

## USE OF DATA IN ELECTION

*Ankit Srivastava*  
*Independent Researcher*  
*ankit1985sri@gmail.com*

---

### *Abstract*

*Data in elections has become much more common in recent years and political parties, campaigns and the media now use an array of data sources to drive their strategy, messaging and voting choices. The purpose of this research paper is to analyze the data use in elections, what the potential and downsides are of this, and what that means for the democratic process. Elections are a core aspect of democratic politics and the power of data to influence the results has never been more relevant. The paper covers the nuances of data use in elections, from campaign finance to voter outreach, to policymaking and electoral integrity. It even solves the moral and legal issues around data use.*

*Keywords: Data, Election, US Election. India general elección, social media, US Elección*

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Elections are the foundation of any democracy functioning, and the data that guides elections has gained more influence in recent years. Data in elections cover all the bases – from voter lists and turnout to campaign tactics and election results. In this article, we would like to discuss how data is currently being used in elections, what advantages and disadvantages could result from such use, and what this may mean for the integrity and fairness of elections. Digital media and data-driven analysis is now at the core of every election campaign [1]. Party and candidate campaigns are now resorting to many digital technologies and methods for reaching voters – from social media, online ads, predictive modeling and more. [2] These technologies help campaigns collect and digest colossal amounts of data on voting behavior, preferences, and demographics, then customize messaging and outreach campaigns. [3] [2]

### **II. METHODOLOGY**

The research paper will conduct a comprehensive literature review to synthesize existing research on the use of data in election campaigns.

The analysis will focus on the following key areas:

- The different ways in which data and analytics are being used in election campaigns, including targeted advertising, voter outreach, and campaign strategy.
- The potential benefits and risks of using data in elections, including issues of privacy,

bias, and manipulation.

- The role of policy and regulation in governing the use of data in elections.

The paper will draw on a range of academic sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, and reports from think tanks and other research organizations.

The paper will also consider perspectives from diverse stakeholders, including political campaigns, technology companies, and civil society organizations.

### **III. LEVERAGING DATA FOR ELECTION CAMPAIGNS**

Data analytics in election campaigns have also become more common as political parties and candidates attempt to tailor the message and tactics to a particular voter type [1]. That's created powerful campaign tools based on data gathered from all sources, such as social media, voter rolls, and consumer data. [3] These tools help campaigns reach voters with targeted messaging, reallocate resources, and find supporters. These data-driven approaches have also been used to bring voters and turnout higher. Data is available for campaigns to pinpoint and rally support, as well as to target messaging and outreach to communities. But whether such practices actually make the electoral process fair or just in the long run is still open to debate, as they're accused of abuses and the redistribution of wealth.

### **IV. USE OF DATA IN INDIAN ELECTION**

Data analytics for campaign purposes isn't an original development either — as shown by the increasing literature on the subject. During the 2014 general election in India, for instance, political parties had adopted data-driven methods of voter profiling and message segmentation. Our study Pathways of money: insights from the 2017 Gujarat assembly election will tell us how candidates in India avoid formal limits of spending and use data to help them run more effectively. [5] It's also the case that the 2017 Dutch national election campaign demonstrated that data-based targeting could be applied successfully in a proportional representation model that at first appears unfit for this. [6] In the article "Influence of NaMo App on Twitter," the party's involvement in digital media and social media activation allowed for direct contact with voters and collect information on voter behavior and preferences.

India's political parties are collecting caste information and targeting voters. The paper From Caste Census to Caste Mapping: The Politics of Enumeration in India is about the history and impact of caste-based data collection in India, and the way it can cement existing social hierarchies and marginalize certain groups. Although it might be a useful tool in elections, employing these kinds of techniques comes with important moral and privacy issues.

In the paper Influence of NaMo App on Twitter, we explore how the Bharatiya Janata Party tapped into data and social media especially Twitter to engage with its supporters and propagate their platform in the 2014 Indian general election. Similarly, the research paper Data Analytics to Analyze Trending Issues in Indonesian Election 2019 is a paper that investigates

how new technologies such as big data analytics can be applied to campaign strategy and enhance campaign activities efficiency and effectiveness. [3] These studies are demonstrative of the promise of data and social media for election campaigns, but they're also problematic ethically. In its paper "From Caste Census to Caste Mapping: The Politics of Enumeration in India," the paper points out the dangers of data gathering and categorization for issues as sensitive as caste and the ways in which it can serve to consolidate the social hierarchies and marginalized groups.

## **V. USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN ELECTIONS**

Besides data analysis, social media is also becoming a major part of political campaigning. This paper "Social Media and Political Marketing A Case Study of Malaysia During the 2018 General Election" analyzes how social media is used in political advertising and political campaigns and how it helps voters understand party policies and get involved. But the use of social media and analytics in elections is not a free ride. App, Instagram, Twitter and Facebook in 2019 Indian General Elections" analyses the social media activity of Indian political parties like BJP, Congress and AAP. These parties, the research reported, have spent a lot of money expanding their social media presence and using these platforms to reach voters directly. Further, the paper Trend Alert: A Cross-Platform Organization Manipulated Twitter Trends in the Indian General Election" gives the glimpse of social media abuse, as it discovered that a cross-platform organization has also manipulated Twitter trends in the Indian general election in 2019.

In the study "Social Media and Political Marketing A Case Study of Malaysia During the 2018 General Election", it is described how social media affects the behavior of voters such as giving them access to party policies and getting them to actively engage with them. But, also warns the paper, elections based on social media could intensify inequalities and biases, disenfranchising certain voters. This article "Political Tweets and Mainstream News Impact in India: A Mixed Methods Investigation into Political O" analyses how social media works alongside the traditional media and how politicians can use social media to send a message. Also, the "Influence of NaMo App on Twitter" Paper talks about social media impact in the BJP's 2014 campaign as BJP had heavily engaged with digital media and social media campaign to directly engage supporters. [7]

This article "Social Media and Political Marketing A Case Study of Malaysia During the 2018 General Election" also considers the role of social media in influencing voting behavior by suggesting that social media could be used to make voters aware of party policies and to get engaged with them, but also warns that it might also increase existing inequalities and prejudices [8]. This paper titled Political Tweets and Mainstream News Impact in India: A Mixed Methods Investigation into Political O likewise states that social media can increase politicians' message as it means they can appeal to a much bigger crowd via social media even though they are not as prominent in traditional media.

## **VI. USE OF DATA AND SOCIAL MEDIA IN US ELECTION AND AROUND THE WORLD**

Campaigning and social media are like never before in terms of the data driven, campaigning for the 2020 US presidential election. Our study "Political Communities on Twitter: Case Study of the 2022 French Presidential Election" shows how social media can affect politics and how online communities can be used to impact election results. The then US president Donald Trump was a prodigious social media user (he used Twitter) to connect with supporters and convey his message. This paper – Political Tweets and Mainstream News Impact in India: A Mixed Methods Investigation into Political O – compares social media with mainstream media and how politicians use social media to spread their message.

Data and social media are not just used for elections in India. Political Communities on Twitter: Case Study of the 2022 French Presidential Election" gives an idea about the power of social media to influence politics, and how online communities can help in the election. In the paper "Social Media and Political Marketing A Case Study of Malaysia During the 2018 General Election", they also analyzed the effect of social media on the voters' behavior saying that social media will enable voters to understand party policies and better engage in the election, however, it should also be warned that social media will amplify current inequalities and biases.

Elections using data analytics have dragged their feet at the high level of controversy and deliberation during recent elections such as the US presidential elections in 2016 and 2020. Predicting the 2020 US Presidential Election with Twitter" discusses the possibilities of making predictions about elections based on social media data, in this case, Twitter, and how they could be superior to conventional polling. But the author also recognizes that these methods are based on a finite set of assumptions, and should be checked and researched further.

Data and analytics in presidential campaigns have increased in the US since the 2008 election season. As documented in their paper "Political Communities on Twitter: Case Study of the 2022 French Presidential Election", during the 2008 U.S. presidential election, the "relatively new paradigm" was seen in which most of the political campaign occurred via social networks such as Facebook and Twitter. The pattern remained and deepened in the 2012 election, when Obama's data-savvy campaign was celebrated as a winner for focusing and reaching voters.

## **VII. CHALLENGE AND ETHICS**

Even the use of data for elections poses some ethical and security issues. Data leaks, voter suppression and false news could all undermine the democratic process. Additionally, data-driven tactics could make inequalities and biases worse and disadvantaged groups of voters less eligible for election [3] [4] [2] Yet elections are also thorny matters of ethics and privacy with the use of data and social media. In this essay "From Caste Census to Caste Mapping: The Politics of Enumeration in India", caste based data collection in India is discussed and interpreted with respect to how it can reinforce social hierarchies and marginalize some groups. Trend Alert: A Cross-Platform Organization Manipulated Twitter Trends in the Indian

General Election" Paper also shows how a cross-platform organization may use social media for manipulating twitter trends in the Indian general election of 2019.

### **VIII. LIMITATION OF DATA USAGE**

These limitations and dangers with implementing data in elections are also laid out in the paper "The role of digital marketing in political campaigns", where they report that Americans do not, as yet, know how to make a self-governed decision about whether their finances, health, geo-location, race or ethnicity information is suitable for digital ad profiling. Data and analytics used in election campaigns can offer useful information and create the potential for more personalized and targeted communications – but also comes with ethical and privacy issues. The article From Caste Census to Caste Mapping: The Politics of Enumeration in India makes clear the pitfalls of data collection and classification, especially when sensitive issues like caste are concerned, and how such processes can serve to perpetuate social hierarchies and exclude people.

### **IX. GOVERNMENT REGULATION ON USE OF DATA AND SOCIAL MEDIA IN ELECTIONS**

With more and more election campaigns relying on data and analytics, we need policies and stakeholders to work towards strong ethics codes and laws to make sure these tools are responsible and transparently used.

Governments and regulatory bodies should consider implementing policies and regulations that:

- Mandate transparency and public accountability around the collection, use, and storage of voter data;
- Prohibit the use of certain data-driven tactics, such as micro-targeting based on sensitive personal characteristics, that could be used to manipulate or disenfranchise voters;
- Require social media platforms and digital ad providers to implement stronger safeguards against the spread of misinformation and the manipulation of political discourse.

Ultimately, the responsible and ethical use of data in election campaigns is essential for preserving the integrity of the democratic process and ensuring that all citizens have an equal voice in the political process. [6] [3] [2]

### **X. DISCUSSION**

The use of data and social media in election campaigns is a complex and multifaceted issue, with both potential benefits and significant risks. On the one hand, social media platforms can help politicians and parties reach a wider audience, understand voter sentiments, and engage more effectively with supporters. [9]

## XI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the use of data and social media in elections is a complex and multifaceted issue, with both potential benefits and significant risks. Overall, the use of data and social media in elections is a complex and multifaceted issue, with both potential benefits and significant risks. The upshot is that using data and analytics during an election campaign can be both a powerful, but also potentially very dangerous, process. While the evidence points towards how data-driven approaches can be very useful in understanding voters' preferences and behavior, there are ethical issues that should be addressed too – privacy, bias and manipulation being the major ones. Data and social media as election use cases are inextricably and deeply ambivalently dangerous. New technologies such as big data analytics might provide information about how to plan campaigns and how to better deliver political messaging, but these new tools pose important ethical issues around privacy, prejudice and manipulation. After all, it is only by being thoughtful and responsible with data and social media during elections that we are able to take account of all of the issues and adhere to democracy and its principles.

## REFERENCES

1. P. J. Chen and P. J. Smith, "Adoption and Use of Digital Media in Election Campaigns: Australia, Canada and New Zealand Compared," Feb. 09, 2010, Deakin University. doi: 10.5130/pcr.v1i1.1249.
2. J. Chester and K. Montgomery, "The role of digital marketing in political campaigns," Dec. 31, 2017, Alexander von Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society. doi: 10.14763/2017.4.773.
3. F. Arifin et al., "Data Analytics to Examine Trending Topics for Indonesian Election 2019," Nov. 28, 2019. doi: 10.35314/isi.v4i2.984.
4. R. T. Mercuri and P. G. Neumann, "The risks of election believability (or lack thereof)," May 24, 2021, Association for Computing Machinery. doi: 10.1145/3461464.
5. A. Kumar, S. Banerjee, and S. Dhar, "Pathways of money: insights from the 2017 Gujarat assembly election," Oct. 19, 2020, Routledge. doi: 10.1080/14736489.2020.1855012.
6. T. Dobber, D. Trilling, N. Helberger, and C. H. de Vreese, "Two crates of beer and 40 pizzas: the adoption of innovative political behavioural targeting techniques," Dec. 31, 2017, Alexander von Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society. doi: 10.14763/2017.4.777.
7. S. Sharma, S. Caur, Hitkul, and P. Kumaraguru, "Influence of NaMo App on Twitter," Jan. 01, 2021, Cornell University. doi: 10.48550/arxiv.2109.01936.
8. S. A. Rahim, "4. Social Media and Political Marketing A Case Study of Malaysia During the 2018 General Election," Jan. 01, 2018. doi: 10.2991/icosaps-18.2018.4.
9. S. Chakraborty, P. Chandra, J. Pal, and D. M. Romero, "Political Tweets and Mainstream News Impact in India: A Mixed Methods Investigation into Political Outreach," in Author eBooks, 2018.