BJP workers and the news organisations and reporters. The study traces back the celebrity following/ endorsement strategy to the Bollywood actor Ajay Devgn hosting a session with the then Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi on Google + Hangout ensuring that #ModiHangout signals the earliest hashtags going viral in Modi - Social Media story. Bollywood celebrities such as Raveena Tandon, Preity Zinta, Amitabh Bachchan, A R Rahman; Southern cine stars such as Rajnikant, Vijay, Nagarjuna and Pawan Kalyan, technology magnate Bill Gates; Youth Icon Pranav Mistry and spiritual leaders such as Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and Baba Ramdev- all of these were the nodal points of Modi's Social Media circuit. Pal 2019 claims that the presence of celebrities in Modi's twitter posts changed the campaign dynamics during 2014 general elections. The research specifies three periods of engagement with celebrities: (i) mid to late 2013 (ii) 2 months prior to 2014 elections in March-May (iii) late 2014 i.e. six month after Modi came to power while examining 9040 tweets from twitter handle "@narendramodi". The study concludes that spiritual gurus such as Ramdev, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and Amritnandmayi were central to Modi's outreach plan. On similar lines, Baishya 2015 discusses the impact of Modi's selfies going viral in the same election and observes that Modi's selfies with his own mother and with Chetan Bhagat conveyed authenticity of his persona and made him appear accessible. The research points out that the impact of Modi's selfie strategy captured the imagination of ad makers as well. Baishya exemplifies the point citing Amul butter advertisement with a punchline "Ab ki Baar Bhajapa Sweekar". Selfie, claims the researcher, was used as an index of the real.

Pal, Chandra and Vydiswaran (2016) lists the self-descriptions adjectives used in the non-celebrity following in @narendramodi. The tally includes patriotic, proud, nationalist and Hindu. In terms of professional self-descriptions, engineer, professional, lawyer and entrepreneur emerged as the most commonly

used terms. Youth and Development remained the constant themes throughout the timeframe under analysis in the study. Rallies, addresses, political confrontations and political themes such as elections or issues associated with BJP or mention of the rival Congress – the study identifies all these trends on @narendramodi.

In 2009-2012 timeframe/ Phase I under study, the authors claim that hyperlinking to www.narendramodi.in and Facebook feed were interceded in twitter posts. The most retweeted messages during this phase, states the research paper, were dominated by development branding, nationalistic appeal, mention of the political rivals (e.g., #2facedCongress, A Raja or Shiela Dixit). The study claims that (i) Hindu themed tweets where Modi draws connection between friendship day and the mythological characters such as Krishna and Sudama, or questions subsidies to slaughterhouses (ii) reference to national iconic figures such as Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, Sukhdev and Swami Vivekanand and (iii) mainstream issues such as earnings in Swiss Banks were the most retweeted subjects. During the second timeframe analyzed by the research scholars in Pal, Chandra and Vydiswaran (2016), i.e., the phase that signals Modi's preparation for national leadership, foreign origins of Sonia Gandhi, naming of schemes after members of Gandhi family and referring to Rahul Gandhi as Rahul Baba were some important aspects. "Politics of tribute" (signaled by a social media shout out to Rajnikant, greetings to cricketing heroes, shout out to Arvind Kejriwal), "religion intertwined with filial piety" (signaled by addressing River Ganga as a mother, or release of his images with his mother) say the scholars marked the third timeframe (April 2014 to May 2014) under study. #SelfiewithModi emerged as the most popular hashtags during this phase.

Unlike the pre-election phases where issue based political tweets were the flavour of the day, post-election phases was conspicuous by absence of political tweets. Dominant news trends such as the Cricket World Cup ensured that cricket related popular culture references such as calling MS Dhoni "Captain Cool"

In the final timeframe under study, (Dec 2014 to Feb 2015) i.e. the post elections phase, Modi's focus also shifted to policy issues, though these do not figure strongly in the most retweeted list for the phase. It is worth mentioning that the paper acknowledges that reduction of direct media contact by Modi accompanied by engagement of Ogilvy and Mather as an image manager of the leader, caused the evolution of his social media profile on twitter that used sporadic hashtags to every post feeling like a well "crafted quote". The tweets appeal to the audience while flaming aspirations of development and technology, in addition to leveraging young demographics of the country. Thus, reciprocity by way of follow backs and the interactivity implied by number of posts (450 to 625) both establish that Twitter as a social media handle not only has the potential of creating a compelling alternate discourse but also the ability to craft great leaders.

II. Modi versus Indira versus Nehru

In a compelling comparison of Modi's communication strategy with the communication strategy of Nehru and Indira, Sen (2021) highlights the innovative use of social media elections in 2019 General Elections in India. The three WhatsApp groups constituted by the BJP covered over 1.2million social media volunteers, over 90,000 polling booths and digital media tools such as Facebook and Twitter. Accordingly, some researchers have dubbed 2019 Indian elections as the first WhatsApp elections of the country. Increased mobile phone penetration combined with the decreasing cost of mobile data worked in favour of BJP. The study compares the use of radio by Nehru to connect with the masses with the Modi's Mann Ki Baat. Citing W H Morris Jones, a political scientist who said: "Nehru rules the country of continental size and bewildering diversities with a microphone", the study points out that in the first three decades after India turned republic, the presence of daily newspapers was low and even in 1981, newspaper penetration was restricted to 22 per 1000. This made radio the dominant tool for

political communication and leaders such as Nehru and Lal Bahadur Shastri used it particularly to address the nation during the crisis moments. To communicate and push for Nehruvian developmentalism, mandatory screening of documentaries and news reels in cinema halls aided transmission of government views. Toeing the line of Indira's notion of using the press, radio and TV to educate masses; Chanda Committee critically evaluated all the three mediums and stated that All India Radio needed "psychological transformation". Particular of interest was the "Garibi Hatao" slogan coined during Indira Gandhi's regime and the study cites it as a case of conveying "complex ideas through catchy slogans" leading to Indira's landslide victory in 1971 elections.

The research also points to the prior studies that highlight the use of AIR, Doordarshan and Films Division as "propaganda instruments" and "peddlers of a personality cult." The study mentions Shah Commission's report that states that between Jan 1, 1976 to Jan 18 1977, the AIR news bulletins carried 192 items on Sanjay Gandhi alone. Also, worth mentioning here is the four-hour long documentary titled Indus Valley to Indira Gandhi that was commissioned in furtherance of personality centric political communication strategy. The study further claims that in addition to press censorship, the slogans communicating the Government's twenty-point programme dominated the political discourse originating from the power corridors of the country. Political communication during Indira's regime also attempted to portrayed Nehru as the "Skipper of Modern India" to take advantage of the popular sentiment attached with Cricket. Serious attempts to leverage creative streams such as Bollywood were also made to further the political agenda. Kishore Kumar's refusal to compose and sing songs lauding Twenty Point Programme led to AIR and Doordarshan ban on his songs. Popular film Bobby was screened on Doordarshan to ensure that masses do not attend the election rally of the opposition party.

The paper points to the "Modi's presidential style of politics", while calling Indira the

country's last "presidential prime minister", claiming that akin to Indira, BJP's communication strategy flows from Modi. Citing an instance where Indira told a Newsweek journalist that she is the issue during 1971 elections, the scholars claim that 2014 and 2019 elections gyrate around Modi.

The study further states that similar to Nehru, Modi uses the platform of Mann Ki Baat to communicate policy framework/decisions of the government. Through the radio platform, claims the study, Modi targets voters outside metro cities and use special occasions such as Independence Day address and Parliamentary Speeches on scraping of Article 370 to address the nation.

Incidentally Mann Ki Baat is telecasted on Doordarshan with a still image of the leader. Moreover, the first 50 episodes of Mann Ki Baat has been transcribed and published as a book with a title: "Mann Ki Baat- A Social Revolution on Radio."

As for the content broadcasted/telecasted/beamed across Mann Ki Baat, the study makes the following observations:

- (i) Term 'India' is the most mentioned term, followed by 'nation', 'water', 'young', 'youth', 'clean' and 'women'.
- (ii) Policy initiatives: Mention of Swachh Bharat, Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao, Jan Dhan Yojana and Atmanirbhar Bharat
- (iii) Clarification on contentious policy initiatives such as demonetization, GST and farmer's bill
- (iv) Self-referential, uses personalization by stating the address with "brothers and sisters" or by naming the individuals
- (v) Targets youth- Pariksha Pe Charcha

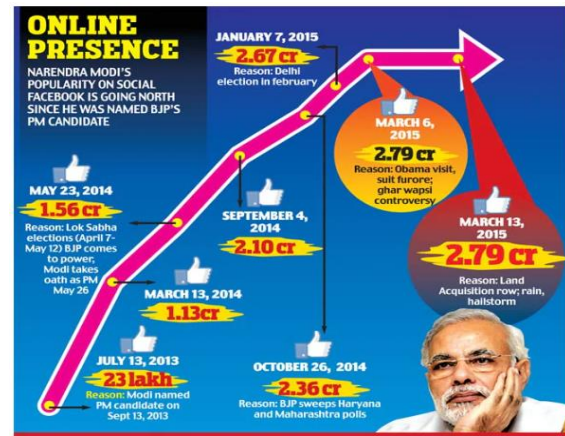


Fig.1. Surge of Modi: Ever since Narendra Modi was named as the prime ministerial candidate in September 2013, his popularity on Facebook has grown on various accounts (Image Source: India Today).

The study further states that the governments in power largely ensures positive coverage or by passes mainstream media by:

- (i) Deploying state media
- (ii) Bolstering partisan media outlets
- (iii) Denying government ads to media outlets critical of government
- (iv) Ingenious use of social media handles

Use of dramatic appearances too has been a dominant communication strategy. The study cites the pictures of Modi meditating in a cave near Kedarnath, or making a public appearance in military attire during his visits to the country's army bases. The leader's presence in the mainstream media is restricted to public interviews during election time. His interview to Bollywood actor Akshay Kumar just before 2019 elections and the episode of Man Vs Wild with Bear Grylls may be termed as his PR masterstrokes.

It is worth mentioning that since 2014, Modi's presence on social media handles is not only better funded but also much more streamlined. The paper claims that Modi has traditionally practiced centralized, one-way messaging with the narrative of "us versus them". Moreover, the political leader uses traditional media (radio

in specific) to complement his social media strategies.

Rao 2020 makes a valuable contribution to political communication by identifying dominant rhetorical themes by linking social media campaign of Narendra Modi to what she terms as the country's "delegative democracy" in the run up to 2019 General elections in India. While conducting a qualitative analysis of tweets by Narendra Modi, she claims that democracy under Prime Minister Modi is marked by maximal individualism of the leader accompanied by majoritarian politics. The paper claims that in such democracies show no commitment to inclusive representation. It is worth mentioning that by winning 303 out of 545 seats in Lok Sabha, BJP enhanced its vote share from 31.34% in 2014 to 39.5% in 2019. The study claims that the rise of BJP in 2019 elections has at its root the following factors:

- (i) Depleted organizational capacity of Congress
- (ii) Sluggish Economy
- (iii) Failure of Congress to inspire aspirational India
- (iv) Positioning of BJP as the party of future with Hindutva agenda

Drawing from the existing pool of knowledge, the study claims that India is an instance of "presidentialization of parliamentary politics".

Despite the backlash of demonetization on the economy, Modi managed to come back to power riding the waves of security deficit caused by Pulwama attack and its counter by way of the surgical strikes. Critiques of Modi, claims the study, accuse political leader of (i) "xenophobic nationalism", (ii) erosion of free press, (iii) interference in the judicial processes, (iv) compromised autonomous federal bodies such as Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and manipulation of official data. The researcher says that RSS volunteers played a major role in 2014 and 2019 elections. The political leader countered his criticism of mainstream media during Godhra riots by directly taking to Social Media handles and bypassing the age-old media platforms.

Moreover, the positioning of Brand Modi as a technocratic, development oriented, accessible over chai pe charcha (discussion over tea) and live streaming prime minister created a compelling alternate discourse. The study highlights the characteristics of delegative democracy as described the political scientist Guillermo O'Donnell and describes its features as:

- (i) Delegative Democracy rests on the premise that whoever wins an election is authorized to govern the way he/she find appropriate and is only constrained by his/her constitutional term and prevalent power equations
- (ii) Elected political leader is equivalent to the nation and is considered to be keeper of the country's economic, cultural and political interests
- (iii) Delegative democracy is majoritarian in nature and the majority formed authorizes the elected leader to be the interpreter of country's interest
- (iv) Delegative democracy is individualistic and is not premised on reasoned mutual exchange of information; personalistic leadership is the most significant aspect of Delegative Democracy as the highest order of individualism is the key strategy of keeping the channel of personal communication alive when in power
- (v) The researcher says that though delegative democracy is not authoritarian as elections are held and gives the pretense of institutional accountability, but "proper channels of deliberations" are missing.

The study underscores some interesting details about 2019 general elections such as 67% of the 800 million Indians exercising their right to vote, over 700mn mobile phones receiving tweets of Narendra Modi vis SMS and WhatsApp. Association of Billion Minds (ABM), a political consultancy company operated by Amit Shah serves as the content producer for the social media handles of the leader. During the timeframe (April – May, 2019) under study, Rahul tweeted 49 times

while Modi tweeted 364 times. At times Modi's three speeches per day were uploaded, in addition to 10 second to 6 minutes of sound bites from the full speeches. The study deploys Martin's methodology of qualitative political discourse analysis to draw following inferences:

(i) Modi's perpetual focus on himself corroborated by his pictures on the marketing communication tools such as billboards, digital media posters and other advertising

(ii) Political "Celebrization" by strategically deploying digital technology, social, mainstream and traditional media leading to a celebrity like persona of Modi

(iii) All pervasive presence of Modi as against absence of any other BJP leader in all communication

(iv) Personalization of national policies by centralizing and citing his own personal experiences as the basis of the "virtuous policy framework" of his government

(v) The political leader refers to himself in third person to eulogize his success while deprecating the opposition leader by stating that Rahul Gandhi has never experienced real India

(vi) The leader is "laser" focused on young voters. 45million young voters have been added to the election commission rolls since 2014 thereby taking the count of first-time voters to 84mn. The median age of voters in India is 28.

(vii) The responses to the tweets of Modi are replete with Hindu slogans/ chants such as Jai Shree Ram, Om Namah Shivay, Har Har Modi and Vande Matram.

(viii) Hindu identity overrode every other theme in the analysis of Rao 2020; Development, govt policies and the rhetoric in the narrative is predominantly Hindu; though no derogatory reference to any minority community #stopHindugenocide, #Reclaimtemples and #Hindusundersiege featured in the response to his posts; also, images of Modi's visit to Kedarnath topped the tally of number of responses by evoking 73984

responses; memes posted in response to his tweets depicted him as Ram, Shiva or Hanuman

(ix) In terms of pictorial content, the twitter posts of the leader highlight crowd size

(x) If Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas dominated the political discourse emerging from



Modi and BJP in 2014, "Ghar mein ghus kar mareng" promoted the idea of a strong Modi committed to protecting Indian against terrorists and earning Indians global respect.

Fig.2. Modi's Digital Footprint: In March 2020, Narendra Modi's digital presence reflected 53.5 million followers on Twitter and 44.73 million followers on Facebook. As on April 2022, the corresponding figures are 78.4 million followers on twitter and 46 million followers on Facebook. According to Quartz India the political leader is on his way to add 23 million people on Twitter in the next five years. The leader's tweets get an average of 1584retweets and over 800 likes. (Image Source: Indian Express)

III. Branding Elements

Credibility, brand heritage, brand associations, brand equity, digital footprint and engagement, content strategy (including narratives in message content and content designs), and goals of marketing communication are some factors that nurture and develop political brands (Jain & Ganesh, 2020; Pich & Newman, 2019; Marshment, 2018; Heiss, Schmuck & Matthes, 2018; Speed, Butler & Collins, 2015; Kalsnes, 2016; Holt, 2016). Political branding is an age-old concept. Mrs Indira Gandhi acquired the brand identity of being an "Iron Lady", Mr Vajpayee a "Dove" and Dr Manmohan Singh "Mr Clean". A Business Standard news report

dated July 2019 highlighted that Google and Facebook registered over Rs17crore political ad spending between February 2019 and July 2019 on account of the general elections 2019. Indicating the same trend, PTI cited Facebook’s ad library report to underscore that out of the top 10 political advertisers, including government pages, eight were related to the BJP and had spent nearly Rs2.3 crore on Facebook ads between Feb 7 and March 2, 2019.

to the BJP and spent nearly Rs2.3 crore on Facebook ads between Feb 7 and March 2, 2019. (Image Source: Scroll.in/PTI 2019)

The Indian Express Graphic dated August 2019 describing the political ad spent by the Government of India further reinstates the relevance of the current study. The Indian Express info graphic establishes that while government ad spend on declined from Rs 247.84 crores in 2014-2015 to 156.52 crores in 2018-2019, ad spend on the internet increased more than fourfold.

Though all the three-info graphics capture the trends in the pre and post-election time, branding is an ongoing process and goes beyond election driven media management efforts. Political leaders representing party brands leverage party logo, top-recall historical visuals, the personality traits (inclusive of the dialect, slogans and dressing styles), credibility of the political party, issue ownership and aspirations of the customers of the brand. The voters are the customers in a political market (Jain & Ganesh, 2020). Armed with data on consumer behaviour, social media handles of political leaders and political parties deploy multiple content and marketing strategies to sway public opinion in their favour. Political consent is crafted in the online environment ahead of the electoral outcomes.

The success of a political brand may be gauged by the distance between the performance of the leader and the expectations of the voters/customers from the brand (Jain & Ganesh, 2020). The conceptual framework of political branding is unique to the timeframes and the systems of governance. Political brands are intangible and therefore, exist in the minds of the political customers/voters (Pitch & Newman, 2020; Lindblad, 2019). In other words, perception or image plays an important role in the formation of a political brand and therefore the principles of human branding when applied to political marketing adds to the brand personality of a political entity (Lindblad, 2019; Speed, Butler & Collins 2015). Equally significant are the branding strategies deployed by political leaders in recent times. Though social media strategies of

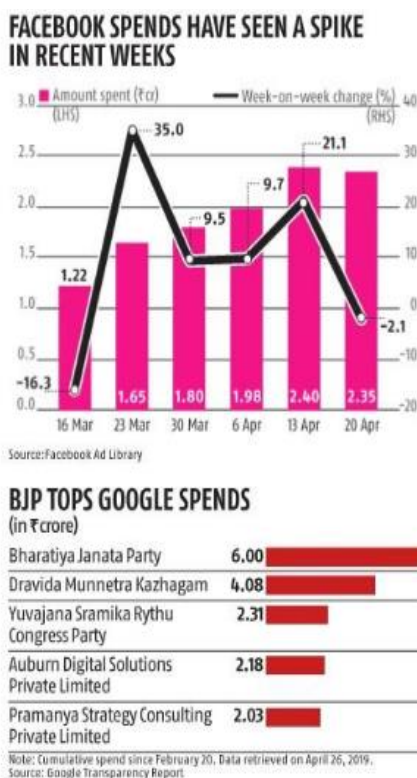


Fig.3. Google and Facebook witnessed over Rs 17 crore political ad spending between February 2019 and July 2019 on account of the Union elections. (Image Source: Business Standard, July 2019)

	A	B	C
1	Page name	Party	Amount
2	Bharat Ke Mann Ki Baat	BJP	10160240
3	Nation with NaMo	BJP supporting page	5224296
4	MyGov India	Central govt	2527349
5	Bharat Ke Mann Ki Baat	BJP	1847555
6	Nation with NaMo	BJP supporting page	1186079
7	MyGov India	Central govt	913786
8	Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)	BJP	660404
9	ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿಯುತ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ	Karnataka govt	620267
10	Naveen Patnaik	BJD	448672
11	Transforming India	Central govt	373801

Fig.4. Facebook’s Ad Library Report indicates that out of the top 10 political advertisers, including government pages, eight were related

political leaders and political parties are a dominant research trend, the larger brand dynamics of a political leader or party cannot be restricted to social media alone. The credibility of social media as a tool of political communication has eroded due to the Cambridge Analytica episode and the shift in political ad spent on OTT platforms was visible in the just concluded US elections. Therefore, just as we borrow concepts from corporate branding studies, an attempt is being made here to have an integrated approach (offline and online) to devise the conceptual framework of political branding, its elements and strategies (Holt, 2016)

We cull out the concept from the existing pool of knowledge by branding concepts from apolitical studies on branding to political markets and secondly it looks at interpreting political concepts from branding perspective.

SPIKE IN INTERNET, OUTDOOR ADS					
Media	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
TV	247.84	245.41	280.76	154.5	156.52
Internet	6.64	14.13	6.97	5.04	26.95
Print	390.89	510.63	463.38	631.84	382.89
Outdoor Publicity	81.27	118.51	186.37	208.54	147.50

* Data accessed under RTI Act ** Figures in Rs crore

Advertisements on the Internet, however, continue to remain a minuscule part of the total money spent on ads.

Fig.5. Government ad spend on TV declined from Rs 247.84 crores in 2014-2015 to 156.52 crores in 2018-2019, ad spend on the internet increased more than fourfold. Image Source: Indian Express 2019)

1. POLITICAL PRODUCT

There are three dimensions to a political product offering (i) Ideology, (ii) Person and (iii) Party (Speed, Butler & Collins, 2015). Ideology is best reflected in the manifestoes of the political parties and also draws from the official stance taken by the political leader/party in prior situations. Ideology also indicates how power is assigned and what institutions are responsible for enforcing the proposed political order (Speed et al, 2015). Person refers to the face of the party, often cited as the prime ministerial or chief ministerial candidate or president of the party

(Speed et al, 2015). Party refers to the organizational entity that aspires to achieve and stay in power. Party as well as the person comes with a brand history or a brand heritage (Speed et al, 2015).

The study’s approach to political branding

<p>Branding concepts applied to political markets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Brand heritage > Brand association > Brand equity > Content strategy > Party brands > Brand personality > Brand Value > Crowdculture 	<p>Political concepts interpreted from branding perspective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Issue Ownership > User Engagement > Credibility and its traits > Political Market Research > UserX creates Brand Heritage > Celebrity Endorsements > Personal- Political Brand Identity Appraisal Framework > Political Product= Party+leader+policy
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Fig.6. Approach to the current study Image Source: Researcher

2. CREDIBILITY AND BRAND VALUE

There are three dimensions to a political product offering (i) Ideology, (ii) Person and (iii) Party (Speed, Butler & Collins, 2015). Ideology is best reflected in the manifestoes of the political parties and also draws from the official stance taken by the political leader/party in prior situations. Ideology also indicates how power is assigned and what institutions are responsible for enforcing the proposed political order (Speed et al, 2015). Person refers to the face of the party, often cited as the prime ministerial or chief ministerial candidate or president of the party (Speed et al, 2015). Party refers to the organizational entity that aspires to achieve and stay in power. Party as well as the person comes with a brand history or a brand heritage (Speed et al, 2015).

Credibility- A Key Social Media Technique

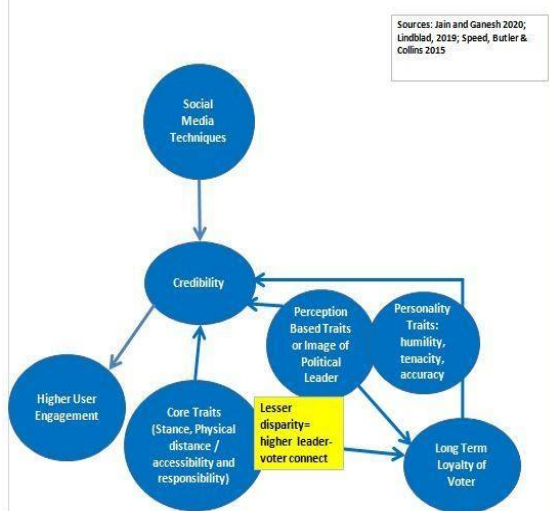


Fig.7. Credibility is one of the key branding strategies. Image Source: Researcher

Jain and Ganesh 2020 pin the success of a political leader or a political party to credibility and asserts that credibility is at the root of effectiveness of all social media techniques. The study examines the link between credibility and the image of a political leader. The paper describes credibility as a “continual development” and infers that the political information that is in sync with the priorities and aspirations of the voters (customers of a political market) capture their attention. Once the interest of the voters/ customer is generated, the same can be further leveraged in the interest of the political leader and political party by maximizing interaction between them. The scholars claim that credibility reduces the distance between the voters and political leaders (Jain & Ganesh, 2020). Over a period of time, the voters develop long term loyalty to the political leader/party and develop an emotional connect that further fortifies the credibility dimension. The paper claims that personality traits such as humility, tenacity and accuracy add to the credibility of the political leader and concludes that credibility attributes result in high user engagement.

Therefore, the realities being portrayed by the political leader must be in sync with the concerns of the intended audiences and portrayal inclusive of the interpretation of the portrayal is the essential ingredient of credibility. The research paper cites (i) value

systems, (ii) interpretation and context of individual voters and (iii) context in which the message is delivered as the three aspects of credibility. Greater accessibility and applicability translate into stronger credibility of a political leader (Jain & Ganesh, 2020). The study states that there are five sub elements to the credibility of a political leader: (i) Traits of the political leader, (ii) Image of political leader, (iii) Performity of political leader, (iv) Protection of political leader, (v) Reduction of distances between the political leader and voter.

3. ELEMENTS OF POLITICAL BRANDING

For the purposes of defining credibility, Jain & Ganesh, 2020 segregate traits of a political leader into (i) core/image traits (i.e., stance, physical distance and responsibility) and (ii) externalised/defence traits (i.e. anticipation and reduction of distances and engagement). Core traits are functional whereas external traits are perception based. When a concerted effort is made to reduce the disparity between the two traits, connection between the leader and the voters increases.



Fig.8. Multiple elements develop Political Brands Image Source: Researcher

3.1: BRAND PERSONALITY

Lees-Marshment 2008 draws an analogy between political brands and corporate brands, lists elements of political marketing, highlights different dimensions of political branding such as rebranding, brand heritage, brand perception and even prescribes a best practice guide to political branding. The chapter titled Political

branding of the book states that brands are intangible and psychological and include a logo, narrative, consistent set of images and three to five selling points. Political marketing, asserts Marshment, draws from elements such as strategy, goals, political market research, product development and communication. Successful brands act as simplifiers, are unique, clearly differentiated from competition, aspiration driven, embellished with positive vision, symbolise better internal values and are high on credibility and performity. The author cites varied literature and arrives at five principles of successful party branding. The principles are: (i) Market research, (ii) Brand design, (iii) Brand Implementation, (iv) Brand communication and management, (v) Brand delivery. Prescribing a best practicing guide to political branding, the author states that the public perception of political brands is the outcome of experience of the public as well as the communication about the brand. This in turn creates a brand heritage which is not easy to change (Lees-Marshment, 2018). Political entities to be seen as brands with a reputation must create a sense of identity with the political leader and party to cause a long-term trustworthy relationship.

A political brand with clear, coherent, differentiated, aspiration driven, symbolic of superior internal values, credible, competent, sincere and trustworthy is the outcome of effective political branding exercise (Lees-Marshment 2018). The author introduces the concept of brand equity and defines it as an attribute where brand consumers are aware of and loyal to the brand along with creating positive brand associations. Lindbald 2019 and Lees Marshment 2018 also create a narrative about effective political brand personality and use

terms such as sincere, exciting, competent, sophisticated, strong, open and empathetic to convey positive brand personality.

3.2: CROWDCULTURE

Another important contribution to the concept of branding has been made by Holt.D 2016, who advocates that cultural branding that

leverages crowd cultures is the “real locus of the digital power”. Drawing parallels with brands such as BMW, Axe, Chiptole, Old Spice and Dove, the author prescribes five steps to ensure effective branding. The exercise begins by mapping the cultural orthodoxy in the society followed by the identification of the cultural opportunity emerging from the orthodoxy. Further the new ideology should be diffused into the crowd culture being targeted for communication. The brands are then advised to continually innovate with the aim of leveraging cultural flashpoint. The research paper claims that the mega brands invested billions in branded content but A- List Celebrities stole the march and cornered larger social media subscriptions with little investment. Brands succeed when they break through in culture, and “crowdcultures” are a great vehicle for doing so. Brands, says the study, serve as prolific innovators. The paper cites the examples of reputed brands to demonstrate the arrival of crowd cultures in digital space. In the context of political branding the allied social media handles of political leaders and political parties create brand value for themselves through crowdculture.

3.3: PERSONAL POLITICAL BRAND IDENTITY

As for the personal political brands, Pich & Newman 2019 discusses how political brands are operationalised. The study claims that personal political brands projecting authentic characters and distinct identities are structured around tangible dimensions such as physical appearance, style, online and offline communication tools and actions. Intangible dimensions such as lived experiences, skills, values and personality characteristics are equally significant when it comes to personal political branding. The research paper makes a significant contribution by developing Personal Political Brand Identity Appraisal Framework- a theoretical model. The scholars of the study claim that personal branding as a strategy is grounded in the impressions management literature and draws from individuals actively managing a positive identity.

Candidates are the brand ambassadors of the corporate party brand, suggest the researchers, further prescribing that the corporate parties must strike a fine balance between party authority and individual authenticity. The study claims that political parties use priming, framing and agenda setting to develop persuasive messages thereby contributing to management of candidates' political brand image. The paper defines framing as a method of clearly communicating the outcome of policy in action, further adding that creation of favourable brand associations and desired imagery are crucial to political strategies. The paper asserts that effective brand communication impacts the voting intentions for the candidate and young voters understand symbolic communication created and expressed by the politicians and the government. Effective brand communication is linked to acceptance of and engagement with political brands (Pich & Newman, 2019). Trustworthy political brands can mobilize citizens and cause voter participation by communicating an array of signals ranging from intangible, symbolic, value-laden cues and tangible elements such as appearance of candidates by way of his/her apparel and style.

3.4: POLITICAL BRAND= POLITICAL PARTY + POLITICAL PARTY + POLICY/IDEOLOGY

Pich and Newman 2019 describe political branding as “the critical application of traditional branding concepts, theories and frameworks to politics in order to provide differentiation from political competitors and identification between citizens and political entities.”

Political parties, pressure groups, movements, politicians, candidates and campaigns can be conceptualised as political brands. Creating a differentiation from competition is the key goal of a political brand, which unlike a corporate brand, is a multidimensional and complex entity. A political brand comprises party, leader and policy.

As for the party leader as the face of a political brand credibility is a key contributor in

developing an authentic personal political brand image. A collaborative, multi stakeholder approach accompanied by a crisis management strategy facilitates the development of brand image from the perspective of voters. A relatable personality and humility are the personal traits consistent with a credible political brand image. In addition to these cultural antecedents of trust contribute to effective political brand communication. Effective political brand communication thrives in the environment of collaborative stakeholder communities.

Harvey and Branco 2019 suggest that the politicians, local party supporters and party members are equally important elements of political brands and emphasises the need to revisit concepts, theories and frameworks to include brand communities, brand architecture and event-based branding.

4. BRANDING STRATEGIES

4.1: INTERNAL ALIGNMENT

Issue ownership is yet another dimension of effective brand communication. Lindblad 2019 is set around Swedish general elections of 2018 and looks at brand identity from the perspectives of party leader profile positioning, negativity in branding and issue ownership. The study provides a conceptual framework of branding and states that political branding includes (i) wide strokes of political reputation; (ii) psychological interpretation of something i.e. something conveyed and something perceived; (iii) parties, policies and politicians. The researcher claims that parties must consider the preferences of their own members and design a brand strategy to achieve branding internally.

Branding strategies are not only unique to the systems of governance, but they must devise a method to effectively curtail the distance between voters and politicians. Social media platforms make political campaigns an ongoing process.

In context of political marketing, branding brings together communication, personalities and popular culture. Among the factors that

impact political branding are the voters' choice and analysis of political reputation and tone of the voice of politicians. The research paper looks

at both the ownership as well as symbolic representation of brands and states that good brands are simple, unique, reassuring, ambitious, credible and endowed with clear values. There are four dimensions to a political brand: (i) tangible- symbol, colour, and name; (ii) intangible- history, heritage and experience; (iii) attitude in branding; (iv) issue ownership.

4.2: PERSONALISATION

The research paper claims that the voters associate a political brand with the brand personality of the politician and this in turn leads to personalisation of a political brand (Lindblad, 2019). The political brand goes beyond addressing functionality and adds an emotional connect between the party and the voters. The study defines brand identity as the image a political party aspires to create and convey to the voters and describes brand image as what the voters view the party, politicians and the policies as. Accordingly, the researcher infers that the personality of a political party is the associative network of human attributes

that the voters perceive the party to possess. Political communication through social media makes political parties and politicians more accessible to the voters and creates a demand for personal and private information of politicians' lives to complement their public image. Social media contributes to political branding as it reveals the personalities of the politicians through sharing of pictures from both public and private spaces. Politicians use social media to convey the personality traits they want to be associated with and the political parties use social media to highlight the features they want the voters to notice and identify the political leader with. The politicians' personality conveyed through social media handles add to the brand personality of the political party he represents.

The study claims that brand positioning in context of political branding is aimed at creating an image that is (i) aligned to the

qualities that the voters are seeking in a party (ii) consistent with the previous actions of parties and politicians.

The research paper also discusses negative campaigning and gives directional and evaluative perspectives to the concept. In directional context, negative campaigning occurs when a party or a politician says something negative about their opponents, while in the evaluative context, negative campaigning entails making false statements about the opponents. The researcher describes anti branding as intentional actions aimed at communicating and spreading negative associations in forms of impressions, feelings, and thoughts about the opponents.

The fourth brand dimension that political branding comprises is issue ownership. Drawing from the issue ownership theory, the paper claims that political parties brand themselves through ownership of issues they have a reputation of handling with competence or the issues that they are associated with. The parties garner votes on the basis of the issues they highlight and are linked with.

Lindblad 2019 differentiates between the personalisation of a political party from personalisation of a political candidate. Personalisation of a candidate can achieve political branding for the party if in the social media post, the candidate is stated to hold a position in the party (for example a potential Prime Minister or a chief ministerial candidate) or if the city mentioned in the post is home of the candidate. In similar vein, television interviews can be personalised if they reveal private information about the candidate/politician or if a caption of an image describes a party leader as a person outside politics. Pictures that capture

the emotional side of a politician also achieve branding by humanizing the otherwise protocol driven public image. The research claims that positioning entails neutralising opponents' strength and leveraging opponents' weaknesses. To ensure statesman profiling of a politician, the social media post may include a leader's picture in front of the government

building dressed as a statesman or a video graphed speech bringing out the leadership qualities of the candidate.

Lindblad 2019 discovered that in the context of Facebook, the political parties with the highest share of politician-based posts had the least amount of posts in total and that political parties with prime ministerial candidates preferred statesman profiling over personalisation of their candidate. The study did not find a correlation between the mention of other parties in the posts and the party positioning outcomes.

Political parties with the highest share of posts about other parties also had the highest number of posts in total, implying that in such cases, the political parties had higher number of posts mentioning themselves in comparison to the posts mentioning other parties (Lindblad, 2019). The mention of other parties in the Facebook posts could be explained by the size of the political party. The inquiry also concluded that negative campaigning was most likely to be used by the political parties in power. Smaller parties concentrated on fewer political issues while the larger parties profiled and positioned themselves citing a larger variety of issues. The largest numbers of Facebook posts were from the party aspiring to hold the prime minister's office. The research paper reflected that the political parties posted more about the issues that the voters trusted them for.

4.3: CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT

There are a number of studies that attempt to underscore the branding strategies of political leaders and parties though the majority of them are set around elections. Pal 2019 claims that the presence of celebrities in Modi's twitter posts changed the campaign dynamics during 2014 general elections. The research specifies three periods of engagement with celebrities: (i) mid to late 2013 (ii) 2 months prior to 2014 elections in March-May (iii) late 2014 i.e., six months after Modi came to power while examining 9040 tweets from twitter handle "@narendramodi". The study concludes that spiritual gurus such as Ramdev, Sri Sri Ravi

Shankar and Amritnandmayi were central to Modi's outreach plan. On similar lines, Baishya 2015 discusses the impact of Modi's selfies going viral in the same election and observes that Modi's selfies with his own mother and with Chetan Bhagat conveyed authenticity of his persona and made him appear accessible. The research points out that the impact of Modi's selfie strategy captured the imagination of ad makers as well. Baishya exemplifies the point citing Amul butter advertisement with a punchline "Ab ki Baar Bhajapa Sweekar". Selfie, claims the researcher, was used as an index of the real.



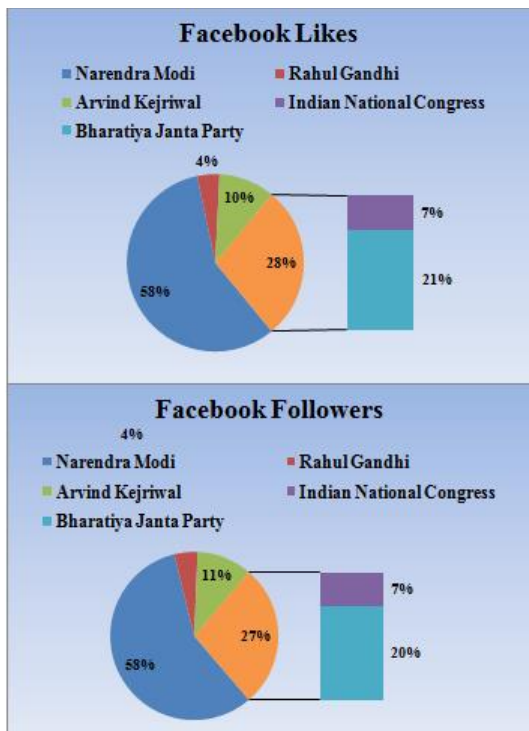
Fig.9. Branding efforts of BJP and Narendra Modi: Bollywood celebrities facilitated the arrival and sustenance of Brand Modi. Top left and top right image exemplify celebrity endorsement branding strategy; Bottom middle and Bottom right image signifies issue ownership branding strategy. Bottom left image is an example of accessibility and credibility branding elements. (Image Source: India Today, News Nation TV, Doordarshan National and DAVP).

4.4: HUMAN BRANDING

However, Speed, Butler & Collins (2015) brings in a fresh perspective to political branding by applying human branding to the political market and attempting to find connections between human and organizational brands. The research paper draws from the associative network model and synthesizes human branding theory and political marketing theory to gain new insights into the relationship between political actor and political offer. The study claims that policies, party and leadership are the three dimensions of the product offered in a political market and a political product comprises ideology, person and party. Ideology spelt in the manifestoes detail principles and policy proposed for political order. Person is

either the candidate or the political party’s leader. Party is the political organization that aspires to attain and retain power. Political brand heritage is the history of the brand in the minds of political customers or voters. The research scrutiny applies associative learning to political communication through policies that the party advocates, perceived brand heritage and the reputation of the party candidate or leader. Brand positioning says the research paper is an integrated and consistent set of activities aimed at causing a certain position in the minds of consumers. Further, the paper claims that brand authenticity and brand authority are the two factors impacting human brands in politics. Brand authenticity, according to Speed et al 2015, is the relationship between the person and the ideology or the proposed policy. Brand authority on the other hand is the authority of the human brand or the political leader in the political organization. That the slogans or other forms of political communication must be aligned to the political market’s desire is best exemplified by Barack Obama’s Yes, We Can campaign in the 2008 US elections.

4.5: SOCIAL MEDIA BRANDING



As on May 25 2020

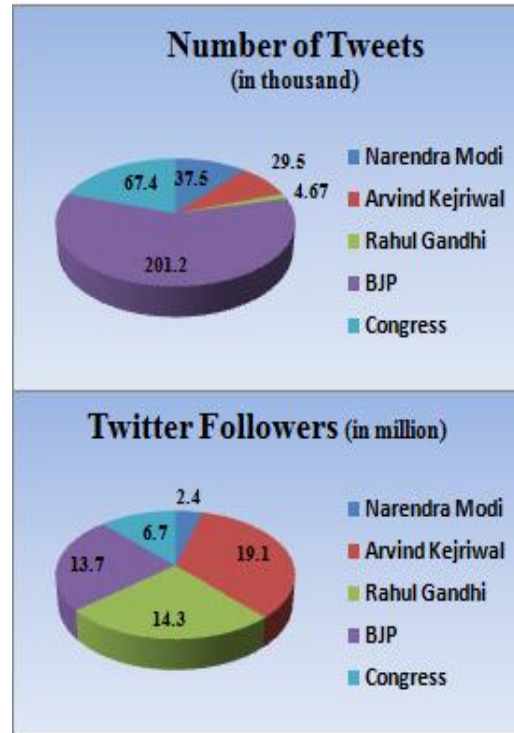


Fig.10. Digital footprint of five key political stake holders in India retrieved from Facebook and Twitter on May 25, 2020. (Image Source: Researcher).

According to Google Transparency Report on India, BJP is the leading advertiser with an ad spent of Rs 154, 543,500 (Since Feb 2019), next in the list is the Tamil Nadu based DMK at Rs 49,793,250 followed by the Indian National Congress at Rs 29, 312,000. Kumar V (2019)

asserts that social media marketing has emerged as the most effective tool of political marketing with 26% of the country’s population using social media platforms. Kumar 2019 lists celebrity endorsement, political advertising, canvassing through mobile phone as the prominent techniques used by the Indian political parties in 2019 General Elections. As per the Election Commission of India 2019 general elections were the most expensive elections in the world. A report published by the Internet and Mobile Association of India claims that the potential voters using Twitter are 4.3crore. The corresponding figures for Facebook and WhatsApp are 24.1 crore and 37.9 crore respectively. Kumar 2019 also states that social media war rooms of the two leading political

parties – BJP and Congress indulged in issue-based propaganda through social media expert volunteers calling them cyber warriors. NAMO App was countered by Digital Saathi App of Congress. The research paper cites a report of ADG Online, the agency responsible for managing Brand Yogi Adityanath (Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister), to highlight that nearly 33% of the first-time voters in the 2019 general elections were influenced by political communication through social media platforms. It is also observed that both BJP and Congress invested 5 to 7% of their total election budget on marketing through social media platforms. The study outlines news management, internal cohesion management, parallel campaign management, fund raising, communication, product, cost and distribution as the key functions of political marketing. The surge of social media as a tool of political marketing, says the research scholar, is because the traditional communication is regulated by the Election Commission of India. The cost of inserts in mainstream media is more expensive compared to social media releases. Competition research, direct marketing, internet marketing, market segmentation, and branding are some of the marketing techniques at work while designing marketing communication for political parties.

Facebook Footprint of Political Stakeholders In India			
Political Stakeholder	Date of Page Creation (FB)	Number of Followers	Number of Likes
Narendra Modi	5-May-2009	45,925,986	45,643,472
Rahul Gandhi	12-Apr-17	3,591,562	3,233,070
Arvind Kejriwal	13-Dec-12	8,556,178	8,130,660
Indian National Congress	20-Feb-13	5,773,389	5,570,802
Bharatiya Janta Party	30-May-10	16,018,033	16455930

Twitter Footprint of Political Stakeholders in India				
Political Stakeholder	Number of Tweets (in Thousands)	Followers (Million)	Number of Tweets (in Thousands)	Date of Joining
Narendra Modi	37.5	2.4	37.5	May-11
Arvind Kejriwal	29.5	19.1	29.5	Nov-11
Rahul Gandhi	4.67	14.3	4.67	Apr-15
BJP	201.2	13.7	201.2	Oct-10
Congress	67.4	6.7	67.4	Feb-13

Fig.11. A comparative view of the digital footprint of five key political stake holders in India retrieved from Facebook and Twitter on May 25, 2020. (Image Source: Researcher).

Among the modern strategies of political marketing used during 2019 General Elections in India, the research lists propaganda or the controversies directed at the rivals through social media platforms, and persuasive communication on policy agenda pushed through mobiles via tele calling or SMS functions. Social media platforms ensure better reach of political

messages though the credibility of these platforms is still far from acceptable levels.

Aynkoya, Calitz & Cullen 2015 describes social media as a “valuable repository of information” and an effective communication and distribution channel to understand and influence customer perception and behaviour. The research set in South Africa addresses the question regarding the components of a framework for implementation of social media marketing strategies in political context by evaluating demographics, degree of internet awareness and acumen for social media usage.

As for engaging through social media, Aynkoya et al 2015 defines it as a process of communicating and connecting with the target audience/viewers to garner their attention. Engagement involves understanding of the consumer behaviour and designing communication focused at the niche audience rather than generating a generic communication for mass consumption. Political marketing, state Aynkoya, Calitz & Cullen 2015, refers to aligning political offerings of the political party in the form of policies, leaders and issues with the dimensions the voters or political customers identify themselves with. Political parties deploy strategic marketing techniques as per the orientation of the electorate and create an appropriate identity reflected through its ideology, campaign or the candidate it chooses as the face of the party. Political communication is described as the flow of information from a political system via varied communication channels to the public or the electorate. In other words, after creating an identity as per the strategic marketing mechanisms, the political party designs a communication strategy to convey the said identity to the voters. Political communication

facilitates interaction between and development of association between the political system and the stakeholders.

Social Media technologies democratised flow of information paving way for bottom-up communication thereby empowering voters to express and enforce their political views (Aynkoya et al 2015). The dictatorial rules in Arab nations such as Tunisia, Egypt and Libya were overthrown through the political movements unleashed via social media platforms. The study establishes the role of digital communication media and technologies to enhance collective action by advancing relationships between public, politicians and political parties.

Digital media creates and sustains interpersonal networks between the public and political stakeholders beyond organized political formations. By generating social capital for the politicians and political parties, social media handles promise to deliver cognitive and emotional engagement, campaign mobilisation and an opportunity to direct political participation.

Social media handles such as Facebook and Twitter create a ripple effect connecting users, friends of users and friends of friends of users (Aynkoya et al 2015). Social movements in the Middle East and North America through Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are cases to the point. Studies reveal that the e ownership of Facebook is independent of the age, gender, social or economic factors. Aynkoya, Calitz & Cullen 2015 concedes that the effectiveness of social media as a tool for political marketing requires a systematic, strategic, tactical and operational approach.

Kapoor and Dwivedi 2015 cite a 2014 study of London School of Economics to announce "Obamafication of Indian political campaign". In a point wise comparison between Obama's 2008 campaign and Modi's 2014 campaign, the research highlights: (i) ByMo (Obama's brand name) is similar to NaMo (Modi's brand name); (ii) Obama is the first social media president of the United States while Modi is the first social media Prime Minister of India; (iii)

Just as in case of Obama's 2008 campaign, nearly 2 million volunteers signed up to join Citizens for Accountable Governance (CAG) group and ensured rich digital footprint of Modi (iv) Akin to Obama's dashboard campaign, Modi initiated 272 plus drive (v) the twitter handle of Modi releases content in regional languages. The move is perhaps aimed at leveraging the rise of vernacular in the online environment and striking a pan India connection. Interestingly, the official website of the Narendra Modi i.e. NarendraModi.in, publishes content in English, Hindi, Kannada, Telugu, Marathi, Manipuri, Urdu, Gujarati, Bengali, Malayalam, Tamil, Assamese and Odia.

Nalin Mehta 2019 reiterates that digital platforms are indispensable to the larger political mobilisation which he claims is the fallout of the rise of "digital data-consumption society". While the author decimates the concerns on digital divide pointing out that the internet users in India went up eight times between May 2014 and May 2019 with over 50% Google searches coming from non-metro cities of India. In another significant observation, the researcher claims that the tech giants such as Google, Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Share Chat and Tik Tok voluntarily agreed to a code of ethics proposed by the Election Commission of India during 2019 general elections in India. The prominent election specific initiatives of Facebook include candidate connect, share you voted and poll check programmes. However, the study claims that regulation of social media handles and aligning them to the electoral processes is a work in making.

Can social media platforms predict electoral outcomes? Jaidka et al (2018) looks at the possibility by attempting to understand the predictive power of social media platforms deploying volumetric, sentiment and social network approaches for three countries- Malaysia, India and Pakistan. The study finds that mining twitter to forecast election outcomes augurs well for India and Pakistan and sentiment approach signified by the positive sentiment on social media interface in

close proximity of elections signals higher vote share for a political party.

So how does any social media handle impact or contribute to political branding? Wei and Xu, 2019 states that during 2016 US Presidential elections tech giants Facebook and Google turned into hidden political agents. The research examines the effect of new media on politics in international and cross-cultural contexts, asserting that aspects such as cultural norms, political systems or systems of governance, and digital literacy must be factored in to draw accurate inferences on the impact of social media on political communication. Drawing from various public opinion and media theories including agenda setting, opinion leadership, two-step flow, third person effect, and hostile media effect, the paper tests the relevance of these theories in the new media environment and announces the emergence of Hybrid Media Systems powered by new power players (exemplified by FB and Google) in political communication.

4.6: USER ENGAGEMENT- BRANDING INDICATOR

Though restricting the study to the social media platform of Albania Socialist Party, Gambarov, Zenelaj and Belba (2015) identifies the scales to measure user engagement on Twitter and Facebook. The paper investigates how political parties use social media networks for political marketing. The researchers cite the online donation campaign initiated during the 2008 presidential campaign of Barack Obama was an innovative use of social networks in political campaigns. The initiative fetched Obama Marketer of the Year title. According to the paper, Twitter engagement is measured by (i) the follower number, (ii) talking trends and (iii) retweet numbers. Likewise, the scales for monitoring the Facebook are (i) page likes, (ii) comments and like numbers, (iii) monthly new friends, and (iv) monthly deleted friends.

Kushwaha (2016) lists the factors that motivated political parties to deploy new media as a tool of political communication. Among the new media communication tools of political parties are blogs, Mobile SMS texting, Flickr,

Webinar, Video Sharing site and Webbelow. The research claims that new media technologies offer anonymity, rich and diverse information, omnipresence, speed, ability to combine different kinds of recorded audio or video information and absence of regulatory authority intervention making it an ideal tool for political marketing.

Heiss, Schmuck & Matthes (2018) undertakes a quantitative content analysis to investigate the profile level and post level drivers of user engagement in political communication. The researchers define interaction as the degree of responsiveness includes profile outreach, profile activity, vote share and page type as the profile characteristics motivating user engagement. Similarly, they claim that deliberative elements (that entails linking posts with empirical evidence), tonality, emotions, humour are the post characteristics that influence user engagement. Stronger arguments have high persuasive powers causing higher user engagement whereas longer posts are more likely to contain sophisticated information. The research inquiry also claims that referring political competitors in the posts enhances user engagement. Negative tonality, emotions, humor and call for action increases user engagement.

Heiss, Knoll and Matthes 2019 investigate how Social Network Sites (SNS) invokes political engagement in adolescents. The study discusses the outcomes of intentional and incidental mode of exposure to political information. In an earlier study, Knoll, Matthes and Heiss (2018) highlighted the psychological processes that connect social media use (SMU) and political participation to the proposed social media Political Participation Model (SMPPM). The paper lists a set of interrelated processes as prerequisites in social media usage aimed at generating political participation. The inquiry cites goals systems perspective to propose that the cognitive constructs of goals and subgoals drive human behaviour, claiming that to be able to explain political participation, understanding of how citizens form, activate and implement participatory goals in a behavioural situation is a must. The SMPPM accounts for uses and gratifications (U&G) approach, appraisal

theory and a priming paradigm among others to predict conditions under which social media exposure fosters political participation. The research takes a holistic view of the social media usage and political participation taking in view multiple factors in all its complexity.

Brien, H. L., Arguello, J., & Capra, R. (2020) draws the concept of User Engagement (UE) from interactive information retrieval studies. Providing a conceptual definition of user engagement, the researchers describe it as an emotional, cognitive and behavioural investment a user makes in a digital application. User engagement is indicated by frequent page visits, longer time investments and more interactivity. The study uses Amazon

Mechanical Turk (M Turk) to find effects of interest on user engagement. It examines the effects of post tasks on user engagement. It focuses on self reported task perceptions such as complexity, difficulty and interest as well as search behaviours such as querying and bookmarking.

Using multi-level modelling to establish task topic effects on user engagement, the researcher concludes that the more search engine results page exploration and greater perceived task difficulty negatively impacts the engagement. On the other hand book marking pages have a positive effect on engagements. In an interactive information retrieval where tasks drive user engagement with information search systems, the research paper aligns self-reports and search behaviours while evaluating online search engagement.

Content Strategy	1. Narratives in message content	Jain and Ganesh, 2020; Kumar, 2019; Pich and Newman, 2019; Herts, Schumack & Mathers, 2018; Holt, 2016; Speed, Butler & Collins, 2015; Kalsare, 2016; Lee-Marshment, 2018
	2. Content designs	
	3. Propaganda or the controversies directed at the rivals through social media	
	4. Persuasive communication on policy agenda pushed through mobiles via telecalling or SMS functions	
	5. Political Communication on policies adopted and advocated, perceptions of the heritage of the party and reputation of the leader or candidate	
	6. Political Communication themes Collaborative stakeholder communities	
	7. Party Logo	
	8. Top recall historical visuals	
	9. Personality traits (demeanor, slogans and dressing style)	
	10. Parties use Priming, framing and agenda setting to develop persuasive messages	
	11. Selfies: images with camera actors and religion heads	
	12. Fielders Cinema TV actors with mass appeal	

Social Media Branding	(i) Political Campaigns are ongoing processes	Jain and Ganesh, 2020; Lindblad, 2019; Herts, Kasli and Mathers, 2019; Mehta, 2019; Wei & Xu, 2019; Herts, Schumack & Mathers, 2018; Jaidka, Ahmed, Shorie and Hilbert, 2018; Kanbuka, 2016; Gamboror, Zemelaj and Belba, 2015; Ayakoya, Calitz & Cullen, 2015; Kapoor & Drivedi, 2015; Baidhya, 2015
	(ii) Post Characteristics Drive Engagement (iii) Profile characteristics drive Engagement Social Media Political Participation Model	
User Engagement-A Branding Indicator	Stronger credibility results in higher User Engagement	Jain and Ganesh, 2020; Brien, Arguello & Capra, 2020

Political Product= political party + political leader = policy	1. Political Product offer	Lee-Marshment, 2018; Speed, Butler & Collins, 2015
	1.1 Ideology: Party Manifestos	
	1.2 Person: Face of the party, prime ministerial or chief ministerial candidate or party president	
	1.3 Party	
	2. Party Branding	
	2.1 Market Research	
	2.2 Brand Design	
	2.3 Brand Implementation	
	2.4 Brand Communication and Management	
	2.5 Brand Delivery	

Internal Alignment	Issue Ownership Analysis of political reputation within and outside the political organisation	Jain and Ganesh, 2020; Lindblad, 2019
Personalisation	1. Personal Political Brands with authentic characters distinct identities 1.1 Tangible dimensions: physical appearance, style, online and offline communication personality characteristics	Pich & Newman, 2019
Celebrity Endorsement	A- List Celebrities garner larger social media subscriptions	Pal, J., 2019; Kumar, 2019; Holt, 2016; Baidhya, 2015
Human Branding	Brand Authority and Brand authenticity impacts Human Brand in Politics	Lindblad, 2019; Speed, Butler & Collins, 2015
Crowdculture	Leveraging cultural branding crowd cultures as the "real locus of the digital power" Crowd cultures are prolific innovators	Holt, 2016

Fig.12. The existing pool of knowledge give multiple perspectives on Elements and Strategies of political branding. (Image Source: Researcher).

5. POLITICAL BRANDING: BEST PRACTICES

Political brands are driven by perception and image management is an important aspect of brand building. The perception of a political brand is the outcome of the communication about and voter experience caused by the said communication. Over a period of time, political parties and political leaders develop a certain listening among the electorate and this goodwill or brand equity that they create for themselves is not restricted to either a single media platform/ communication channel, nor is it limited to a single election. However, every election gives an opportunity to the political parties and leaders to enrich their brand equity and add value to their brand heritage. To build positive brand equity, the political parties and

Different Perspectives on Elements and Strategies of Political Branding		
Element of Political Branding	Sub elements of Political Branding	Sources
Brand Personality	1. Credibility	Jain and Ganesh, 2020; Pich and Newman, 2019; Lindblad, 2019; Lee-Marshment, 2018; Speed, Butler & Collins, 2015
	1.1 Traits of the political leader	
	1.2 Image of Political Leader	
	1.3 Performance of Political Leader	
	1.4 Protection of Political Leader	
	1.5 Reduction of distances between the political leader and voter	
	2. Brand associations/ Associative network model	
	2.1 Favourable brand associations and desired imagery signalled by intangible (symbolic, value laden cues) and tangible (candidate's appearance, apparel and style) communication	
	3. Brand heritage	
	4. Brand equity	
	5. Political branding includes:	
	5.1 wide strokes of political reputation	
	5.2 psychological interpretation of something i.e. something conveyed and something perceived	
	5.3 parties, policies and politicians	
6. Tangible: Symbol, Colour, Name		
7. Intangible: History, Heritage and experience		
8. Branding attitude		
8. Issue Ownership		

leaders must be differentiated, reassuring, credible, competent, sincere and trustworthy. Positive associations that political parties and leaders create win them voters' loyalties that may last lifetimes. Political leaders in specific must be perceived as visionaries, aspirational, distinctive and clean to carve a niche among the voters. Empathy and crisis management are some of the skills that the voters look for in their leaders. With 52% of the country's population in the under 25 age segment, brand communication targeting the emerging voters can prove to be the game changer in the times to come. Involving stakeholders by engaging them as volunteers or social media warriors and coining slogans such as "Har Har Modi, Ghar Ghar Modi" to create mass appeal paid rich dividends to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Branding public policy and demonstrating the commitment of the government machinery to the said policy will establish efficiency and clean governance reputation of the ruling political party. While BJP is calibrating its branding exercises to meet the expectations of the young voters and will need to constantly reinvent itself on the basis of the learning from consumers' behaviour, Congress must to begin with at least identify the attributes it aspires to be associated with. The labels "dynasty" and "corrupt" attached to Congress will take time and effort to wean off. Decontaminating the party brand is the task in hand for Congress. The party must first work on the perceptions internally before effectively communicating its brand value at the national and international levels. Brand communication and brand management within the political parties are essential for them to be perceived as viable and sustainable political options. Perceptions are not created in a day and therefore would require sustained efforts in this direction.

The literature accessed so far examines the role of social media in causing favourable electoral outcomes, but there seems to be little understanding of the message design or distribution strategies particularly when the content is audio visual in nature. The researcher feels the need to examine the political content posted on the Facebook and Twitter handles of

Narendra Modi to arrive at a common thematic denominator of the posts and find out in what way are these themes contributing to the Branding perceptions of the leader. With this in view the study addresses the following research questions:

1. Under what themes and categories can the textual posts on Facebook and Twitter handles of Narendra Modi be segmented?
2. Under what themes and categories can the video (transcripts) posts on Facebook and Twitter handles of Narendra Modi be segmented?
3. What strategies deployed by the political leaders and parties lead to effective branding?
4. What are the characteristics of political social media posts that achieve branding and yield favourable electoral outcomes?
5. What are the branding linkages of the themes and categories in the textual posts on Facebook and Twitter handles of Narendra Modi?
6. What are the branding linkages of the themes and categories in the transcripts of the video posts on Facebook and Twitter handles of Narendra Modi?

IV. Methodology

The following process was used to mine and analyze the data to arrive at the findings of the study. In the first step, the textual posts and the video links of the posts were harvested for the specified timeframe and inputted into an excel sheet for each of the two social media handles. Thereafter, the video content was converted into transcriptions and the transcriptions were collated into a single document for Facebook and Twitter separately. Similarly, the textual posts were converted into a single document for each of the two social media handles. The files were imported into the NVivo for analysis.

Word frequency along with weighted percentage was outputted for all the four segments separately- Facebook Text Posts;

Facebook Video Posts, Twitter Text Posts and Twitter Video Posts. Face Validity was established through consensus-based approach. Unidimensional Cronbach reliability was established.

The outputted data was cleaned for numeric and special characters and manually coded into themes and categories. The themes and categories were further mapped to branding elements identified and depicted in the developed constructs to arrive at the findings.

Verbs, particularly action verbs such as talk, create, reach, ensure, contribute to the narrative and therefore, are taken under content design theme, categorized under content design and linked to Content Strategy branding element. 'Greetings' and 'congratulations' too reflect a specific kind of message design and are therefore, themed and categorized as content design, leading to branding element Content Strategy.

Regional scripts are themed under regional connect, categorized under election and therefore, linked to Political Product (party+ leader+ policy/ ideology) brand element.

References to individuals as a unit or as a collective noun such as people or even references to people, public, birthday are themed under Personalisation and linked to the branding element Collaborative Stakeholder Community.

Mention of self or political opponents such as Modi, didi, ysjagan, brothers, sisters, friends, mother, daughters, women are themed and categorized under Personalization and the branding element linked to this is Political Product.

On similar lines, any reference to youth or a noun associated with youth such as examination (Pariksha Pe Charcha) are themed and categorized under Youth and linked to Collaborative Stakeholder Community branding element.

Any reference to religion, whether as a noun or verb such as Shri, Ram, Hanuman, Meenakshi, blessings, Jayanti (i.e. anniversary), temple, God (i.e. Bhagwan), amman, darshan, pray are

themed and categorized as Religion and associated to Crowdculture. Where the reference to Religion is limited to a segment (e.g. Pundit) branding element associated with it is Collaborative Stakeholder community.

Farmers, crops, fish, energy, climate, healthcare, agriculture, Corona, Covid, Oxygen, vaccination all clubbed under theme Issue Ownership and category and linked to Issue Ownership branding element.

Terms such as UPSC, double engine government, press, press release, minister, rajya, sabha are themed and Categorized under Governance and linked to brand element Credibility. Minister, mission and ayushman themed and categorized as Governance but are linked to branding element Political Product.

#TeamIndia, countrymen (i.e. deshwasiy), India, bharat, nation, Indian is themed and categorized under Nationalism and linked to brand element Credibility.

Kamla, Harris, Potus, Biden themed under Global Approach and categorized under Global Approach and linked to brand element Credibility/ Celebrity endorsement.

India, Indian, Nation, bhagat, bharat are themed and categorized under Nationalism and linked to branding element Credibility. Mention of Lata is also themed under theme and category of Personalisation and is linked to brand element Celebrity Endorsement.

Bangbandhu, Bengal, Andhra, Assam, Odhisha, Puducherry, campaign linked to Regional Connect theme, categorized as Elections and linked to Political Product branding element.

HTTP, aspx, connectivity themed under Development, categorized under Issue Ownership or Development and linked to branding element Political Product.

Business, Cement, CEOs, sector, bank, commerce, economic themed under Finance/ Economy, categorized under Issue Ownership and linked to Political Product branding element. Where these elements seem like a segment such as CEOs, sector, the theme and category Finance/ Economy is linked to

Branding element Collaborative Stakeholder Community.

Reference to timeframes such as today, tomorrow, yesterday, September, 25th, 27th and 28th- all are themed under Topicality and categorized under Content Design and linked to branding element Content Strategy.

Saradara Modi Date of the Post #	Date of the Post	Posts	https://www.facebook.com/saradaramodi/	Number of Likes	Number of Comments	Number of Shares
13.9.2021	27.3.2021	4.2M Views + At the Jeshoreshwar Kali Temple + Video with Music +		366K	12K	11K
13.9.2021	27.3.2021	1.3M Views + Duration 0:19 Feeling Blessed after praying at the Jeshoreshwar Kali Temple + Video with Chanting +		381K	17K	16K

Link - <https://www.facebook.com/narendramodi/videos/2887507814894368>

Sr. No. 40

Sh. Narendra Modi ji -

Listening to your plans and vision and looking at your excitement, my enthusiasm has also grown even more. Friends, today is also the birth anniversary of two great sons of the country, Bharat Ratna Shri Jayaprakash Narayan ji and Bharat Ratna Shri Nanaji Deshmukh. Both these great personalities had an important role in giving direction to post-independence India. Their philosophy of life to bring about important changes in the nation by taking everyone along and with everybody's efforts continues to inspire us. I bow to Jayaprakash Narayan ji and Nanaji Deshmukh ji and pay my tributes.

Friends, it is the unwavering belief in India's potential that India of the 21st century is moving forward and undertaking reforms. India's strength is not less than the major countries of the world. It is the responsibility of our government to remove every obstacle which comes in front of this potential and, therefore, the government is leaving no stone unturned. There has never been such a decisive government in India as it is today. The major reforms in the space sector and space tech in India are examples of this. I once again congratulate all of you for the formation of the Indian Space Association and convey my best wishes.

Step 3: The transcriptions of Video posts and the textual posts are fed into NVivo to get thematic analysis output. (Fig 15-16)

Step 4: The themes emerging from the NVivo are coded and categorized manually. (Fig 17)

Step 5: The themes and categories are mapped to the branding elements drawn from the literature review. (Fig 18) (Image Source: Researcher).

V. Findings

Theme	Facebook Text	Facebook Video	Twitter Text	Twitter Video
	1. Health 2. Personalization 3. Religion	1. Content Strategy 2. Personalization 3. Nationalism	1. Content Design 2. Governance 3. Nationalism	1. Content Design 2. Nationalism 3. Personalization
Category	1. Content Strategy 2. Nationalism 3. Credibility 4. Regional Connect	1. Content Design 2. Regional Connect 3. Issue Ownership	1. Development 2. Finance/economy 3. Governance	1. Content Design 2. Issue Ownership 3. Nationalism
Branding elements	1. Content Strategy 2. Political Product 3. Collaborative Stakeholder Community	1. Content Strategy 2. Collaborative Stakeholder Community 3. Political Product	1. Credibility 2. Political Product	1. Political Product 2. Content Strategy 3. Credibility 4. Collaborative stakeholder community

Fig.19. Findings@glance

I. Modi Facebook Thematic Depiction (Combined)

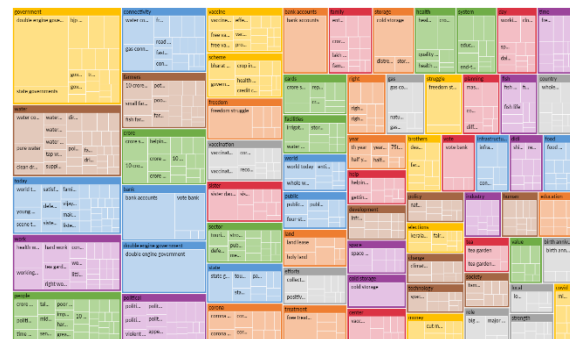


Fig.20. NVivo Output on the Modi's combined (Text plus Videos) Facebook posts

Word/Frequency	Count	Theme	Category	Branding Element
1: birth	4	Finance/Economy	Issue Ownership	
2: bank accounts	18	Finance/Economy	Issue Ownership	
3: birth anniversary	42	Nationalism/Nationalism	Nationalism	
4: mathematics	12	Personalization	Collaborative Stakeholder Community	
5: cards	18	Finance/Economy	Issue Ownership	
6: center	14	Governance	Brand Personality	
7: change	14	Electors	Political Product	
8: cold storage	8	Logistics/Development	Development	
9: connectivity	39	Content/Health/Development	Issue Ownership	
10: corona	30	Health	Issue Ownership	
11: country	26	Nationalism	Credibility	
12: covid	21	Content/Health	Issue Ownership	
13: come	31	Finance/Economy	Issue Ownership	
14: day	16	Finance/Economy	Issue Ownership	
17: development	16	Development	Issue Ownership	
18: lab	16	Mention of the election/Opinion	Political Product	
19: should argue + government	11	Governance	Brand Personality	
20: education	11	Development	Political Product	
25: efforts	11	National/Political/Personalization	Political Product	Collaborative Stakeholder Community

Word	Length	Count	Weighted Percentage (%)	Similar Words	Themes	Categories	Branding Elements
people	5	532	0.53	people	Personalization	Personalization	Collaborative Stakeholder Community
government	10	408	0.52	governance, government, governing, government, governments	Governance	Governance	Credibility
hempal	5	198	0.50	countries, country	Regional Connect	Electors	Political Product
country	7	387	0.67	countries, country	Nationalism	Nationalism	Credibility
dit	4	358	0.81	dit	Electors	Electors	Political Product
friends	7	348	0.78	friend, friendly, friends	Personalization	Personalization	Collaborative Stakeholder Community
today	5	302	0.68	today	Topicality	Content Design	Content Strategy
india	5	308	0.68	india, india, india	Nationalism	Nationalism	Credibility
time	4	214	0.42	time, timely, times	Topicality	Topicality	Content Strategy
works	5	265	0.60	work, worked, working, works	Content Design	Content Design	Content Strategy
visitors	7	162	0.59	visit, visitors, visit	Personalization	Personalization	Collaborative Stakeholder Community
coming	6	249	0.56	come, comes, coming	Content Design	Content Design	Content Strategy
vaccines	6	143	0.55	vaccines, vaccinated, vaccinating, vaccination, vaccinations, vaccine, vaccine	Health	Health	Issue Ownership
years	5	242	0.55	year, years, years'	Topicality	Content Design	Content Strategy
every	5	221	0.50	every	Content Design	Content Design	Content Strategy

Fig.13-18. Step 1: Harvested Data inputted into an excel sheet. (Fig 13)

Step 2: Videos posted on the Facebook and Twitter handles were transcribed. (Fig 14)

II. Thematic Analysis Modi-Facebook: Text Posts

1. Health, Personalization and Religion were the dominant themes, followed by Global approach, Issue Ownership and Nationalism from the Counts perspective.

2. In terms of Category wise Weighted Percentage, Content Design followed by Nationalism, Credibility and Regional Connect were the dominant categories. Global Approach

and Topicality were the least significant categories.

3. The analysis of Branding linkages in terms of weighted percentage depicted Content Strategy, followed by Political Product and Collaborative stakeholders Community as the top three branding attributes.

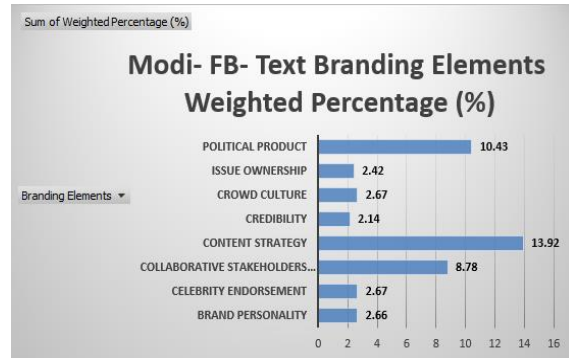


Fig.21-23. Graphic depictions of the findings on Modi’s text posts

Among the top word highlights in the word cloud on Facebook textual analysis of the leader reflected Oxygen and Vaccine, given the pandemic. The word Modi and Biden are in line both with the statistical findings of NVivo and inferences drawn from the prior pool of knowledge. Health, personalization and religion statistically emerged as the dominant themes – reaffirming the reflections in the word cloud.

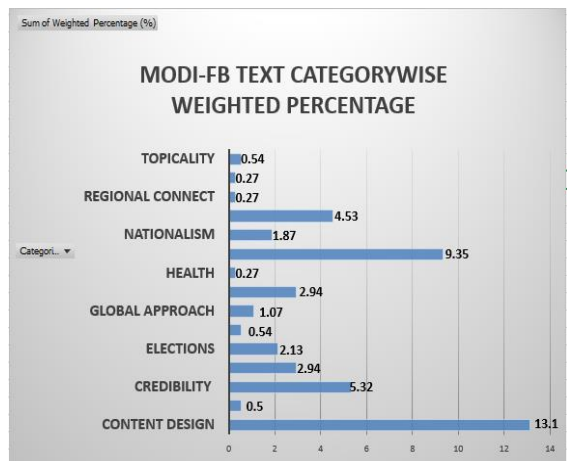
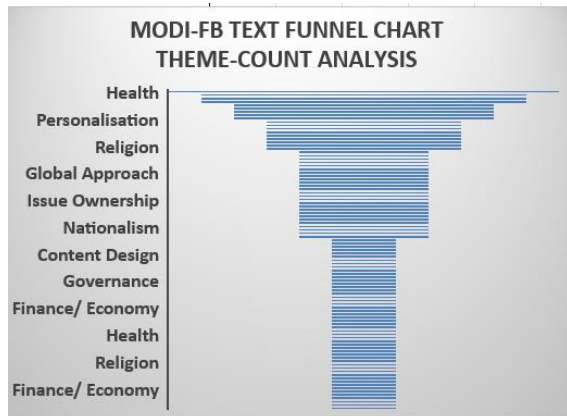


Fig.24. Word Cloud depiction of the findings on Modi’s text posts

III. Thematic Analysis Modi-Facebook: Video Posts

1. Once again Content Strategy, Personalization and Nationalism dominated in terms of theme wise count followed by governance and regional connect.

2. Content design topped the category wise weighted percentage followed by regional

connect and issue ownership in the Facebook Video Transcripts for the period

3. As for the weighted percentage by Branding elements of the Facebook Video transcripts, Content Strategy followed by Collaborative Stakeholders' Community and Political Product were the highlights of analysis.

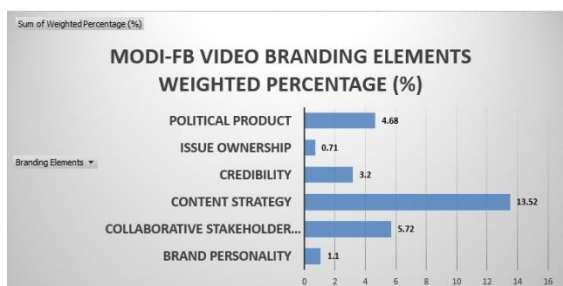
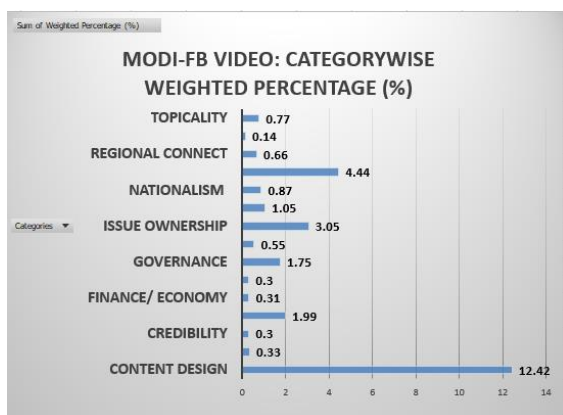
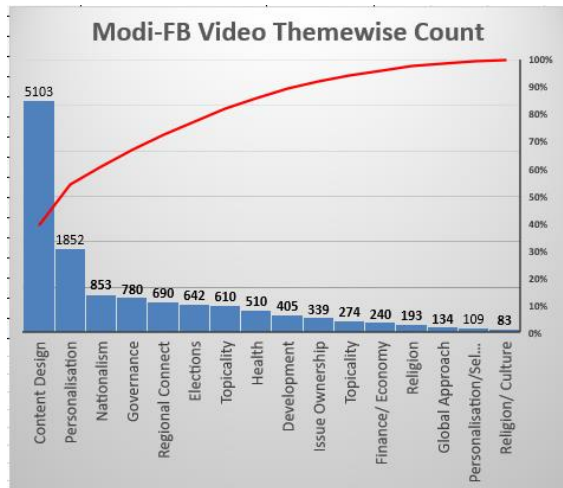


Fig.25-27. Graphic depiction of the findings on Modi’s Facebook video posts

Among the top word highlights in the word cloud on Facebook video transcripts analysis of the leader are country and India. The finding is reaffirmed in the statistically drawn Bar charts. Bengal, didi were the reflection of state elections in the timeframe under study. The

dominance of people, brothers, sisters, friends-all reflect personalization, once again in tandem with statistical findings of the study. Statistically Content Strategy, Personalization and Nationalism emerged as the dominant theme of the video transcripts.



Fig.28. Word Cloud depiction of the findings on Modi’s Facebook video posts

IV. Thematic Analysis Modi-Twitter: Text Posts

The textual coding from Twitter was limited to 200 rows of the data leveraged from NVivo to avoid data contamination on account of verbs.

1. The count wise themes of the textual posts on Modi’s Twitter handle for the period Content Design, Governance followed by Nationalism were at the top of the tally.
2. In terms of weighted percentage of the textual content on Modi's Twitter handle, Development followed by finance/ economy and governance emerged as the dominated categories
3. The weighted percentage of branding elements in the textual posts of Modi’s Twitter handle Credibility closely followed by Political Product dominated the analytical outcomes.

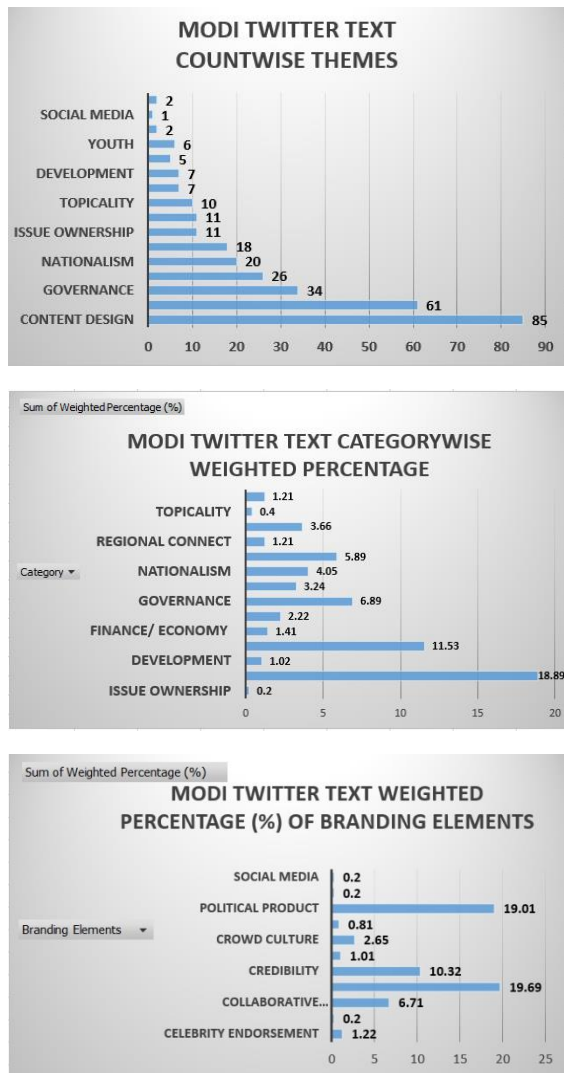


Fig.29-31. Graphic depiction of the findings on Modi's Twitter text posts

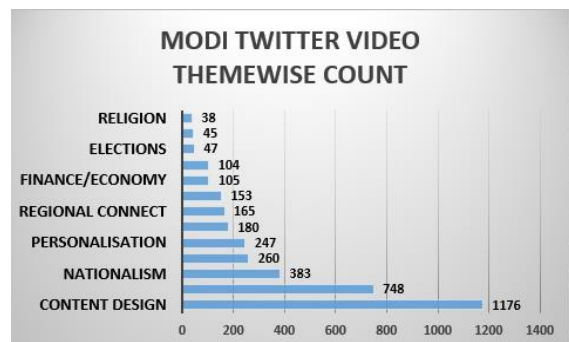
Among the top word highlights in the word cloud on Twitter textual posts of the leader are India, nation. pray, people, Shri, pandit. The finding is reaffirmed in the statistically drawn bar charts to the extent that Nationalism emerges among the top three themes. Odisha and Puducherry in the word cloud reflect the state election timeframe under study.



Fig. 32. Word Cloud depiction of the findings on Modi's Twitter text posts

V. Thematic Analysis Modi-Twitter: Video Posts

1. Content design, nationalism and personalisation were the top three themes in terms of count in the thematic analysis output of the Video transcripts on the leader's handle
2. Category wise weighted percentage tally was dominated by content design, issue ownership and nationalism in Modi's Twitter Video posts
3. Lastly, the political product was the dominant branding element in terms of weighted percentage followed by content strategy, credibility and collaborative stakeholders' community.



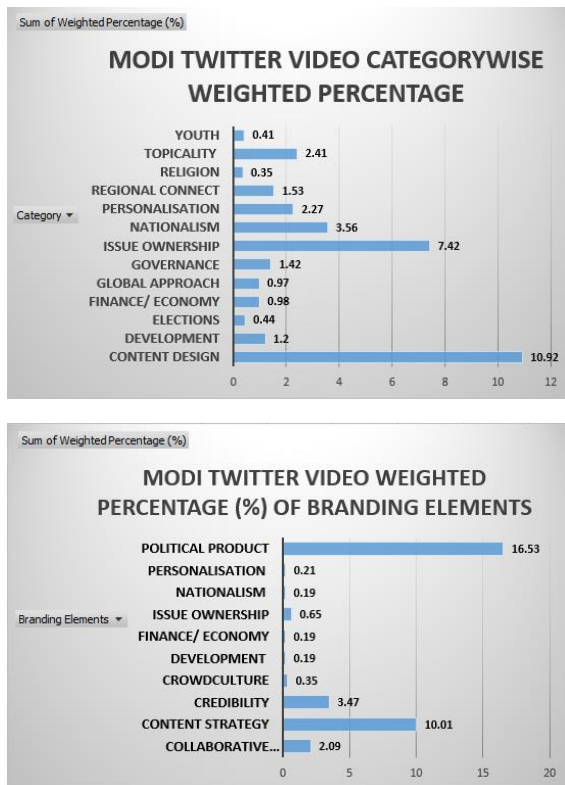


Fig.33-35. Graphic depiction of the findings on Modi's Twitter Video Posts



Fig.36. Word Cloud depiction of the findings on Modi's Twitter Video Posts

Among the top word highlights in the word cloud on Twitter video transcript posts of the leader are country, India, today, farmers, friends and world. The finding is reaffirmed in the statistically drawn bar charts to the extent that Nationalism emerges among the top three themes. Friends signifies Personalisation, which also features among the top three themes in the bar charts. The word cloud depiction

further adds to the inference of the statistical findings to the extent that farmers, agriculture, health, digital campaign, and development all signifying issue ownership also emerge as the dominant theme.

VI. CONCLUSION

The rise of Narendra Modi overlaps with the rise of social media, making it imperative to study the role of social media in the growth story of the leader who, equipped with the RSS background, emerged from the shadows of Godhra riots to emerge as the custodian of "Hindu pride". Moreover, Narendra Modi is also one of the most portent case study if one wished to find out the role of social media in political branding. The paper sets out to do just that. The concept of political branding has acquired a new dimension with social media handles making it an ongoing process, taking the narrative of analysis beyond election times.

Most research studies on political communication through social media pertain to pre-election timeframe when the electoral budgets make political branding dependent on a specific political event. The need was felt to understand political branding, its elements and marketing strategies in totality, which is what this research paper achieves. It borrows from diverse studies including the ones that test the applicability of corporate branding principles to political communication to understand the outcomes the communication has had for the political brand. It also attempts to understand how interactivity and user-engagement can contribute to political branding. Few studies on social media use and political participation have gone beyond the analysing the count of followers and retweets, to examine the message design and content aspects of the political posts. Even the social media studies that examine the content dimension only focus on the behavioural aspects of the users, thereby leaving a gap in the perception or branding outcomes of social media posts for politicians/parties. The researches on political branding are set in different systems of political governance and one finds little proof that the

same inferences will be replicated in India. Hence, a reference has been made to branding strategies deployed by the Indian politicians to win over voters -the customers in a political market.

In a nut shell the study integrates concepts of corporate branding, political marketing, social media theories and psychological perception-based definitions to draw an outline of political branding and applies them to the most relevant political leader of our times- Narendra Modi.

The future studies may map the definitions developed in this study to the political narratives emerging from different media platforms and empirically test their relevance to branding outcomes for various political parties and political leaders. The findings of the study may be timeframe specific and to that extent must be tested in different timeframes to stay relevant. Moreover, an analysis of the pictorial content may also prove to be useful in the future studies.

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