

Abstract

Political Communication has undergone many changes with the evolution of internet and social media. This study was conducted with the objective to understand and examine the use of Facebook by Indian national political parties for the purpose of political communication. It was conducted to compare the Facebook strategy of Indian national political parties with their use of Facebook pages in practice and to find differences between them. Social media has provided opportunity of open interactions and dialogue between the people and the politicians. However, is this potential being utilized by the Indian national political parties in their Facebook pages? The answers to the questions were studied by comparing the data collected from the field study to know the strategy of political communication of Indian national political parties in their Facebook pages with the data regarding the actual engagement of the parties which was collected from their Facebook pages. The field study was done using the interviews with the senior leaders and social media strategists of the Indian national political parties. The data from the Facebook pages of Indian national political parties was collected by using the Graph API of the Facebook and applications, websites such as Facepager, fb_loader and the manual analysis of the pages. On comparing the data it was found that though there are similarities in the strategy and the real engagement of the Indian national political parties in their Facebook pages regarding the issues like how to share data that can influence the population, how to make content catchy and how to reach out a large population, the part of the strategy of Indian national political parties to use Facebook and social media to strengthen the democratic values of open and free discussions between the people and the parties was not manifested in actual practice.

Keywords: social media, political parties, political communication, democracy, Facebook