An Overview of Political Marketing in India

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An India is the largest democratic country in the world. After reform era has changed the concept of Indian politics. Multiparty system has demanded a political party to be able to compete for their constituent. Being in politics, a party activist has a distinct identity that could reap dividends in the form of prestige, status and accessibility. These could be converted to pecuniary benefits. Parties look like business firms in a political market. The recent climate of competition has led to the emergence of sizable rent-seeking professional leaders. They calculate the returns on the political and economic investments made, which is not confined to a zero-sum game of winning elections. There are pay-offs even when one loses an election. This article is an attempt to analyze the nature of transformation in the Indian political parties and to rethink their role in the contemporary times. That parties are motivated to ‘serve’ the people and inspired to ‘win’ elections is well documented. However, there are counter-examples of parties serving people at a price or being equally powerful even while losing elections. Forming or sustaining a party seems to be a survival strategy for political activists. Politics has become a business-like anxiety.

Keywords: Political Campaign, Political Marketing, Integrated Marketing Communication, Social Media, Election

1. Introduction of Political Marketing

The democracy is the most common political system all around the world. Free competitive elections are the opportunities that citizens can choose their rulers and it is the best tool to reflect the needs and preferences of people. Political marketing provide the candidates to overcome these problems effectively.

Additionally, it increases the power of political groups in political disputes and their
promoting activities that has already done only by using traditional ideas and tactics of political science through using a consistent framework of marketing and modifying basic concepts of commercial marketing so that be applicable to parties or political individuals.

**During the Previous Year’s many Definitions have been Proposed**

Political Marketing is the process by which political candidates promote themselves and their platforms to voters through masterly-crafted communications aimed at gaining public support.

Defined political marketing firstly as “the process by which political candidates and their ideas are directed at voters in order to satisfy their potential needs and thus gain their support for the candidate and ideas in question”.

- **Shama (Shama, 1976)**
  “Political contests remind us that candidates are marketed as well as soap.”

- **(Kotler and Levy, 1969)**
  “Political marketing is concerned with communicating with party members, media and prospective sources of funding as well as the electorate”.

- **(Lock abd Harris, 1996)**
  Political marketing as “the party or candidate’s use of opinion research and environmental analysis to produce and promote a competitive offering which will help realise organisational aims and satisfy groups of electors in exchange for their votes”.

- **(Wring, 1997)**

  Henneberg proposed that “Political marketing seeks to establish, maintain and enhance long-term political relationships at a profit for society, so that the objectives of the individual political actors and organisations involved are met. This is done by mutual exchange and fulfilment of promises”

- **(Henneberg, 2002).**

  The American Marketing Association (AMA) defines political marketing as “Marketing designed to influence target audiences to vote for a particular person, party, or proposition” Political marketing to be “concerned with reciprocated exchanges of value between political entities and their environments.

- **(Winther-Nielsen, 2011)**
2. Importance of Political Marketing

Political Marketing provides an excess of new opportunities to connect with potential voters and shape public opinion, radio and TV spots, direct mail flyers, email campaigns, social media outreach, etc. Voters have an excellent unknown candidate, Political Marketing will help democracy. Political Marketing helps Democratic country like India.

Elections have always been an important national activity for any country as the future of the entire nation depends on them. Different political parties are bound to market their candidate in the best and efficient way. Indian loksabha elections 2014 have proved the power of political marketing. The 2014 election campaign would go down in history as the first one where digital crowd sourcing played a key role in shaping speeches. The introduction of technology in elections has been initiated by BJP’s Prime Ministerial candidate Mr. Narendra Modi who actively used creative services of Social Media and 3D modern tools in order to persuade the youth of India. The timing of the advertising Ab ki baar Modi Sarkaar campaign on TV was very crucial. Har Har Modi, Ghar Ghar Modi was well accompanied with his pre-recorded video messages in villages. While the BJP’s campaign was decisive and to the point, the Congress campaign, with the tagline Harhaath Shakti, harhaath tarakki, failed to impress.

As the population is becoming Hi-tech the communication medium have to become hi-tech. Google + Hangouts, Facebook, twitter, YouTube are modern social paths to connect with the masses. The political branding strategy framed in a way to revolve around these modern mediums would yield maximum benefits for the political parties.

Election commission announce, ready to jamili (2018) election are important to every campaign as they build a strategy that will attempt to reach and convince as many people as possible to support certain issues. The voters are trying to build support for a candidate or cause, here are four ways you can create a message that voters will engage with.

Objective of the Political M
- To know the importance of Political Marketing in India
- To understand the Political Marketing system in India

3. Political Marketing Characteristics

There has been little discussion of the service components of the service ‘product’ although
the concepts of variability, intangibility, heterogeneity and perishability commonly associated with services marketing have been applied in politics has dissected the anatomy of the political service ‘product’ in the UK as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Features of the Political Service (associated benefit to voter/organization)

Source: Baines et al., (2003)

According to Baines et al. (2003), core political service features comprising constituency representation by a member of parliament at the local level and a voice in government at national level (functional features). Actual political service features is seen to incorporate the policies, values and statements espoused by the party, the politicians themselves, the party manifestos and the party’s ability to deliver on its promises (functional and technical features). The augmented political service features can be seen as: party membership where members receive policy newsletters and social function information (both functional and technical features); regulatory information (technical feature) on forthcoming policy (e.g. purchased by companies to aid in lobbying efforts); and party conferences and associated literature (technical and functional features).

4. Political Marketing Functions:
Functions of political marketing are pre-requisites for successful political marketing management. According to political marketing theorist some functions of a successful political marketing which includes the following:
• **Product Function**: the product advertised is more than just the candidate, it is also the promises of change, good government and success.

• **Distribution Function**: delivering the right message to the right target market is crucial. The marketers have to make sure that the message suits the distribution channel and the target audience.

• **Result Function**: just as commercial product is advertised to achieve customers buying the product for a certain amount of money, the political candidate is advertised to gain positive perception, attitude and approval from the public, the public not needing to pay anything for the promotional materials received.

• **Information Function**: the political marketing should provide the voters with the needed information for their decision. Party's and candidate's history, intentions and programmes should be made public.

• **Financial Function**: political advertising also focuses on calling the audience to action such as making donations, volunteering.

Political advertising includes advertising or marketing communications about a political party, representative or candidate, advertising about political issues or issues of public interest, and advertising in relation to government policies. Advertising by Government, political parties, lobby groups and other interest groups may fall into this category.

**Structure and Process Characteristics of Political Marketing**

The structural characteristics of political marketing consist of the political product, organization and the market. The political product has three parts: the person/party/ideology; the significant degree of loyalty involved and mutability. In shifting policy strong loyalty allows any party or candidate a certain degrees of flexibility. Mutability is about the alterable purchase whenever candidate or party that enters into coalitions with others after the election. The political organizations are able to tend to maintain the amateurism that a negative view of marketing they have; because they are mostly dependent on volunteers and control over operations which is exceptionally difficult. The political markets include resources and the willingness to commit them and also the electorate creates a political market. The process characteristics of political marketing are concerned with procedures that govern marketing activities. The main issues are style in electioneering, the different advertising and communications standards, the political polling, the news and media attention paid to the
process and voters vote for a candidate other than their favourite to defeat their least-favoured candidate (Table 1).

Table 1 Structural and Process Characteristics of Political Marketing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structural Characteristics</th>
<th>Process Characteristics</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Product</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Person / party / ideology</td>
<td>• Style versus substance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Loyalty</td>
<td>• Advertising &amp; communications standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mutability</td>
<td>• News &amp; media attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Organization</strong></td>
<td>• Political polls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Amateurism</td>
<td>• Tactical voting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Negative perception of marketing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Dependence on volunteers</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Market</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Ideologically charged</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Social affirmation</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The counter-consumer</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Source:</strong> (Butler, P. &amp; Collins, N., 1994)</td>
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The structural characteristics of political marketing consist of the political product, the political organization and the political market. The political product are divided into three parts: the multi-component (person/party/ideology) as nature of the offer; the significant degree of loyalty involved; and the fact that it is mutable, i.e. it can be changed or transformed in the post-election setting. The multi-component (person/party/ideology) offer is that component cannot be offered separately. These three components i.e. candidate, party organization and its manifesto must complement each other in offering values to the voters. Strong loyalty factor allows parties or candidates a certain degrees of flexibility in shifting policy. Mutability is about the alterable purchase (even in the post-purchase setting) whenever candidate / party that they voted enter into coalitions with other party after the election.

**Political Marketing System**

Political marketing is the marketing of ideas and opinions which relate to public or political issues or to specific candidates. The party or candidates use of opinion research and environmental analysis to produce and promote a competitive offering which will help realize organizational aims and satisfy group of electors in exchange for their votes. In political marketing we need to make modification of mainstream marketing system to a political
marketing system in which the industry consist of a collections of politicians whereby they communicated ideas to a collection of voters with hope in return they will get voters’ vote and in achieving this they will need information about voters needs and wants through the process of marketing intelligence. This political marketing system is depicted in bellowed Figure 2.

![Political Marketing System](image)

**Figure 2 Political Marketing System**

Marketing consists of actions undertaken to elicit desired responses including behavioural responses such as vote or support from a target audience. In effecting successful exchanges, marketers analyze what each party expects from the transaction. For example politicians want trust and commitments; brand loyalty and long-term support or repeat voters, and maximized electoral support. Voters, however, want political information and facts; prudent, credible, intellectual and honest leader; better government and better policy. Figure 3 below depicted the exchange map for politicians and voters.

![The Exchange Map for Politicians and Voters](image)

**Figure 3 The Exchange Map for Politicians and Voters**

Grigsby (1996) stated that political campaign techniques have almost always followed the lead of commercial marketing. Politicians and political activists quickly adapt techniques that have proven effective in the economic marketplace. Political campaigns have evolved from a
party concept to a marketing concept. Under the party concept, voter mobilization was the most important factor for successful campaigns. Modern campaigns use the marketing concepts and tactics popularized by commercial marketers. The marketing concept focuses on voters’ wants and needs. The politician then finds a part of the campaign platform that conforms with the needs of voters. The parallels between political marketing and commercial marketing are demonstrated on Table 2.

Table 2 Similarities between Political Marketing and Commercial Marketing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Political Marketing</th>
<th>Commercial Marketing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Party Concept/</td>
<td>Organization by party leader and centred on the political party</td>
<td>Products are selected by distributors and delivered to consumers generically. When something sells out, more is ordered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-industrial marketing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sells the quality of the product through the brand. Example: Model T Ford manufactured for quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product Concept</td>
<td>An internally driven organization run by selected candidate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selling Concept</td>
<td>Political organization is run by the experts and focus on the candidate. Attempts to create favourable impression of the candidate by the voters</td>
<td>Companies like Procter and Gamble create markets for new products on the basis of experiment and survey or they conducting marketing research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing Concept</td>
<td>An externally driven organization run by marketing experts and centered on the voter. Polling determines the message sent to the voter.</td>
<td>Companies first identify consumer needs and then develop products to meet those needs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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5. Political Marketing is Involved are Political Campaigns

The main events in which political marketing is involved are political campaigns. These are the most important techniques used in campaign advertising:

- **Target Market Segmentation** – the campaign addresses different market segments with specific, targeted messages depending on peoples' culture, preferences, and expectations.

- **Competition Research** – very popular nowadays are the negative messages focused on opposition, comparative advertising, even ironic attacks. In order for these methods to be effective, a opposition research is required so that the facts and affirmations employed are pertinent.

- **Internet Marketing** – politicians can use the continually expanding opportunity of e-marketing to advertise their person, campaign, party, using conventional e-mail marketing, banners and pay-per-click advertising or social media( Facebook, Twitter), blogs.

- **Direct Marketing** – the classic marketing methods should also be employed. The candidate can deliver his message through direct mail, telephone, fliers, speeches,
concerts, tours, banners.

- **Product Development** – the citizens are more and more interested in knowing their options, in political marketing's case, in knowing more about the candidate. So an efficient technique in this area is creating an extensive image of the candidate, beginning with his history and life, continuing with his family and personal opinions and preferences.

- **Branding** – associating the candidate with a visual image, or a positive social symbol leads to wider awareness and recognition of the politician.

- **Marketing Surveys** – represented in politics by public opinion polls can provide useful information about citizens' approval of the candidate or political opinion and choice.

6. **Social Media use in Political Marketing**

Social media have become coordinating tools for nearly all of the world’s political movements, just as most of the world’s authoritarian governments are trying to limit access to it. The use of social media in political marketing has evolved seriously in the last 10 years. Facebook, YouTube and Twitter as a platform campaigns and candidates reach out to voters the power of social media have understood much more clearly now. Social media campaigns should be used in an efficient way through reaching volunteers and increasing their shares on the platforms for the multiplier effect.

The campaigns that created by political candidates and parties are easily accessible to the target audience through social media platforms, thus, marketing activities can be managed with voters reviews in a more interactive way. The volunteers can easily communicate with other voters in the same region through the location based usage of social media and the campaigns can be carried out in an interactive manner.

Social media has opened the doors to a new type of political dialogue. Political party, candidate's main marketing strategy is reduced from society to peer to peer level and provides the distribution into the trust based on social platforms. It also enables travelling whole information through internet and allows voters to participate as an opinion leader to the political marketing activities.

**Popular Social Media Platforms**

**Facebook** - Online networking service to find similar activity with the friends or meet new
people that have in common shares. All posts are being shared in the News Feeds Section and aims that create a multiplying effect.

**Twitter** - Micro-blogging or mini blogging service with limited text-based messages of 140 characters or less. Users subscribe to the other accounts as Followers and tweets appear in Followers’ news feeds.

**LinkedIn** – One of the biggest online professional networks in the world. Set up a professional profile, also for the business or organization to add “Connections” or “Contacts” for networking. It is also useful for job search and recruitment.

**Google+** - Social network platform owned by Google, it has similar features with Facebook. Connections are called “Circles” and users can access the “Stream” on their platform pages easily to interact with others.

**YouTube** - Video-sharing website where users can upload, view, share videos up to 15 minutes in length. It also provides a forum to connect, inform, and inspire and reach other users in the social platform.

**NaMo Political Marketing Strategy**

Narendra Modi best understood the potential of new media and the advantages of the opportunities offered passed into history as the politician although he was not the leader to implement social media tactics to the market. Namo campaign in twitter account. The strategy was based on the energy of being part of a whole, participation and come together around a goal. Political marketing requires some basic things like the product, brand image, political consumer, communication, delivery etc. Narendra Modi (NaMo) best understood the potential of new media and the advantages of the opportunities offered passed into history as the politician although he was not the leader to implement social media tactics to the market. The strategy was based on the energy of being part of a whole, participation and come together around a goal.

The secret of the success of the NaMo campaign (2014-Lok Sabha and 2017 UP election) was effective use of social media and getting the support of volunteers who want to make a difference and the technology became an vital part of the strategy to collect donations. NaMo won with the support given to messages to which election volunteer’s email and online content sent every day through social media. NaMo campaign was managed more efficiently than other competitors to plan, communicate and also creation of the movement and the group supporting for the grassroots master plan in the natural way by helping voters. As a
result of this activities the BJP and NaMo had been performed the most successful internet based political marketing in the history in which information technologies and social media were the main driver to mobilize the masses.

NaMo made young people more active than ever before. Obama constructed not an ordinary political base, but more of a database millions of supporters can be connected and engaged by simply a few clicks on the keyboard. Obama has a different political strategy than ordinary. It was a good example of effective use of young people than ever before. The team had very powerful database that included the information millions of volunteers to be able to get viral effect of the social media very easily and quickly. The success of the NaMo team has showed how to spread the message effectively and efficiently through social media platforms and it was a really good guide for every political campaigns. All speeches and online events were broadcasted to reach voters by social media. Blogs were the channels to distribution of the campaign to the masses. The other web sites that refer the link in their pages to the campaign sites resulted multiply effect to reach more voters. YouTube was used to edit and post within hours of speech or event. NaMo changed the rule of the games completely in the past and future. The results of the Obama’s campaign showed the power of social media that individuals could make a huge difference if given right tools and managed in right way.

Among the above fundamentals, product design is very important. In order to get to the brass-tacks, the analysts are supposed to get the feel of market demands by talking to party members, focus group discussions, opinion polls, segmentation of voters/consumers, views of public etc to design the product. The product design and development based on market intelligence create to Narendra bhai using the language in several campaigns including the one in the L.B. stadium. After the product is designed like ‘development and change’, ‘Congress hatao’, etc branding is very vital. Branding is about how the political organisation or Individual is perceived overall.

An Innovative Strategy in Political Marketing in 2014 Election

In India political advertising started by the BJP government by launched an ad campaign on television. The 'India Shining' campaign that marked the beginning of a new age of political advertising in India. It discusses in depth the political advertising strategy of the erstwhile NDA government and examines how the campaign was aimed as a tool to win votes. In the latest elections in India, the winning party was accused of using the principles of marketing.
Both the major parties, Congress and the BJP, had hired PR firms to manage their campaigns.

- BJP is organizing an on-ground promotion strategy called Chai Pe Charcha (talk over tea). This outreach promotion is going to connect their prime ministerial candidate with the common voter and the point of contact is going to be Tea Stalls in various towns across the nation. Reportedly, they target to touch base with 2 Crore voters through this activity.
- BJP is also using the new and innovative methods to cover the entire masses as every person having a mobile phone is given the liberty to listen in on Mr. Modi’s rally speeches in real time from anywhere in India.
- The introduction of technology in elections has been initiated by BJP’s Prime Ministerial candidate Mr. Narendra Modi who is actively using creative services of Social Media and 3D modern tools in order to persuade the youth of India. Good Governance and Development of the nation are the agenda’s targeted by Mr. Modi and have helped him to gain attention of the elite class of India.
- BJP is the first among Indian political parties to use Google + Hangouts to connect with the masses. Mr. Modi also initiated a talk on Technology in Politics at the Google Big Tent Activate Summit 2013.
- The Another major role player of 2014 elections, Indian National Congress still believes in reaching out to the people and offering a personal touch to their issues.
- AAP has utilized the technologically advanced platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and Linked In not only to reach out to people but has also initiated the practice of accepting donations through these channels.
- The Other political parties contesting in 2014 general elections such as CPI, CPI (M), Janta Dal and Bahujan Samaj Party are also recognizing the power of technology by using their websites and joining some social media channels. For Example – The website of BSP contains information on its state units, and updates along with some links redirecting to social networking pages of the party. It is also displaying an exclusive on its leader Ms. Mayawati so that people can understand her profile and contributions in an innovative manner.

7. Conclusion

Political marketing concepts derived from the traditional marketing and it shares many
concepts of marketing. In the business marketing, sellers sale goods and services, and communicate the market with the help of Advertisement and earn money and make good relationship with customer.

The primary aim of political marketing is to build preference and shape the public knowledge. Marketing in politics is not the classic warfare we've seen through the years. It deals with advertising in various fields including social media and endorsements.

In 2014 election compare to BJP the Congress missing on social media. Their TV commercials were not at all eye catching. Efficiently integrating traditional media with new technology is useful in reaching to masses successfully. Campaigns now rely on political marketing for success in elections, without the marketing tactics they employ; their messaging would not be distributed to the voting public.

In political Campaigns, candidates make promise, favours, policy preference, and personalities to a set of voters in exchange of the votes. Many concepts and tools of marketing is used in politics. Parties’ emphasis on understanding the basis of marketing to be successful in long term. Marketing offers political parties the ability to address the voter needs and how they fulfilled the needs of voters. At the last political marketing is nothing it is the societal process of political exchange, while political marketing management describes the combination of arts and science which manage the political exchange process.

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