

Role and Impact of Meme and GIF on voters behaviour : A Case Study About LPU Students

Dr. Meenakshi¹ & Dr. Kuldeep²

¹Assistant Professor, Lovely Professional university, Phagwara.

²Assistant Professor, Lovely Professional university, Phagwara.

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ABSTRACT: *Advent of internet facilities us with virally-transmitted social symbol or cultural idea with description with photograph or doctored image with the intention to create humour. In the present paper researcher tried to understand the scenario of meme and gif and how these influence the decision making behaviour of voters. The data was collected from young LPU voters. The findings showed that meme and gif do influence the behaviour of voters and also the modes of traditional media.*

Key Words: *Internet, Meme, Gif, Traditional Media, Decision making*

Introduction

Major development in media came during industrial period in Europe. Invention of printing press gave to communication to reach masses through books and newspaper. Newspaper reader steadily rose during 19th century, aided by invention of high speed rotary steam printing press and rail connectivity. This came as boom for recruiting new newspaper reader and increasing circulation. Increase in newspaper readership aided in spreading information and development in technology. Post first World War saw increase technology invention and further growth in print media. The term mass media during early 20 century was confined only to print media. After development of radio and telegram, radio replaced print media. First real development in radio came during major wars. They are prime source of military transmission. Commercial radio came only after First World War. It became important medium of news, information and entertainment for the masses.

After radio came television. In addition to audio it also has visual representation. It was available in after World War First only as a experimental form. But marked its real presence after Second World War. Television first came in black and white representation in United States of America and in Great Britain. It was mostly a luxury commodity, enjoyed by select few. And in late 1960's and early 1970's saw colour television. News were transmitted and broadcast with more visual than never before. Gulf war was first major war, which was broadcasted live on national television across America. With investment in Research and Development, saw newer, better forms of television and its facilities. High Definition, better quality video, Satellite TV. Tremendous development took place in last 20 years. Improvement in television and its facilities helped news media industry to tapped into latest technology to use features such as: on live phone conversation, live coverages, breaking latest news.

Biggest contribution within short period of time came with invention of internet. Internet is better form of interactive communication medium, where network of interconnected computers work. Internet and World Wide Web together created a mammoth network of human connection through email, data, file transfer, data storage and innumerable other internet based task. In late 20th century with improved living condition and development of technology made internet more accessible to the world population. Today more than half the world population has access to internet. According to statistic published by Miniwatts Marketing Group, 55.1% of the population has access to the internet. Today with advent of better technology and computer, internet have taken in become mainstay of mass media. Mass media today is flooded on internet. Nearly all the information, video, research paper, journal, books are accessible on internet. Even radio listening is available on internet.

MEME AND GIF: VISUAL INTERFACE

Advent of internet saw different computer language getting invented. Meme according to internet dictionaries is A virally-transmitted social symbol or cultural idea with description with photograph or doctored image with the intention to create humour. Meme tend to have small movement among ardent internet user, with fan following but they are usually short lived depending on situation and current news.

Meme related to different internet cultures and subcultures created on different websites such as 4chan, memegify.com and reddit.

The word meme was first described by biologist and scientist Richard Dawkin in his book

The selfish Gene in 1976. Internet meme comes under general meme categorisation. Internet meme was first proposed by Mike Godwin in June 1993 in the issue of WIRED.

GIF: A GIF is a computer file that is used on the internet for sending images, especially moving images. GIF is an abbreviation for 'Graphic Interchange Format'.

MEME in politics :

Meme in India social media is a new phenomenon. United States election campaign saw countless Meme, gif and visual language in a race to malign opposition candidate or draw attention to its own candidates. American election saw huge mammoth of resource and energy devoted by presidential candidate in campaigning online. And meme and gif is one of the most important part of the campaign. It has disrupted election campaign like never before. Meme and gif have gone mainstream. Current US president Donald Trump during his election campaign frequently tweeted fan meme, gif and short videos.

Demand for meme content has raked in election in countries like France, Austria and in India. Meme and gif may be in early stages of its growth. But they have played huge role in minuscule time. Content creator are on demand during election campaign. In age of fast food and busy life, a meme with apt captioned can say thousands words and appropriate time than opinion piece written by expert or strategist.

When the photo with caption, 'Only Rahul Gandhi has been launched more times than ISRO satellite', started doing round in the internet. People started associating then Indian National Congress general secretary as someone weak and fool. He became synonymous with Pappu, Hindi term for someone small boy, who is innocent and not matured enough. Internet is inundated with meme featuring now Indian National Congress President as Pappu. It also started affecting his political stature and persona. Even in mainstream media did not take him seriously. Coming from Nehru-Gandhi family, heading most decorated party which saw leader such as MK Gandhi, Nehru, Sardar Patel, Indira Gandhi and countless other freedom fighter it was something unwelcoming. But the narrative of Rahul Gandhi as Pappu, started either by his political rival or from his own doing started impacting his political ambition in Lok Sabha and in State assemblies.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Facebook page Rajnikanth vs CID jokes was once home to meme and gif degrading Congress President Rahul Gandhi. Now it devotes more resources on creating original content. Other Facebook pages like Laughing Colours, which has nearly 30 million likes has hyper nationalistic leaning. Sometimes taking jibe on minorities issue and lauding personalities. In such a technological driven society meme and gif have huge scope, especially for Indian election where cheap internet connectivity.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The connection between media and politics has long been of curiosity to scholars. Political impacts of media publicity were examined throughout media, contexts, and results, such because the outcomes of poor newspaper insurance plan on readers' experience of trust and political effectiveness the impact of viewing community tv news on opinion exchange in the course of a presidential crusade and the connection between being attentive to speak radio and voting conduct of relevance to the current be trained, editorial cartoons that combine text and image to make political statements or arguments have also been examined for their influence on viewers' opinions. As enjoyment-oriented content material most likely located within the opinion portion of newspapers, cartoons can be regarded part of newspaper editorials, which have been demonstrated to furnish cuing knowledge for voters as they make their voting decisions (RK Laxman political cool animated film 1990). Although some scholarship on this subject has argued for restrained or minimal effects of media, others counter that discovered minimal results may be the effect of dimension error (Bartels, 1993), no longer indicative of the true relationship between media consumption and citizens' political decisions, opinions, and behaviours. Nellie Bowles did extensive research on Memes in American political discourse. He seeks to find answer to how two big political parties in United States uses political Meme to advance their political agenda. Republican party have been very effective in doing so. Nellie Bowles, The Mainstreaming of Political Memes Online, Feb,14,2018, New York Times. Reviews of media and politics are approached from a type of views. Some reports involving media content material and politics make use of natural media effects theories, that are theories about the approaches where media content material and use form individuals' views of the sector. For example, cultivation is an extended-time period media results idea that has probably been applied to tv; it states that the more an individual watches tv, the

more they consider social truth fits what they see on tv (Gerbner, 1998). Different reports concerning media and politics look at how media facilitate opinion formation and citizen conversation. Studies on this field endorse that partisan media can support the attitudes or beliefs of totally partisan residents to make them much more extreme, which in flip contributes to a polarized public (e.G.Levendusky, 2013). Polarization in a democracy can inhibit dialogue amongst citizens, and so is in most cases considered a negative outcome of viewing media through political communique students. This study have been conducted to understand growing impact of internet visual languages, how much internet penetrates in your lives, increasing use of internet in political campaign and these objectives

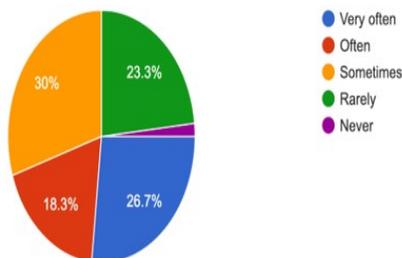
1. To know the role of meme and gif on drawing voters attention.
2. To study the gif and meme in influence decision making.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

survey method was used by the researcher to collect the data.Data was collected from 60 respondent of Lovely professional university,from different age group both from male and female through random sample survey from 15 February to 20 February.

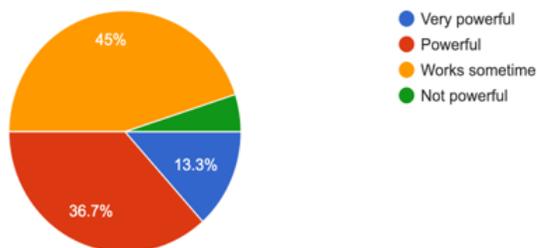
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

How often do you came across political meme and gif on social media?
60 responses



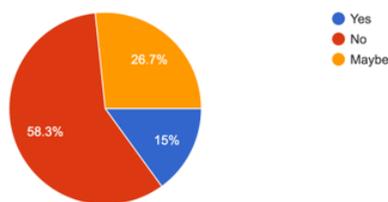
The data above shows that overall 98.3% people seen Gif or meme on social media, which give us a impression of about meme and gif are available in social media, Surprisingly only 1.7 % have never seen meme or gif in their social media feed.

How powerful do you think meme and gif is in drawing attention to political problem or social issue
60 responses



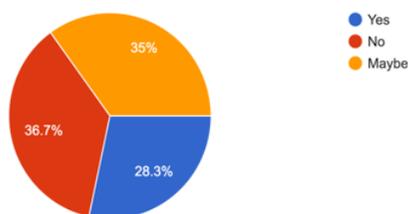
Data above shows that importance of gif and meme to get theattention towards social issues and help to address social and political issue of the society. Data shows that total 45% respondents believe partially with the idea. They think only sometime it will help in drawing attention to social malice,36.7% believe that meme and gif will draw attention to it, but in less powerful than the former,13.3% population strong subscribe to the idea that meme and gif will draw attention to the social or political causes whereas only 5% believe meme and gif will not do anything to bring attention to the social malice so according to the data more than 95% respondent agreed that gif and meme help to address the social and political issue.

social media visual language like meme and gif influence electoral (political) decision making
60 responses



Data above shows only 15% of the respondent believe social media meme and gif influence their electoral decision making. Overwhelming 58% believe meme and gif does not affect their electoral decision making. While 26.7% are not sure and believe they think maybe it does and maybe it doesn't. Meme and social media role in brainwashing or influence uneducated and ill-informed is controversial subject. Use of negative campaign in US Presidential election centred around bombarding voter with ill-informed, distorted and incomplete information about the opposition. Now with the presence of social media and abundance of data, it has become more effective for political parties to target their audience. Cambridge analytica is one clear example of misuse of social media based on meme and gif on highly specialized targeted audience.

Do you think social media languages like meme and gif can overtake traditional news media in its reach and impact
60 responses



28.3% respondents believe that the traditional media like TV, newspaper, radio importance will be replaced by new age or new media in its reach and impact. While 36.7% of the respondent does believe this to be the case and think traditional media is here to stay. They will not be replaced by new age media in its reach and impact. 35% of the total population are not sure whether meme and gif impact or reach will exceed traditional media. There is a growing cry of dwindling newspaper readership and demise of cable television. All these can be attributed to growing use of internet and rise of online web portal like huffPuff, buzzfeed and others. There is a certain section of the analyst who believe traditional media is doomed with rising social media and internet. This question seeks to find if it really is the case or are we just overreacting to minor adjustment. It's too early to predict the demise of traditional media, unlike in America or in the west where there is dwindling readership and drop in cable subscription. However, there is growth in traditional media in developing countries like India and China. No concrete conclusion can be made from these findings as the result is evenly split. But we have to understand traditional media houses to adapt to growing change. Otherwise, they will be doomed. Traditional media houses need to expand like old age vis-a-vis adopting new technology in its growing reach and impact.

CONCLUSION

Internet meme and gif have been used in political discourse and electoral campaign like never before. However, this finding understands that there is not a huge shift in tools used in political campaigning and the impact of the existing tools used as we thought. Newspaper, radio, and electronic media are still here to stay. Emergence of internet and new media created a huge surge in use of meme and gif in future political discourse in India. Meme and popular culture of understanding the world without the nitty-gritty of over-complexity of traditional news media and getting the attention of the audience. Apart from that, it is also influencing the decision-making behaviour of voters and will find more takers and audiences in the near future.

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