

SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE ON GENERAL ELECTION OF INDIA

by

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ABSTRACT

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There have been multiple cases of unfair social media manipulations to sway the outcome of a democratic election process in today's social media-dominated world. Given that India is the largest democratic nation in the world in terms of the number of voters, this poses significant challenges to the democratic process. Many news stories have talked about how people used social media to change people's minds and affect the result of India's general election. This paper talks about the following main study questions.

- Does social media have an impact on the Indian general election?
- Are opinions expressed on social media affecting India's general election?

Approximately 100,000+ mentions were gathered from social media sites like Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube during different stages of the Indian general election to provide answers to these two research questions. Particular attention was

paid to the key hashtags of several well-known political parties, including the BJP, Congress, TMC, and AAP, during the data collection process. Awario.com is a tool for data extraction and analysis.

- To determine whether there is a correlation between these data sets and the outcome of the Indian general election, a thorough qualitative and quantitative analysis of these gathered mentions and their characteristics was conducted.
- The analysis and outcome, however, failed to find any meaningful correlation between the poll's outcome and the data that was gathered. In fact, it was clear that none of these platforms' social media actions have a big impact on the Indian general election.
- Lastly, this study recommends an ongoing procedure to prevent unfair social media manipulations during India's general election.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Social media (SM) is defined by Merriam-Webster (n.d.) as "electronic communication forms (like social networking and microblogging websites) that allow users to establish online communities to exchange ideas, information, private messages, and other content (like videos)." Social media platforms (SMP) are defined by a few essential elements:

- They make use of Web 2.0 technologies, which facilitate seamless interoperability across various services and allow for user-generated content, encouraging increased user interaction and collaboration (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010).
- User-generated content, like messages, images, and videos, is essential to social media platforms' operation (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010).
- People can create personal profiles on each platform, which are hosted and managed by the company providing the service (Pennsylvania State University, n.d.).
- People can create digital communities and facilitate interaction by connecting their profiles with others on social media (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010).

The most common ways to access SMP are through mobile applications on smartphones and tablets, and web-based applications on desktops and laptops. According to the widely recognised definitions and traits of social media, a variety of digital tools are included in this category. These platforms, which promote user interaction, content sharing, and online networking, are well-known examples and

include Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter (now X), and YouTube (Kietzmann et al., 2011; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Connecting people, including friends, family, and academic or professional contacts, is one of social media's main purposes. Through their interactions and sharing of content, users create enormous volumes of data while using these platforms. Researchers and organisations looking for practical insights for business and strategic decision-making frequently monitor and analyse this user-generated data. These big datasets can now be processed and interpreted to find significant patterns and trends thanks to the development of contemporary data analytics tools and technologies like machine learning, natural language processing (NLP), and social media analytics platforms. In order to facilitate data-driven decision-making, these analytical methods are developing quickly and becoming more widely used in a variety of industries.

Today, a successful company is well-versed in the digital behaviour of its clients, network, and sentiments. Their digital marketing campaigns in digital media are driven by the digital behaviour of their targeted customers or prospects. They even monitor their digital media marketing campaigns in terms of their reach and the reasons behind their success or failure, and they keep improving the campaign's success rate by analysing digital customer behaviour. Additional intriguing uses of social media data include:

- Establishing a company brand
- Predicting user behaviour to determine personality
- Making predictions about purchase behaviour based on social media activity
- Tracking Rivals for Market Research

- Astute Customer service
- Online Reputation Management
- Social Commerce
- Social Research

The general elections of many democratic countries are another crucial area where social media data is widely used. According to recent estimates, over 50% of people worldwide actively use social media, frequently for prolonged periods of time (Statista, 2023). SM is now a powerful tool for political campaigning because of its extensive use. Political campaigns (PC) based on social media are becoming more and more popular for a number of reasons, including the fact that they are inexpensive, simple to use, and allow for quick voter outreach. Furthermore, by facilitating two-way communication, these platforms enable citizens to voice their opinions, offer feedback, and take part in political discourse.

PC on social media are becoming more and more popular as

- It is the quickest, easiest, and most affordable way to connect with the public.
- Social media lets people write evaluations and comments, which promotes a two-way conversation.
- Getting general feedback from regular people is simple.

1.2 Research Problem

Due to its ability to facilitate previously unheard-of levels of public communication, networking, and engagement, social media has emerged as a transformative tool in contemporary society. By giving people a forum to freely express their thoughts, interact with like-minded groups, and take part in public

discourse, social media by its very nature promotes democratic values. Users can express their opinions, ask for input from others, and construct collective narratives based on social identities and common values. Especially during national events like elections, these digital platforms are crucial in influencing public discourse.

But there are also serious risks in this dynamic and open environment. Coordinated manipulation, disinformation, and propaganda can be used to take advantage of the same systems that permit free speech and public participation. Lomas (2019) cites research from the Oxford Internet Institute (OII) that shows how sophisticated and widespread political manipulation is becoming on SMP. The study shows that using fake accounts on social media is not a new threat, but a common way for politicians around the world to change people's minds, often in an unfair or harmful way.

Seven countries were found by the OII study to regularly use "cyber troops" to carry out influence campaigns both domestically and abroad: China, India, Iran, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela (Lomas, 2019). These cyber troops are composed of organised groups of internet workers who use a variety of strategies, such as coordinated posting, bots, and phoney accounts, to disseminate political propaganda and influence public opinion. In their global study, Bradshaw and Howard (2019) further highlight the scope of this phenomenon by pointing out that 87% of the countries they examined used human agents to manipulate political narratives, while 80% of them used automated accounts (bots).

By skewing public opinion, compromising reasoned decision-making, and reducing institutional trust, such actions pose a serious threat to democratic processes. Real-world repercussions of social media manipulation (SMM) of political discourse include polarisation of voters, the spread of hate speech, and weakened electoral integrity.

The significance of continuous, exacting, and context-specific research is made evident in this regard. Studies must concentrate on particular countries, regions, and election events because social media usage patterns, user behaviour, and political environments differ greatly between nations and electoral contexts. Broad generalisations might ignore the complex and localised nature of social media influence in the absence of such targeted investigation.

India presents an especially pertinent case for study because it is the largest democracy in the world and has one of the most technologically savvy populations. With more than 800 million people using the internet and smartphones becoming more and more common, social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, Twitter, and Twitter (now X) have a huge and significant reach. These tools are becoming more and more important to political actors and parties for campaigning, rallying supporters, and interacting with the public. Although these platforms offer chances for political engagement, they also give rise to questions about their legitimacy and morality.

This study aims to examine social media's role in the Indian state elections of 2023–2024 in light of these two potentials. The main objective is to determine whether digital platforms are being used improperly or to manipulate public opinion on social or political issues. These studies' conclusions could advance our knowledge of political communication in the digital era and offer evidence-based suggestions for reducing manipulation on social media. The ultimate goal is to protect democratic structures and make sure that technology is used to give people power instead of taking advantage of them.

If we are successful in identifying this evidence of SMM, the outcome will aid in our analysis and development of policies that will forbid such manipulations.

Therefore, limiting these forms of social media manipulation is the larger goal to support the democratic process.

1.3 Purpose of Research

Social media sites like YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter (now X) have become essential tools for political outreach and election campaigning in India. Numerous scholarly investigations have examined the extent to which political entities have adopted these platforms, their rise in popularity in India, and the tactical methods by which they are employed to sway public opinion and mobilise voter bases.

Predicting election results with social media data has also been the subject of a significant amount of research, especially with regard to sentiment analysis methods that try to determine public opinion from user-generated content. Despite their insightfulness, these predictive models typically place more emphasis on forecasting than on examining the underlying mechanisms of manipulation or influence.

Examining the intentional abuse or manipulation of social media to polarise public opinion is still lacking in the academic literature, especially in light of the upcoming general elections in India. Ratkiewicz et al. (2011) and other foundational studies offered systematic frameworks for identifying political abuse on social media, but these studies are now out of date and do not take into account the development of modern digital propaganda techniques or the sophisticated analytical tools at our disposal.

The capabilities of modern social media analytics platforms now enable more thorough investigation of automated account activity (bots), sentiment shaping, coordinated behaviour patterns, and the dissemination of false information. These

changes offer a rare chance to re-examine the problem with new approaches and a more focused approach.

Therefore, the goal of this study is to investigate SMP user behaviour and political discourse concerning the Indian state elections of 2023–2024. Investigating whether social media platforms are being used to influence or sway public opinion on important political issues is the goal of the study. The following questions are specifically addressed by this study:

- How much does social media affect public perceptions or the results of the general elections in India?
- Does political polarisation or a change in voter sentiment during an election cycle stem from sentiment expressed on social media platforms?

By providing evidence-based viewpoints that can direct technology governance, policy, and the ethical use of digital tools in democratic processes, the study seeks to address these problems.

Raising public awareness of social media manipulation is a larger goal that will support democracy. Along with offering advice and best practices for political usage, the research can also assist us in analysing and developing policies to outlaw social media manipulation.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Social media is becoming more and more important in contemporary democracies because it allows people to create online communities, voice their thoughts, get feedback, and participate in conversations that represent both individual and group values. Through decentralised access to political and informational content,

these platforms promote engagement and discourse, thereby bolstering the democratic process.

But social media's participatory nature, which bolsters democracy, also leaves it open to manipulation. The global spread of targeted propaganda and digital disinformation has resulted in the extensive use of SMP for the methodical slanting of public opinion (Bradshaw and Howard, 2019). Their study demonstrates how toxic narratives and fake news have evolved into a dysfunctional but increasingly prevalent tactic used by political actors worldwide.

The report also names seven countries as "sophisticated state actors" that use what are known as "cyber troops": China, India, Iran, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela. These are organised teams of people, frequently operating under formal or semi-formal agreements, whose job it is to influence public opinion and disseminate computational propaganda (Bradshaw and Howard, 2019).

Since these risks are growing, it is important to do regular, in-depth studies on how people use SM for political purposes. Research needs to be customised to particular national, regional, and electoral contexts to produce insightful findings because platform usage and political dynamics differ from one nation to the next.

An especially pertinent example is India, the largest democracy in the world and the country with the highest internet usage rate among democracies. Studying social media's influence on public opinion and voting behaviour is crucial given its growing integration into political campaigns, particularly during significant elections. The Indian state elections of 2023–2024 offer a perfect setting for investigating whether SM has been used to sway public opinion on important political and social issues.

This study is important because it can reveal trends of social media abuse during the election process. If evidence of manipulation is found, the results can help guide future studies, legislative initiatives, and platform governance frameworks that try to reduce online meddling in democracies. Promoting responsible digital participation in political processes and preserving electoral integrity are the overarching objectives.

1.5 Research Purpose and Questions

The main objective of this study is to investigate how users behave on popular social media sites, particularly Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter (now X), in connection with political discussions about the Indian general election of 2024. The goal of the study is to find evidence of coordinated efforts or manipulation to use digital tools to affect public opinion and election results.

To accomplish this, the study will investigate the following crucial areas:

- **How much has social media impacted India's general election in 2024?**
 - Is there concrete proof of the spread of false information meant to influence public opinion?
 - Are phoney influencers or social media profiles being used to spread content with political motivations?
- **Is there proof that social media platforms have been used to systematically manipulate public opinion?**
 - If such manipulation occurs, what are the obvious strategies or techniques employed?

- How might these manipulations affect public discourse and voter behaviour?
- **How can this kind of manipulation be controlled or managed?**
 - What steps can be taken to reduce election-related social media abuse?
 - How can people become more conscious of the need to critically assess political content on the internet?

The responses to these research questions will help us better understand how digital platforms are influencing India's democratic processes, especially during significant election events. It is anticipated that the results of this study will guide the creation of technological, educational, and regulatory interventions meant to maintain electoral integrity in the face of digital disruption.

The following broad questions are also intended to be addressed by this study:

- How much is social media affecting India's general election results?
- Does sharing views on social media sites change how people vote or make politics more divided?

The study intends to support the development of practical tactics and guidelines to lessen the manipulation of SM for political ends in addition to producing empirical insights. These suggestions aim to educate stakeholders on responsible platform governance and ethical digital campaigning best practices, including legislators, platform regulators, civil society organisations, and political actors. The following are important areas of the suggested intervention:

- Reinforcing electoral and regulatory frameworks

- Improving the transparency and accountability of social media platforms
- Encouraging citizens' digital awareness and media literacy
- Promoting moral behaviour in political campaigns
- Strengthening cybersecurity infrastructure to stop digital manipulation and outside interference

The study intends to add to a larger conversation about preserving democracy in the digital age and encouraging responsible use of technology during the election process by tackling these important topics.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Social Media Use in Indian Political Campaigns

Over the past ten years, social media's use in Indian political campaigns has undergone a dramatic change. Social media was barely present during the 2009 general election, and very few politicians used these channels. Khursheed (2014) points out that there was only one active politician at the time with roughly 6,000 followers on Twitter, suggesting that their influence on election results was minimal.

But social media's function had drastically changed by the time of the 2014 general elections. Digital platforms have emerged as a key tool for political outreach, claims Warudkar (2014). Narendra Modi, the then-prime ministerial candidate, led the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which had a sizable online following, with 3.67 million Twitter followers and 15 million Facebook likes. To demonstrate the extent of their online activity, the party also received 6.8 million page views on Google+.

During the 2014 campaign, the BJP had the most social media interactions (over 4.9 million), followed by the Indian National Congress (2.9 million) and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) (3.4 million). Diverse degrees of engagement were also noted by individual politicians. While Digvijay Singh of the Congress received about 19,000 interactions, Arvind Kejriwal of the AAP received 166,000, and Modi's posts generated over 1.5 million (Warudkar, 2014).

Ahead of the general elections in 2019, this trend grew even more pronounced. An estimated 379 million WhatsApp users in India were over the age of 18, making them eligible to vote, according to Finesse (2019). Twitter had about 43 million users, while Facebook reached about 241 million eligible voters. 407 million people, or almost half of the voting population, had internet access overall.

BJP kept up a robust online presence in terms of political activity. The Congress received 1.8 million mentions on Twitter, while the BJP received 2.4 million. However, Congress had slightly more mentions on Facebook (345,300) than the BJP (274,300). There were also noticeable differences in the number of followers: Congress had about 5.1 million Twitter followers, compared to over 10.9 million for the BJP (Finesse, 2019).

Even though these figures show a rise in digital engagement, they don't prove how much social media influences voting behaviour or decision-making. They also don't offer verifiable proof of propaganda or manipulation. Nonetheless, research indicates that Indian political parties—especially the BJP—have made digital tools a central part of their campaign tactics. According to Alam (2021), the BJP acknowledged the strategic importance of digital media in political communication, as evidenced by their heavy reliance on platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube in both their 2014 and 2019 election strategies.

2.2 Evidence of Social Media Manipulation in India

In 2021, Nuthanakanti Bhaskar did a study on how Twitter data could be used to predict election results. The study looked at how machine learning algorithms and sentiment analysis methods could be used to sort and predict how the 2020 US presidential election would turn out. It did this by looking at how people felt about the election on Twitter. The study gave a data-driven view of election forecasting by showing how sites like Twitter can be used to get the thoughts and feelings of people who are likely to vote or who have a say in how people vote.

Complementary research has been conducted with data from other platforms. For example, Mahapatra and Plagemann (2019) conducted a comparative analysis of the digital tactics employed by India's two main political parties, the Indian National

Congress (INC) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), while Mutasher and Aljuboori (2022) looked into sentiment patterns on Facebook during political campaigns.

The NaMo mobile application, which performed a number of tasks such as voter engagement, opinion polling, issue-based feedback collection, and politician performance tracking, was a major component of the BJP's campaign, according to Mahapatra and Plagemann (2019). Party employees routinely used the app at the polling station level, demonstrating a highly centralised and data-driven campaign infrastructure.

The INC, on the other hand, used more casual and culturally sensitive strategies, such as hashtag campaigns, social commentary, and amusing memes. Examples include the use of phrases like "jumla party" to criticise the BJP's campaign promises and "hugplomacy" to parody Prime Minister Modi's diplomatic gestures. Slogans like "TravelAgentModi" and a parody of the BJP's "Swachh Bharat" ("Clean India"), which was widely used as a banner across the INC's social media profiles, were among the other content.

The rise of private IT firms that offer services to political parties to influence public opinion is a significant finding that the study highlights. To carry out coordinated smear campaigns and incite religious polarisation, companies like WebAppMate and Vibgyor Technosystems were allegedly providing political clients with the means to distribute misinformation, fake videos, and doctored content through proxy servers, which were frequently situated outside of India, by 2016 (Mahapatra and Plagemann, 2019).

These results highlight social media's dual nature as a tool for campaigns and a possible manipulation tool. There is growing evidence, especially from the 2014 and 2019 general elections, that suggests the use of bots, disinformation tactics, and

engineered profiles to influence public opinion, even as Indian political parties continue to bolster their online presence for electioneering.

This study will try to extract historical datasets about the 2019 and 2022 election cycles from websites like Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter in order to better understand this phenomenon. Finding patterns and trends that point to social media manipulation, gauging the extent of coordinated activity, and analysing the possible influence on political discourse and voting results are the objectives. The results can be used to inform policy recommendations meant to reduce digital manipulation in upcoming elections, as well as to inform public education campaigns on digital media literacy.

2.3 Social Media Manipulation in Other Countries

Numerous case studies and comparative studies have shown how social media manipulation is used in both authoritarian and democratic regimes, raising concerns about it on a global scale. In order to engage supporters, mobilise volunteers, and raise money, Barack Obama's Chicago campaign team strategically used social media and digital technologies during the 2008 US presidential election. This is a noteworthy early example. According to Aaker and Chang (2009), this digital-first strategy served as a model for later political campaigns worldwide.

Researchers have found a notable increase in politically motivated or state-sponsored attempts to manipulate social media in recent years. The global dissemination of coordinated disinformation campaigns is thoroughly examined by Bradshaw and Howard (2018). According to their research, by 2018, political parties or government organisations were actively using digital platforms to sway public opinion in at least 48 countries, up from 28 the year before. This escalation is especially noticeable in situations where governments invest in propaganda and

counter-narrative tactics because they believe that external narratives or internal dissent pose a threat.

The increasing use of private and encrypted messaging apps like WeChat, Telegram, and WhatsApp is one notable trend. These platforms were used to disseminate divisive content and misleading information in about 20% of the countries under study, frequently during election cycles or times of national emergency. In these instances, it was discovered that disinformation campaigns took advantage of messaging apps' closed nature to avoid public scrutiny and platform moderation.

Furthermore, manipulation techniques have progressed beyond basic social media bots. Paid digital advertising, automated commenting, the creation of phoney accounts, and even search engine algorithm manipulation are now all part of contemporary disinformation campaigns. Advanced psychological profiling and data-driven targeting techniques are frequently used to support these initiatives.

Bradshaw and Howard (2018) also estimate that governments and political parties have spent more than half a billion dollars on social media manipulation since 2010. The bulk of these expenditures seems to be concentrated on influencing public opinion, stifling dissent, or winning elections, even though some are made under the guise of combating extremism.

These worldwide trends in digital interference offer a framework for comparison when examining comparable practices in India. They also highlight how urgent it is to research social media's impact in democracies and assess the ways in which manipulation proliferates during elections, emergencies, or sociopolitical shifts.

2.4 Political Marketing: A Conceptual Framework

Today's successful businesses are well aware of their customers' digital behaviour, networks, and sentiments. They base their digital marketing campaigns on the digital behaviour of their targeted clients or prospects. They even monitor the reach and success/failure factors of their digital media marketing campaigns, and they keep improving the campaign's success rate by analysing digital customer behaviour.

In keeping with this pattern, a successful political party and candidate today is well aware of the voting habits of their constituents. Voters' digital behaviour informs their digital political campaign. The influence of the political candidate and ideology is assessed by tracking and managing each of these campaigns using the principles of digital campaign management.

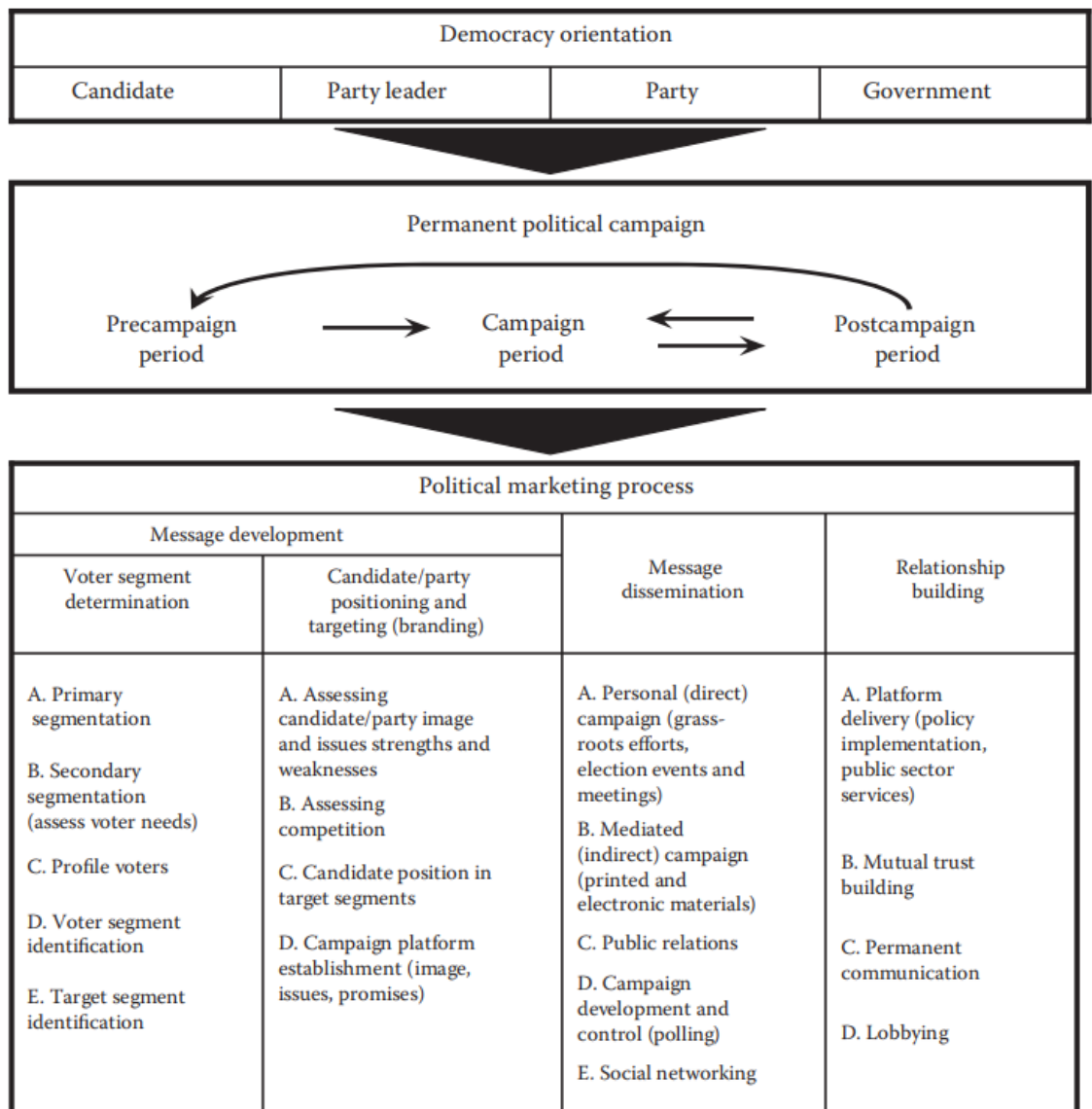
2.5 A More Complex Approach to Political Marketing

A theoretical model of political marketing based on the idea of a permanent campaign was presented by Cwalina, Falkowski, and Newman (2011). According to this theory, political marketing is a long-term, ongoing process that influences how governments and parties function rather than just being a short-term, tactical tool used to garner support from voters during election seasons. According to this perspective, political marketing serves as the guiding concept for the creation and upkeep of party plans and governmental regulations. According to Nimmo (1999), a permanent campaign is a continuous process of change that never really ends. According to this viewpoint, governance turns into an ongoing campaign in which public institutions are repurposed to maintain and improve the popularity and public image of an elected official.

Building on Newman's (1994) seminal work, the model on page 17 provides a framework for comprehending political marketing. It highlights how political campaigns are ongoing and cyclical, showing how voter participation is sustained throughout the pre-, during-, and post-election phases. Throughout the political lifecycle, the model describes the methodical procedures that direct strategic messaging, communication, and relationship-building initiatives.

- Democracy Orientation:
 - The Democracy Orientation, which comprises the Candidate, Party Leader, Party, and Government, is the first part of the framework. These organisations play a key role in the planning and implementation of the political marketing strategy.
- Permanent Political Campaign:
 - Precampaign Period: The first stage that emphasises planning and early voter participation.
 - Campaign Period: The active stage of the campaign, during which the most intense messaging and direct voter contact take place.
 - Post-campaign Period: Following the election, efforts are directed towards upholding voter relations and governance.
 - The arrows show how these phases are cyclical and continuous, implying that relationship-building and political campaigning are ongoing endeavours.
- Political Marketing Process:

- Message Development: This entails identifying voter segments, evaluating the party's or candidate's reputation, and creating the campaign platform.
- Message Dissemination: This includes public relations, social networking, and direct and indirect campaigns, and it describes how the campaign's messages are spread to the general public.
- Relationship Building: Emphasises long-term tactics, such as lobbying, communication, and policy delivery, to preserve voter support and trust.



Political Marketing Model (Newman, 1994)

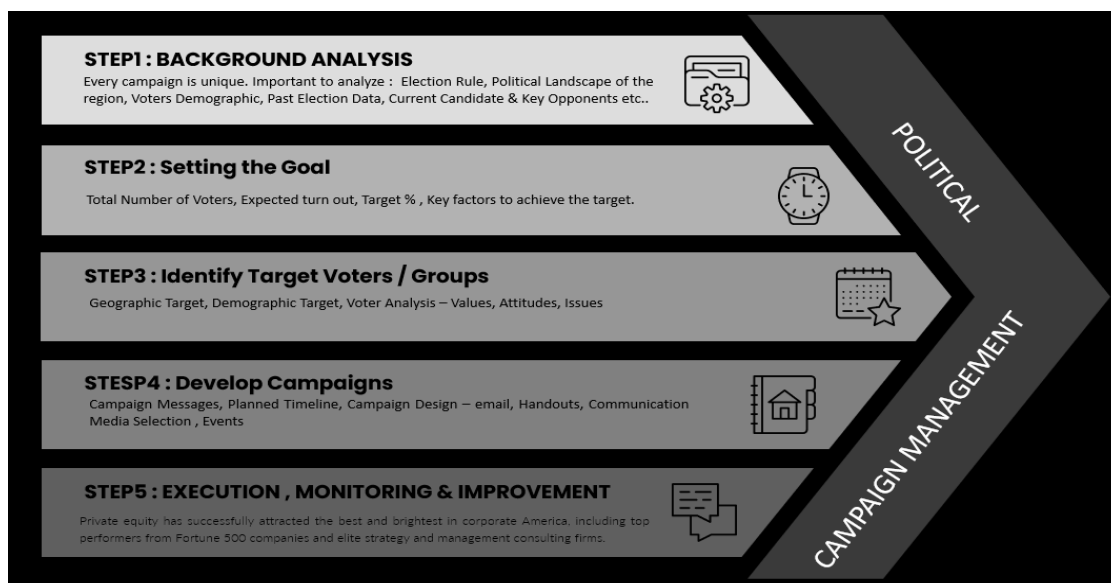
2.6 The Procedure for Managing Political Campaigns

The process of managing a political campaign is intricate and structured, requiring careful preparation, coordination, and execution. Clear messaging, consistent voter engagement, and operational discipline are the foundation of an effective campaign rather than shortcuts or gimmicks. Campaigns are frequently distinguished by their intensity, which includes extensive volunteer coordination, resource mobilisation, and media activity under stringent time constraints.

Candidate positioning, message development, media planning, voter outreach, fundraising, data analysis, and logistics are the fundamental elements that make up campaign management. The ability to combine these elements into a coherent strategy that appeals to specific voter segments determines a campaign's success.

Furthermore, political campaigns are crucial to the operation of contemporary democratic systems in addition to being instruments of electoral competition. Candidates share their policy agendas, get input from voters, and take part in the broader democratic conversation through coordinated campaigning. As a result, good campaign management is essential to influencing political engagement and improving electoral transparency.

Newman (1994) created the Model of Political Marketing, which we can further simplify as a five-step procedure as follows:



This detailed procedure for managing political campaigns is offered by the majority of digital social media campaign management tools.

2.7 The Theory of Social Media Manipulation

In conversations about digital democracy and election integrity, social media manipulation has become a major issue. The Oxford Internet Institute reports that organised manipulation campaigns increased by 150% worldwide between 2017 and 2019, with evidence of such activities detected in at least 44 countries (Bradshaw and Howard, 2019). More than 40% of people worldwide now think social media plays a role in political polarisation and foreign influence in domestic affairs.

The term "information manipulation" describes a set of coordinated tactics that include the production, modification, and distribution of content with the goal of influencing public opinion or upsetting democratic processes. Although these tactics might make use of conventional media like radio or television, recent studies have concentrated on their digital iterations. Threat actors, content, tactics, and vectors are

the four main dimensions that can be used to analyse digital manipulation mechanisms.

A. Threat Actors

A wide range of actors frequently manipulate information. These could be political parties, state-sponsored organisations, or private organisations like troll farms. Government-sponsored cyber troops are especially effective at disseminating politically motivated misinformation, according to Bradshaw and Howard (2019). Ferrara et al. (2016) also draw attention to the widespread use of automated bots and phoney accounts to mimic interaction, increase visibility, and spread misleading information.

B. Content

The goal of manipulated content is to influence public opinion by taking advantage of psychological triggers like loyalty, rage, or fear. Fake news spreads faster than verified information, according to Vosoughi, Roy, and Aral (2018). This is primarily because fake news is designed to be sensational and emotionally impactful. Furthermore, new technologies that distort visual and aural realities, such as deepfakes (hyper-realistic synthetic media), pose significant risks and make it more difficult to verify authentic content (Chesney and Citron, 2019).

C. Strategies

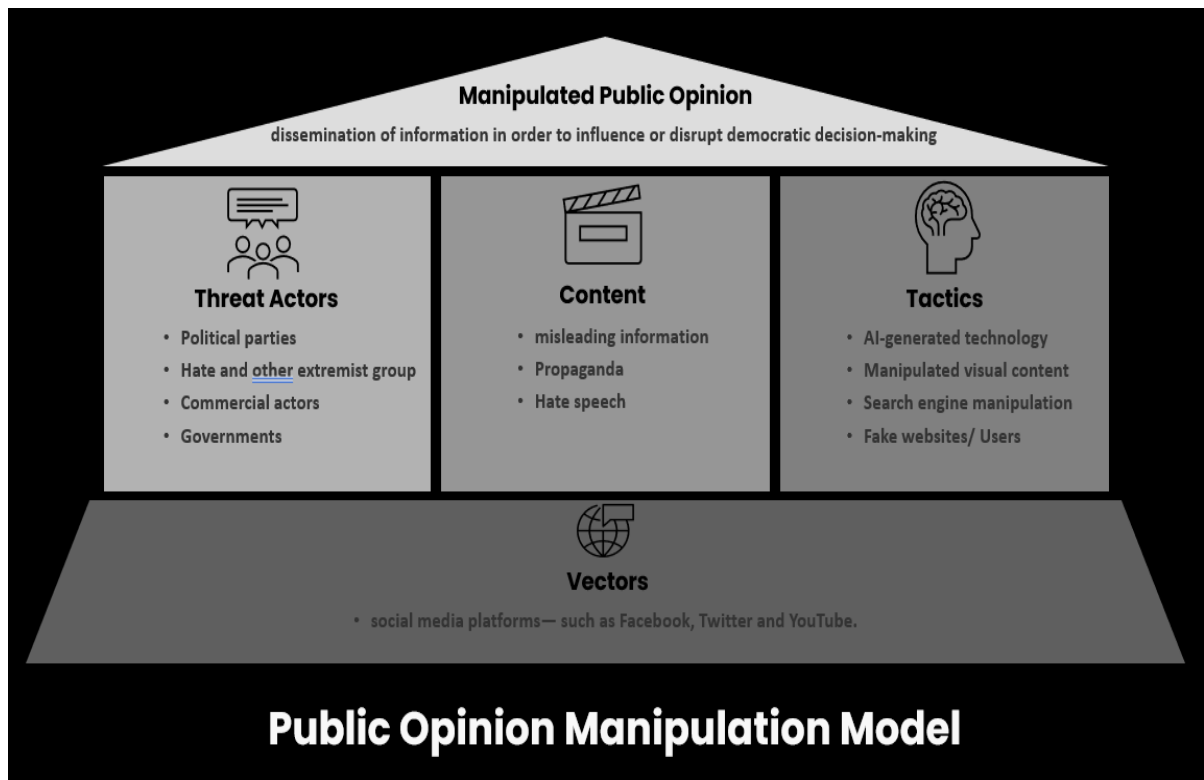
Different methods are used in strategies for digital editing. One of these is algorithmic manipulation, which uses platform-specific suggestion systems to make ideological echo chambers stronger and keep users from hearing different points of view (Pariser, 2011). Furthermore, state actors and political campaigns have employed microtargeting and targeted advertising based on

behavioural data to affect voter behaviour on an individual basis (Zhuravskaya, Petrova, and Enikolopov, 2020).

D. Vectors

Although popular sites like YouTube, Facebook, Twitter (now X), and TikTok are commonly mentioned as the main manipulation vectors, activities also take place on less popular sites like Reddit, TikTok, Instagram, Tumblr, Pinterest, and WeChat. The variety of platforms employed emphasises how multi-channel manipulation campaigns are, frequently coordinating across multiple digital platforms to maximise reach and circumvent platform-specific moderation.

These four aspects taken together provide a theoretical framework for examining the ways in which digital manipulation functions in relation to elections and political communication. Recognising these trends is essential for spotting weak points in electoral ecosystems and guiding the creation of defences to maintain the integrity of democracy.



2.8 Tools for listening: To monitor activity on social media

The methodical process of gathering and examining data from multiple digital platforms to comprehend public interactions, attitudes, and behaviours regarding particular political entities, campaigns, or subjects is known as social media listening. Researchers and political strategists can use it to evaluate how voters interact with content both in real time and over time, which gives them important information about the effectiveness and reach of digital campaigns.

Listening tools can measure the amount of conversation surrounding particular political parties or events by compiling content from SM sites like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter. With the use of these tools, analysts can ascertain when users are most active and spot trends over time, whether they be daily, weekly,

or monthly. They can also compute share of voice, which gauges how much focus each political actor or party is getting in the larger conversation.

Sentiment analysis is another feature of sophisticated social listening platforms, which classifies public mentions as neutral, negative, or positive. You can filter these insights by topic, platform, date, or kind of content. Additionally, social media listening can be used to identify the trigger events that cause spikes in online discourse, such as speeches, debates, or controversies.

This kind of analysis can be supported by a wide range of tools. Platforms like Locobuzz, BrandMentions, Brand24, and Reputation.com, for instance, provide trend mapping, influencer identification, real-time tracking, and visual analytics dashboards. Political analysts, media outlets, and scholarly researchers are using these tools more frequently to assess the success of campaigns and track public opinion during election seasons.

SM listening is a vital tool for political campaigns, helping to shape digital strategy, crisis management, and voter engagement initiatives. It enables political actors to react to online discourse more skilfully by bridging the gap between digital action and public perception.

2.9 Summary

Political marketing theories have changed dramatically over the last 20 years, especially in reaction to the explosive growth of digital communication channels. Social media's rise and broad use have revolutionised conventional campaign tactics, making digital interaction a crucial part of contemporary political communication.

Social media has evolved into a strategic tool that allows political actors to create messages that are specifically targeted, interact with particular voter segments,

and track public opinion in real time. The trend towards data-driven, ongoing campaigning is reflected in the permanent campaign theory, the strategic application of sentiment analysis, and the increasing dependence on predictive modelling.

Researchers and political strategists can now measure public sentiment, track digital conversations, and identify patterns of engagement and manipulation thanks to the development of sophisticated social media listening tools like BrandMentions, Brand24, Reputation.com, and Locobuzz. These platforms can offer early warnings about possible misinformation or coordinated propaganda efforts in addition to making campaign evaluation easier.

All things considered, the reviewed literature confirms that real-time data, behavioural insights, and strategic digital infrastructure are becoming more and more important in political campaigning in the digital age. The necessity of using SMP responsibly during election processes is further supported by the opportunities and manipulation risks these capabilities present for democratic participation.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview of the Research Problem

By allowing people to create communities, voice their opinions, and participate in civic discourse, social media by design supports the democratic process. Through these platforms, users can form interest-based groups, express their opinions, and take part in conversations influenced by common cultural identities, tastes, and beliefs. These same traits, however, also make social media vulnerable to abuse, especially when it comes to concerted efforts to sway public opinion.

According to Howard and Bradshaw (2019), the spread of toxic narratives and fake news has become the new norm in political communication globally, and social media manipulation has become more widespread. According to their research, seven countries—China, India, Iran, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela—are "sophisticated state actors" that use social media to launch coordinated influence campaigns. The authors refer to these campaigns as being run by "cyber troops," devoted agents who use computational propaganda methods to skew public opinion. The study also discovered that 87% of these manipulation attempts involved human agents, demonstrating the scope and complexity of such practices, while bot accounts are widely used in 80% of the countries examined.

These results demonstrate the obvious need for targeted scholarly research on social media politics, particularly during election seasons. Any significant analysis must be grounded in the particular national and regional context because user behaviour, platform usage, and political dynamics vary across nations and elections.

India makes a compelling case for such an inquiry because it is the largest democracy in the world and has one of the highest concentrations of internet users

worldwide. During recent election cycles, social media's incorporation into political campaigns has become particularly noticeable. Examining the extent to which social media may have been used to sway public opinion on political and social issues, this study focuses on the Indian state elections of 2022–2023.

The study aims to advance our knowledge of how digital platforms impact electoral processes by detecting and evaluating evidence of manipulation, such as the spread of false information, the use of phoney profiles, or sentiment engineering. The ultimate objective is to aid in the creation of well-informed tactics and legislative measures that can improve democratic governance and lessen the detrimental effects of social media manipulation.

3.2 Theoretical Constructs

It is clear from the literature review from multiple sources that social media is being used to sway political elections all over the world. Several studies have shown that social media is also widely used during the Indian general elections. Research on potential social media manipulations to divide public opinion on significant political issues during India's general election, however, is extremely lacking.

Therefore, with an understanding of political campaign management, theories of social media manipulation, and the appropriate social listening tool, a more thorough investigation can provide a far more in-depth understanding of social media usage in the Indian political context.

3.3 Research Purpose and Questions

This study aims to investigate how users behave on social media platforms about specific election-related subjects during India's 2023–2024 State Elections. In particular, the study seeks to respond to the following enquiries:

- Does social media have an impact on the Indian General Election? To answer this question, a thorough examination of the social media campaigns of the three main India National Political parties will be conducted.
- Do sentiments on social media have an impact on India's general election? The actual election outcome will be contrasted with an analysis of public sentiment and social media usage by different parties.
- Examine and investigate proof of social media manipulation to sway public opinion; conduct additional research to ascertain its effects.
- The broader goal is to raise public awareness of social media manipulations in order to fortify democracy. In addition to offering recommendations and best practices for political usage, the research can assist us in analyzing and developing policies to outlaw social media manipulation.

3.4 Research Design

The growing popularity and political clout of SMP in India have influenced the design of this study. In India, there were 751.5 million internet users at the beginning of 2024, which translates to a 52.4% internet penetration rate, according to DataReportal (2024). Additionally, 462 million people, or 32.2% of the population, were active social media users. In a democratic setting, where online content is increasingly mediating political messaging and opinion formation, this digital shift is especially important.

A breakdown of platform usage by individual aids in identifying the study's focus areas:

- Facebook: One of India's biggest social networking sites, Facebook has 366.9 million users. 32.4% of the eligible population (those over 13) is reached by its advertisements.
- YouTube: With 462 million subscribers, the platform matched India's total social media user base and demonstrated a high degree of content engagement.
- Instagram: 362.9 million users were reported, with approximately 32.1% of the eligible population being covered.
- Twitter (X): Despite having a much smaller user base (25.5 million), its significance in political discourse, influencer campaigns, and trending narratives makes it a strategically significant source of information (DataReportal, 2024; Oberlo, 2024).

Platform Selection

The study focuses on Instagram, Twitter (X), and YouTube, as well as a few web-based news outlets that enhance or mirror political discourse on social media, based on this statistical landscape and the significance of each platform in the Indian political ecosystem.

These platforms were selected due to:

- Their use by political actors, parties, and influencers;
- Their acceptance and penetration among Indian voters
- The public data they make available for monitoring and listening
- Their backing of multimedia content, which is frequently essential for engagement and manipulating sentiment

Research Approach

This study uses a mixed-methods research design, integrating quantitative and qualitative techniques to offer a thorough grasp of SMM and behavior during the Indian state elections in 2023–2024.

- **Quantitative Analysis** measures sentiment polarity (positive, negative, and neutral), time-based content trends, the frequency of particular hashtags or keywords, and engagement metrics (likes, shares, retweets, and mentions).
- **Qualitative Analysis** incorporates thematic analysis of news articles, influencer content, user posts, and comment threads to extract context, meaning, and narrative framing. Additionally, it looks for potentially coordinated actions, like the propagation of false information or the establishment of echo chambers.

Tool Selection and Justification

A variety of listening and social media analytics tools were evaluated for their capacity to:

- Track both historical and real-time data.
- Monitor hashtags and keywords specific to a campaign or issue.
- Assess the degree of engagement and sentiment
- When available, provide demographic or geographic segmentation.
- Create datasets that can be exported and visualized.

Awario was chosen for this study out of all the tools that were assessed because of its real-time content monitoring capabilities across YouTube, Instagram,

Twitter, and online news sources. Awario is a good option for both exploratory and confirmatory research tasks because it also offers automated sentiment analysis, trend detection, influencer identification, and data visualization..

Alignment with Research Objectives

The major goals of the study are to:

- Examine the degree of political discourse and manipulation on social media during the elections
- Identify potential coordinated attempts to sway public opinion or perception
- Offer insights based on data to aid in the creation of countermeasures and policy suggestions.

This methodology, which combines statistical data analysis with narrative and contextual interpretation, ensures both breadth and depth in understanding how social media was used—both creatively and destructively—during a pivotal point in India's democratic process.

Feature/Tool	Awario	Keyhole	Locobuzz
Overview	A social listening tool that tracks mentions, analyzes sentiment, and provides reports.	A real-time social media monitoring tool focused on tracking hashtags, keywords, and user engagement.	A comprehensive social media management and monitoring platform with CRM capabilities.

Key Features	- Real-time monitoring - Sentiment analysis - Social selling tool - Boolean search - Competitive analysis	- Hashtag & keyword tracking - Influencer tracking - Real-time analytics - Automated reports - Historical data tracking	- Real-time social listening - Sentiment analysis - CRM integration - Multi-channel engagement - Competitor analysis
Supported Platforms	- Twitter - Facebook - Instagram - YouTube - Reddit - Web & Blogs	- Twitter - Facebook - Instagram - YouTube - TikTok - Web & Blogs	- Twitter - Facebook - Instagram - YouTube - LinkedIn - WhatsApp - Web & Blogs
Pricing	- Starting at \$29/month - Offers free trial	- Starting at \$79/month - Offers free trial	- Custom pricing (based on requirements)
Best For	Small to medium businesses and agencies looking for affordable and flexible social media listening solutions.	Businesses and marketers focused on influencer marketing, campaign tracking, and real-time insights.	Enterprises and brands needing a comprehensive tool that combines social listening with

			customer engagement and CRM.
Strengths	- Affordable - Detailed sentiment analysis - Good for small businesses	- Strong focus on hashtag and influencer tracking - Real-time insights - Useful for campaign monitoring	- Comprehensive tool with multi-channel integration - CRM capabilities - Strong customer support
Weaknesses	- No CRM features	- More expensive for small businesses - Limited CRM capabilities	- Can be overwhelming for small businesses - Custom pricing may be higher

Steps to collect data using Awario App:

- Set up Alerts (a mix of key words)
 - Awario will keep an eye on these alerts across a number of social media sites.
 - This could be a name, a hashtag, a link to a website, or any other word.
- Make sure that social media sites can be watched.
 - Twitter - Sign in with your own account.

- YouTube - Sign in with your own account.
 - Instagram - Sign in with your own account.
- Awario gives a lot of reports, and also downloads data to look at it more closely.

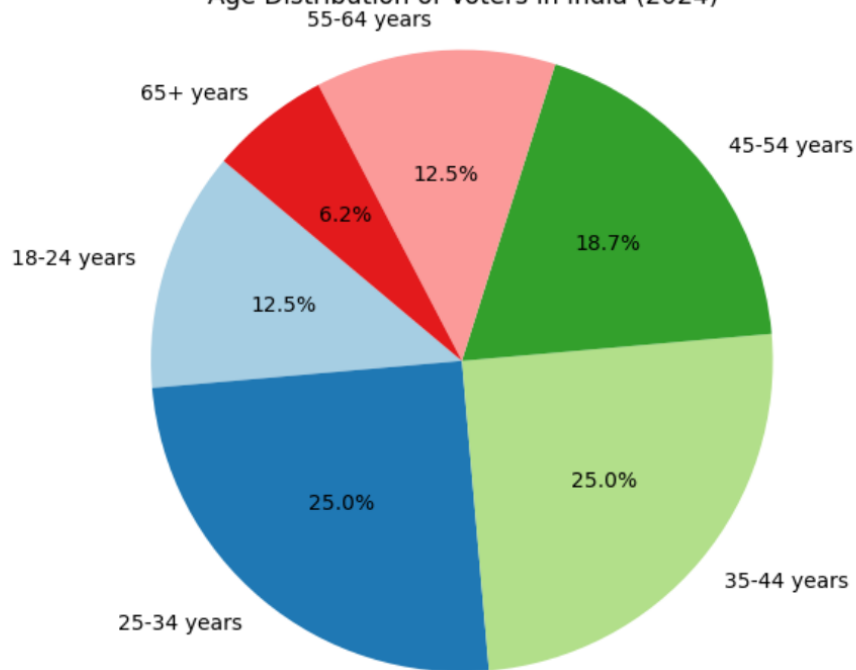
Topic	Approach	Comments
Research Type	Mixed Method	● Data Sampling Techniques: Analyze various recent political topics/campaigns, identify prominent political parties, Identify Key words & Topics to be used for sampling, use these keywords & topics to extract social media data using identified data collection tool. ● Quantitative Method – To qualify the impact of political campaign, to quantify the reach/engagements, to understand the actors' characteristics. ● Qualitative Method – To understand the public sentiments around the specific campaign, to analyze the tactics & content behind the campaign.
Research Method	Observational Studies	● Data Collection Tool: Using social media monitoring tools- Awario App ● Quantitative Observation: Observations related to specific political campaign & its participants demographic. Observations related to participants social media accounts.

		● Qualitative Observation: Observations related to participants sentiments, fake messages, fake accounts, information manipulations etc.
Practicalities		● Need to do manual research on various social media monitoring tool to select the most appropriate one. ● Need to do manual research on various social media / news / mass media to understand/identify few important current political topics. ● Once the political topics / keyword identified, need to use social media monitoring tool to extract around 50K-75K interactions as the research sample data. ● Python Machine Learning libraries can be used further to analyze the extracted data set. ● It is a time-consuming data collection & analysis process & can take 4 – 6 months' period.

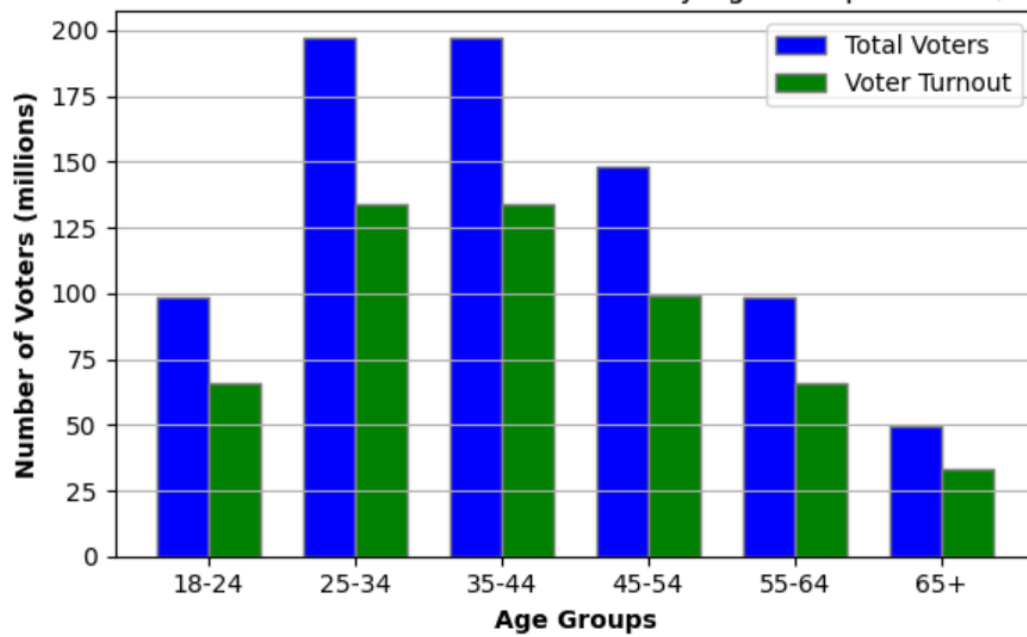
3.5 Population and Sample

The following describes the demographics of Indian voters, according to the Press Information Bureau, Government of India, and Election Commission of India:

Age Distribution of Voters in India (2024)



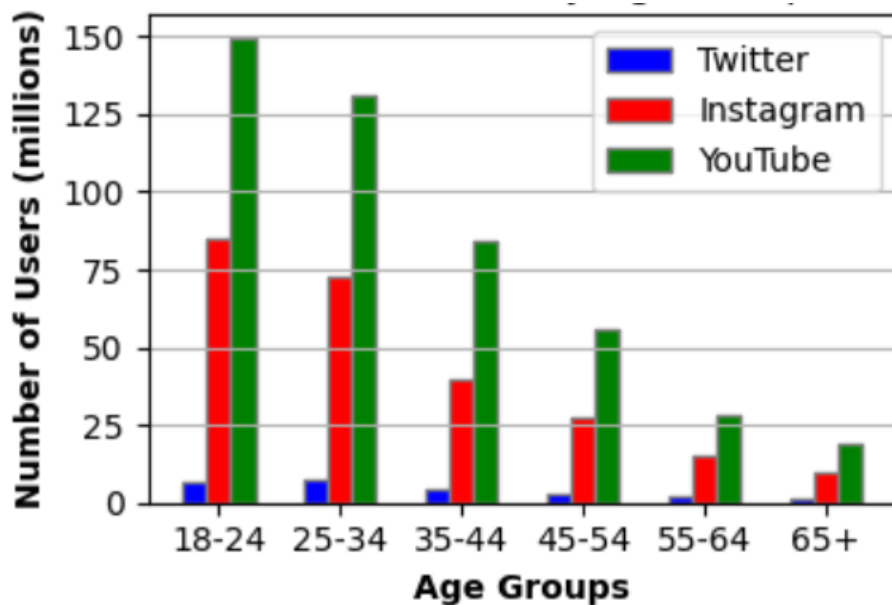
Total Number of Voters vs Voter Turnout by Age Group in India (2024)



Below are active YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter users.

- Twitter: An estimated 26.08 million Indians are active users.
- Instagram: There are an estimated 250 million active users in India.
- YouTube: An estimated 462 million Indians are active users.

The following is the age distribution of these active users:



- The age groups of 25–34 and 35–44 are the most visible for election-related conversations, according to our sample data collection exercise.
- Since the 25–34 and 35–44 age groups are the target group for social media data collection, the snapshot of our population and sample is shown below.

A. Population - Total population of India – 986 million

- Avg turnout of voters in Age Group 25-34 and 35-44 : ~250 million

B. Sample - Total no of users in social media - ~ 630 million

- (YouTube, Instagram, Twitter)
 - YouTube - ~400 millions
 - Instagram - ~200 millions
 - Twitter - ~30 millions

C. Population – Mentions

- 10,000,00 mentions on an avg over 6 months.

D. Sample – Mentions (~10%)

- YouTube - ~20k sample mentions
- Instagram - ~70k sample mentions
- Twitter - ~10k mentions

3.6 Participant Selection

Awario.com, a common social media monitoring tool, is chosen to gather the data. Regardless of the participants in the discussion topics, this social media monitoring tool will randomly retrieve the specified mentions. The mentions will be drawn in according to the following criteria:

- Selected keywords

- Location
- The chosen SMP are Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.

3.7 Instrumentation

Businesses can track mentions, monitor their brand, and get insights from a variety of online platforms with Awario.com, a comprehensive social listening and analytics tool. Awario offers a strong feature set as a data analysis tool that aids in competitive analysis, audience engagement, and brand sentiment understanding.

- Awario as an Instrumentation Tool:
- Real-Time Monitoring:
 - Awario keeps a real-time eye on the internet, blogs, forums, news websites, and social media platforms.
 - It provides real-time alerts and updates when certain keywords, brand names, or competitors are mentioned.
- Sentiment Analysis:
 - The tool analyzes the sentiment behind each mention using sophisticated algorithms.
 - Assists companies with brand perception and early crisis detection.
- Comprehensive Analytics:

- Awario provides comprehensive mention analytics, encompassing metrics such as share of voice, reach, and engagement.
- Reports summarizing the data and offering insights into trends and patterns can be generated by users.
- Competitive Analysis:
 - Companies can monitor and compare the mentions of their rivals.
 - This feature facilitates benchmarking against competitors and the identification of industry trends.
- Influencer Identification:
 - Awario finds important advocates and influencers who use the brand or pertinent keywords.
 - This enables companies to interact with influencers and use their audience for advertising campaigns.
- Data Export and Integration:
 - Data in a variety of formats can be exported by users for additional analysis.
 - Awario's usefulness in more comprehensive data analysis workflows is increased by its integration with other tools and platforms.
- Customizable Alerts and Dashboards:

- Users can create personalized notifications for particular terms or mentions using the tool.
- Dashboards can be tailored to show the most pertinent data and indicators.

Awario is an important tool for collecting and analyzing data from many different web sources. It gives you the raw data and basic analytics that you can look at in more depth using more advanced data analysis tools and methods. Because it gives you raw data, you can do more analysis on top of it.

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

As mentioned before, the Awario app uses alerts (a combination of key terms) to keep an eye on social media sites. Awario App is an app that lets you keep an eye on social media. Most social media monitoring services function by sending notifications and using filters to keep an eye on the sites.

The Awario app keeps an eye on every part of the Web for mentions of your keywords in real time, so you are always the first to know about the talks.

- Mentions: These are Keywords or hashtags
- Alerts: A list of important words that you want to keep an eye on across social networking sites
- Sample Alert to find mentions of the BJP on social media

Settings for BJP

 Show help

Add the keywords you'd like to collect the results for. Fill out the Excluded keywords field if there are any words you'd like to exclude. This will make your results more accurate.

Keywords: 

#bjporg ×

+ "#bjp4india" ×

#BJP4India ×

++ "bjp" ×

++ "sambitswaraj" ×

++ "AmitShah" ×

+ "@BJP4India" ×

++ "modi" ×

+ "BJP" ×

#BharatiyaJanataParty ×

#sudhanshutrivedi ×

+ "bjp.org" ×

#BJP ×

+ "Bharatiya Janata Party" ×

++ "NarendraModi" ×

+ "#BJP" ×

++ "amitshahofficial" ×

Excluded keywords: 

"general mills"

- To narrow down our search, below filters can be used:

Advanced alert settings

Narrow down the search to specific languages, locations, sources, and date range. This way, you'll get less mentions, but they will be more accurate.

Languages:  All languages 

Locations:  Narrow down to specific countries, or states, or cities

Sources: 

Include Historical Data

 Delete Alert

- ☒ Twitter
- ☒ Facebook
- ☒ Instagram (does not support the Country filter)
- ☒ YouTube
- ☒ Vimeo
- ☒ Reddit (does not support the Country filter)
- ☒ News/Blogs

- Boolean search to further narrow down the search:

In search engines, boolean search is a manual search method. Boolean search allows you to add keywords along with Boolean operators like AND, NOT, AND NOT, etc. to create a more complex search query than conventional searches, which are simply keyword searches followed by waiting for the result (in Google, YouTube, social listening tools, etc.).

The production of the data sample is split into two main stages in light of India's size, population, and variety.

3.8.1 Phase 1: Collecting general data before the election

- Date Range – Last Six months, from November 2023 to April 2024
- Alerts – Based on popular party names.
 - Alert 1 – BJP.

Settings for BJP

× Hide help

Add the keywords you'd like to collect the results for. Fill out the Excluded keywords field if there are any words you'd like to exclude. This will make your results more accurate.

Keywords: ?

#bjporg	×	+"bjp4india"	×	#BJP4India	×
++"bjp"	×	++"sambitswara"	×	++"AmitShah"	×
+'@BJP4India"	×	++"modi"	×	+"BJP"	×
#BharatiyaJanataParty	×	#sudhanshutrivedi	×		
+"bjp.org"	×	#BJP	×	+"Bharatiya Janata Party"	×
++"NarendraModi"	×	+"#BJP"	×		
++"amitshahofficial"	×				

Excluded keywords: ?

"general mills"

- Alert 2 – APP

Settings for AAP

 Hide help

Add the keywords you'd like to collect the results for. Fill out the Excluded keywords field if there are any words you'd like to exclude. This will make your results more accurate.

Keywords: 

++"ArvindKejriwal"  ++"BhagwantMann" 
++"AAPReport"  ++"AamAadmiParty" 
++"Aam Aadmi Party"  aamaadmiparty.org 
++"AAP"  #AAP  ++"AamAadmiPar" 

Excluded keywords: 

"general mills"

- Alert 3 – TMC

Settings for TMC

 Hide help

Add the keywords you'd like to collect the results for. Fill out the Excluded keywords field if there are any words you'd like to exclude. This will make your results more accurate.

Keywords: 

++"MamataOfficial"  aitcofficial.org 
++"SaketGokhale"  ++"abhishekaite" 
++"MahuaMoitra"  facebook.com/AITCofficial 
#trinamool  #mamatabanerjee 
++"saket.gokhale"  ++"AITCofficial" 
#tmc #trinamoolcongress 

Excluded keywords: 

"general mills"

- Alert 4 – Congress

Settings for Congress

[×](#) Hide help

Add the keywords you'd like to collect the results for. Fill out the Excluded keywords field if there are any words you'd like to exclude. This will make your results more accurate.

Keywords: 

#congress 

#rahulgandhi 

twitter.com/INCIndia 

INCIndia 

++"ashokgehlot51" 

instagram.com/incindia 

++"supriyasule" 

++"rsurjewala" 

++RahulGandhi 

++"SachinPilot" 

youtube.com/user/indiacongress 

#bharatjodoyatra 

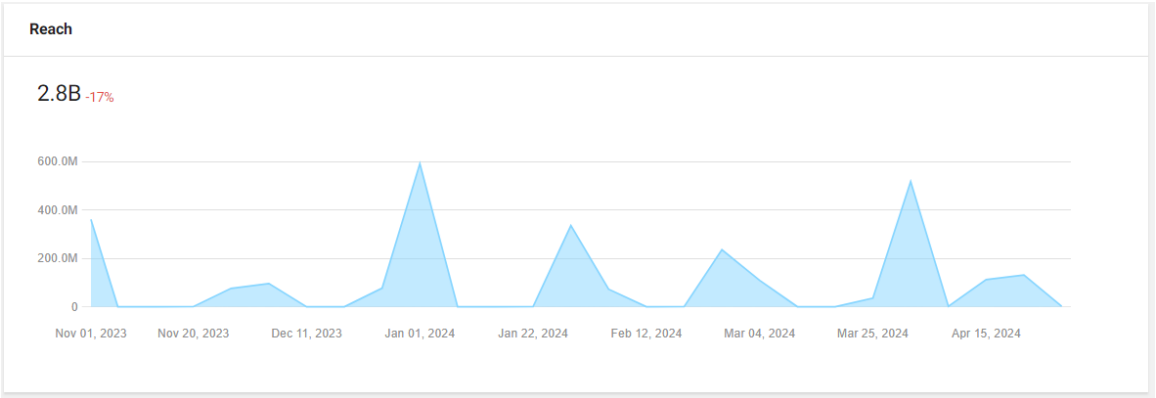
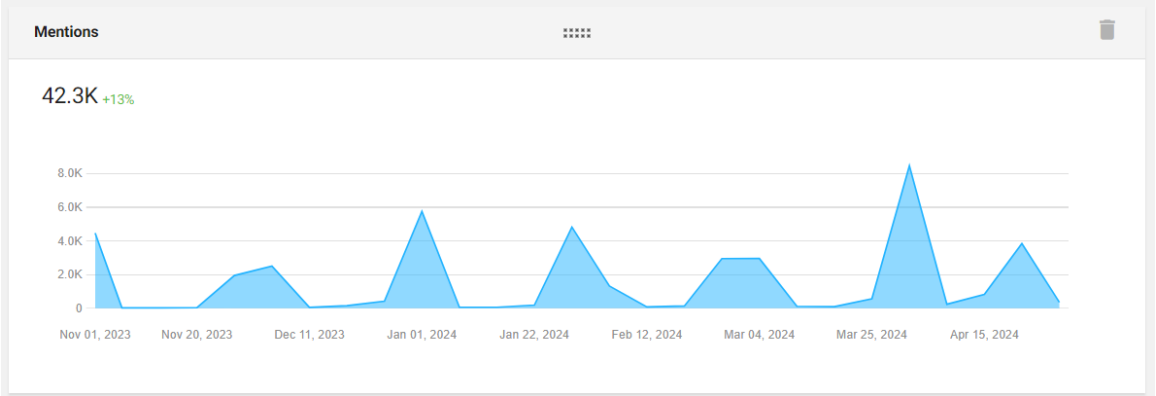
++"priyankagandhi" 

Excluded keywords: 

"general mills" 

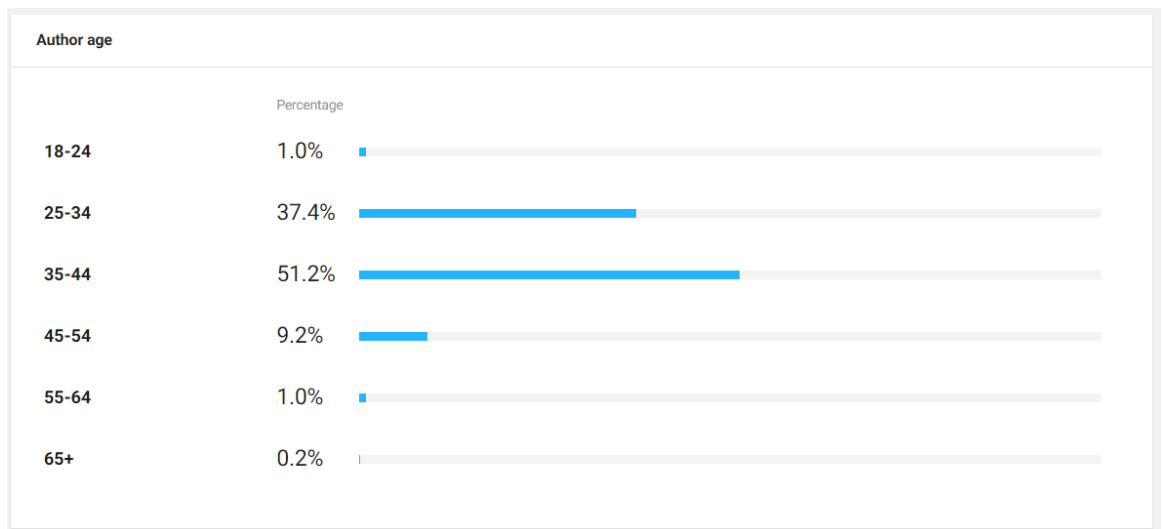
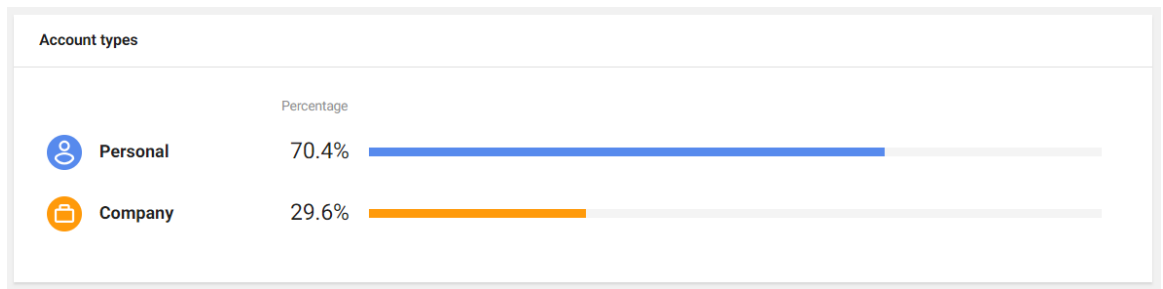
- Talks about how people on social media generally feel about the big political groups.
 - BJP
 - APP
 - TMC
 - Congress
- Shows how people of different political parties feel about politics on social media sites in general.
 - Instagram
 - Twitter
 - Generic Web

Phase 1: Summarising the information gathered:



Sources by mentions

	Mentions	Difference	Percentage
Instagram	28.9K	+83%	68.4%
Web	10.3K	-49%	24.3%
Twitter	3.1K	+117%	7.3%



3.8.2 Phase 2: Collecting data based on location

The announced schedule for the current Lok Sabha election is taken into consideration when creating a data sample. The election will be held nationwide in seven phases, according to the notification made by the Indian government. A certain state and constituency are covered by each phase. Phases are covered in Table 1, while states and constituencies are covered in Table 2 according to phases. The states and places below were chosen for more in-depth data collection.

- Bengaluru, Karnataka, Kerala, West Bengal, Delhi
- Date Range – 1st April 2024 to 10th June 2024

- Political Parties – BJP, Congress, APP, TMC
- Social Media – Instagram, Twitter, YouTube

Alerts that were created as an example:

Alert 1 : Congress, Bengaluru

Settings for Congress - P..  × Hide help

Add the keywords you'd like to collect the results for. Fill out the Excluded keywords field if there are any words you'd like to exclude. This will make your results more accurate.

Keywords: 

#india ×

sachinpilotreels ×

#sachinpilotrajasthanpilot ×

#congress ×

#Congress ×

#kannada ×

#election2024 ×

#Delhi ×

#Loksabha2024 ×

#karnatakaelections ×

#loksabhaelection2024 ×

#dkshivakumar ×

#sachinpilot ×

#RahulGandhi ×

#karnatakacongress ×

#rahulgandhi ×

#rajivgowda ×

#soniyagandhi ×

#sachinpilotreels ×

#congressParty ×

#karnataka ×

#inckarnataka ×

#dvsadandagowda ×

#aicc ×

#kpcc ×

#priyankaghandhivadra ×

#sachinpilotfans ×

#sachinpilotforcm ×

#sachinpilotkesaath ×

#INCIndia ×

#MallikarjunKharge ×

Excluded keywords: 

"general mills"

Alert 2 : BJP, Bengaluru

Settings for BJP - Phase ...

× Hide help

Add the keywords you'd like to collect the results for. Fill out the Excluded keywords field if there are any words you'd like to exclude. This will make your results more accurate.

Keywords: ?

#bjp4india × +*Bhawratiya Janata Party' ×
#LokSabhaElections2024 × ++*sambitswaraj" ×
++*AmitShah" × +*bjpy.org" × #BharatiyaJanataParty ×
#BJP × ++*NarendraModi" × #Modi4PM2024 ×
#bjporg × ++*bjp" × #ModiAgainIn2024 ×
#ModiHaiToMumkinHai × ++*modi" × +*BJP" ×
#fir_ak_bar_modi_sarkar × #LokSabha ×
#jaisanatanadharma × #PMModi × #Sudhanshutrivedi ×
#ModiKiGuarantee × +*#BJP" × ++*amitshahofficial" ×
@Tejasvi_Surya ×

Excluded keywords: ?

"general mills"

Alert 3 : Congress, West Bengal

Settings for Congress - P...

× Hide help

Add the keywords you'd like to collect the results for. Fill out the Excluded keywords field if there are any words you'd like to exclude. This will make your results more accurate.

Keywords: ?

#india × sachinpilotreels × #sachinpilotrasthanpilot ×
#congress × #Congress × #kannada ×
#election2024 × #Delhi × #Loksabha2024 ×
#karnatakaelections × #lokhsabhaelection2024 ×
#dkshivakumar × #sachinpilot × #RahulGandhi ×
#karnatakacongress × #rahulgandhi × #rajivgowda ×
#soniyagandhi × #sachinpilotreels × #congressParty ×
#karnataka × #inckarnataka × #dvsadandagowda ×
#aicc × #kpcc × #priyankaghandhivadra ×
#sachinpilotfans × #sachinpilotforcm ×
#sachinpilotkesaath × #INCIndia × #MallikarjunKharge ×

Excluded keywords: ?

"general mills"

Alert 4 : BJP, West Bengal

Settings for BJP - Phase ...

× Hide help

Add the keywords you'd like to collect the results for. Fill out the Excluded keywords field if there are any words you'd like to exclude. This will make your results more accurate.

Keywords: ?

#loksabhaelections2024 × #LokSabhaElections2024 ×
#ModiAgainIn2024 × #ModiHaiToMumkinHai ×
#BharatiyaJanataParty × #abkibaar400paar ×
#AmitShah × #bjp × #LokSabha ×
#KarnatakaLoksabhaPolls #AmitShah #RoadShow #BengaluruSo... ×
#TejasviSurya #VijayendraVediyurappa#JPNadda#amitshahofficial ×
#ModiKiGuarantee × @TejasviSuryaLS × #BJP4UP ×
#BJP4IND × #PhirEkBaarModiSarkar × #WestBengal ×
#West Bengal ×

Excluded keywords: ?

general mills

Alert 5 : TMC, West Bengal

Settings for TMC - Phase ...

× Hide help

Add the keywords you'd like to collect the results for. Fill out the Excluded keywords field if there are any words you'd like to exclude. This will make your results more accurate.

Keywords: ?

@TrinankurWBTMCP ×
#AITC #TMC #INDIABlock #INDIAAlliance × #narendramodi ×
#isfnews × trinamoolcongress × @Nabarun204 ×
#pmmodi × @sagarikaghose ×
@aitcsudip @aitcshovan × @Tanmoy_Fetsu ×
#cpimnews × #election2024 × #WestbengalNews ×
@AITCSanghamitra × #tmc × #LokSabhaElection2024 ×
#trinamool × @ItsYourDev × @SushmitaDevAITC ×
#cpim_news × #latestnews × #westbengal ×
++*MahuaMoitra* × #isf × @NilanjanDasAITC ×
@IndiaWantsMB × @PritishRoyAITC ×
@derekobrienmp × #modi × @SMitra ×
@abhishekaitc × @TMC_Supporters × #cpim ×
@MamataOfficial × #EiSamay × #naushad ×
@sayantika12 × #mamatabanerjee × #naushadsiddiqui ×

Excluded keywords: ?

general mills

3.8.3 Parts of the Lok Sabha election 2024

The 2024 Indian General Elections were conducted in seven phases”, with the first four occurring on April 19, April 26, May 7, and May 13, respectively, across multiple states (Election Commission of India, 2024).

Phases	Voting date	States
Phase 1	April 19	21
Phase 2	April 26	13
Phase 3	May 7	12
Phase 4	May 13	10
Phase 5	May 20	8
Phase 6	May 25	7
Phase 7	June 1	8

The 2024 Indian General Elections were conducted in **seven phases**, with the first four occurring on **April 19, April 26, May 7, and May 13**, respectively, across multiple states (Election Commission of India, 2024).

Phase	States and UTs	Constituencies
April 19	Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, West Bengal,	Arunachal West, Arunachal East, Kaziranga, Sonitpur, Lakhimpur, Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Aurangabad, Gaya, Nawada, Jamui, Bastar, Sidhi, Shahdol, Jabalpur, Mandla, Balaghat, Chhindwara, Ramtek, Nagpur, Bhandara – Gondiya, Gadchiroli – Chimur, Chandrapur, Inner Manipur, Outer Manipur, Shillong, Tura, Mizoram, Nagaland, Ganganagar, Bikaner, Churu, Jhunjhunu, Sikar, Jaipur Rural, Jaipur, Alwar, Bharatpur, Karauli-Dholpur, Dausa, Nagaur, Sikkim, Tiruvallur, Chennai North, Chennai South, Chennai Central, Sriperumbudur, Kancheepuram, Arakkonam, Vellore, Krishnagiri, Dharampuri, Tiruvannamalai, Arani, Viluppuram, Kallakurichi, Salem,

Phase	States and UTs	Constituencies
	Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Jammu and Kashmir, Lakshadweep, Puducherry	Namakkal, Edore, Tiruppur, Nilgiris, Coimbatore, Pollachi, Dindigul, Karur, Tiruchirappalli, Perambalur, Cuddalore, Chidambaram, Mayiladuthurai, Nagapattinam, Thankjavur, Sivaganga, Madurai, Theni, Virudhunagar, Ramanathapuram, Thoothukkudi, Tenkasi, Tirunelveli, Kanniyakumari, Tripura West, "Saharanpur, Kairana, Bijnor, Muzaffarnagar, Nagina, Moradabad, Rampur, Pilibhit, Tehri Garhwal, Garhwal, Almora, Nainital-Udhamsingh Nagar, Hardwar, Coochbehar, Alipurduars, Jalpaiguri, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Udhampur, Lakshadweep, Puducherry
April 26	Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Kerala,	Darrang-Udalguri, Diphu, Karimganj, Silchar, Nagaon, Kishanganj, Katihar, Purnia, Bhagalpur, Banka, Rajnandgaon, Mahasamund, Kanker,

Phase	States and UTs	Constituencies
	Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Rajasthan, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Jammu and Kashmir	Udupi Chikmagalur, Hassan, Dakshina Kannada, Chitradurga, Tumkur, Mandya, Mysore, Chamarajnagar, Bangalore Rural, Bangalore North, Bangalore Central, Bangalore South, Chikballapur, Kolar, Kasargod, Kannur, Vadakara, Wayanad, Kozhikode, Malappuram, Ponnani, Palakkad, Alathur, Thrissur, Chalakudy, Ernakulam, Idukki, Kottayam, Alappuzha, Mavelikkara, Pathanamthitta, Kollam, Attingal, Thiruvananthapuram, Tikamgarh, Damoh, Khajuraho, Satna, Rewa, Hoshangabad, Betul, Buldhana, Akola, Amravati, Wardha, Yavatmal- Washim, Hingoli, Nanded, Parbhani, Outer Manipur, Tonk-Sawai Madhopur, Ajmer, Pali, Jodhpur, Barmer, Jalore, Udaipur, Banswara, Chittorgarh, Rajasmand, Bhilwara, Kota, Jhalawar-Baran, Tripura East, Amroha, Meerut, Baghpat, Ghaziabad, Gautam Buddha Nagar,

Phase	States and UTs	Constituencies
		Bulandshahr, Aligarh, Mathura, Darjeeling, Raiganj, Balurghat, Jammu
May 7	Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Jammu and Kashmir	Kokrajhar, Dhubri, Barpeta, Guwahati, Jharkhand, Supaul, Araria, Madhepura, Khagaria, Surguja, Raigarh, Janjgir-Champa, Korba, Bilaspur, Durg, Raipur, North Goa, South Goa, Kachchh, Banaskantha, Patan, Mahesana, Sabarkantha, Gandhinagar, Ahmedabad East, Ahmedabad West, Surendrangar, Rajkot, Porbandar, Jamnagar, Junagadh, Amreli, Bhavnagar, Anand, Kheda, Panchmahal, Dahod, Vadodara, Chhota Udaipur, Bharuch, Bardoli, Surat, Navsari, Valsad, Chikkodi, Belgaum, Bagalkot, Bijapur, Gulbarga, Raichur, Bidar, Koppal, Bellary, Haveri, Dharwad, Uttara Kannada, Davanagere, Shimoga, Morena, Bhind, Gwalior, Guna, Sagar, Vidisha, Bhopal, Rajgarh, Raigad, Baramati, Osmanabad, Latur, Solapur, Madha, Sangli, Satara,

Phase	States and UTs	Constituencies
		Ratnagiri-Sindhudurg, Kolhapur, Hatkanangle, Sambhal, Hathras, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, Firozabad, Mainpuri, Etah, Badaun, Aonla, Bareilly, Maldaha Uttar, Maldaha Dakshin, Jangipur, Murshidabad, Dadar and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, Anantnag-Rajouri
May 13	Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Jammu and Kashmir	Araku, Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, Anakapalle, Kakinada, Amalapuram, Rajahmundry, Narsapuram, Eluru, Machilipatnam, Vijayawada, Guntur, Narasaraopet, Baapatla, Ongole, Nandyal, Kurnool, Anantapur, Hindupur, Kadapa, Nellore, Tirupati, Rajampet, Chittoor, Darbhanga, Ujjainpur, Samastipur, Begusarai, Munger, Singhbhum, Khunti, Lohardaga, Palamu, Dewas, Ujjain, Mandasour, Ratlam, Dhar, Indore, Kargone, Khandwa, Nandurbar, Jalgaon, Raver, Jalna, Aurangabad, Maval, Pune,

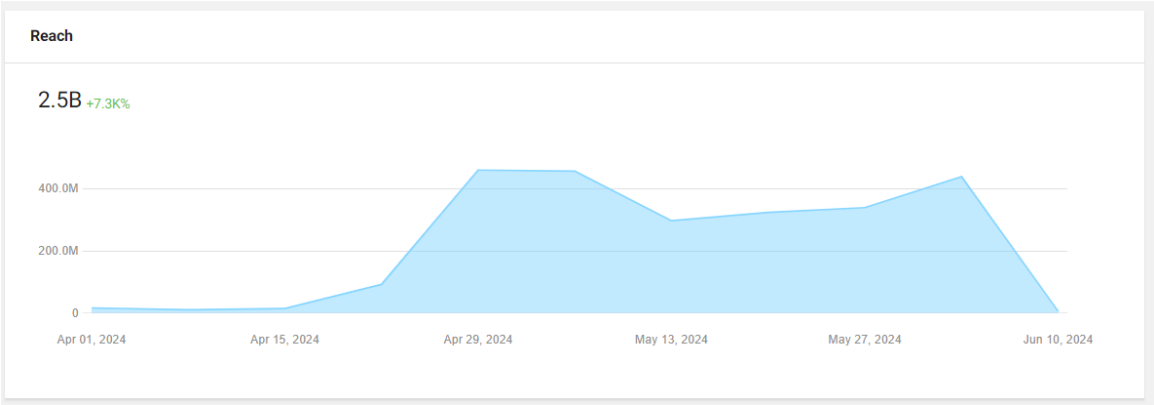
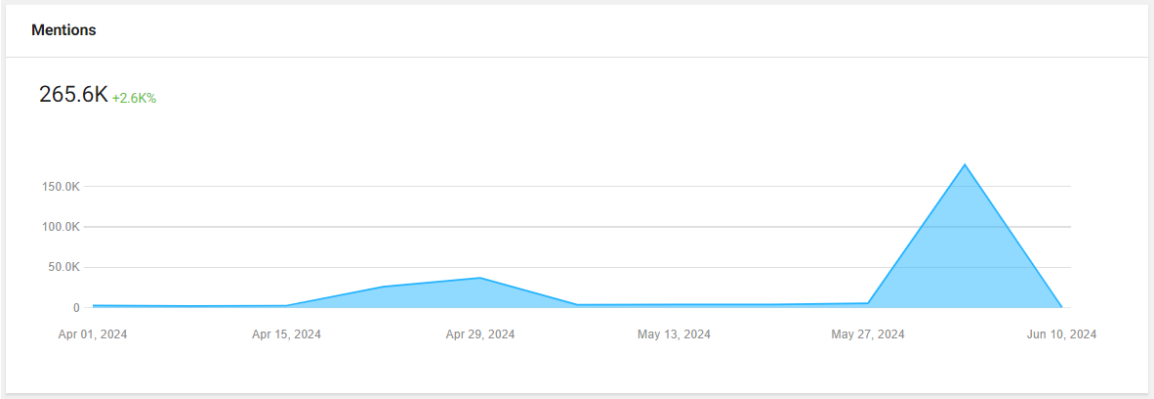
Phase	States and UTs	Constituencies
		Shirur, Ahmednagar, Shirdi, Beed, Kalahandi, Nabarangpur, Berhampur, Koraput, Adilabad, Peddapalle, Karimnagar, Nizamabad, Zahirabad, Medak, Malkajgiri, Secunderabad, Hyderabad, Chevella, Mahbubnagar, Nagarkurnool, Nalgonda, Bhongir, Warangal, Mahabubabad, Khammam, Shahjahanpur, Kheri, Dhaurahra, Sitapur, Hardoi, Misrikh, Unnao, Farrukhabad, Etawah, Kannauj, Kanpur, Akbarpur, Bahraich, Baharampur, Krishnanagar, Ranaghat, Bardhaman – Purba, Bardhaman – Durgapur, Asansol, Bolpur, Birbhum, Srinagar
May 20	Bihar, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal,	Sitamarhi, Madhubani, Muzaffarpur, Saran, Hajipur, Chotra, Kodarma, Hazaribagh, Dhule, Dindori, Nashik, Palghar, Bhiwandi, Kalyan, Thane Mumbai North, Mumbai North – West, Mumbai North – East, Mumbai North –

Phase	States and UTs	Constituencies
	Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh	Central, Mumbai South – Central, Mumbai South, Bargarh, Sundargarh, Bolangir, Kandhamal, Aska, Mohanlalganj, Lucknow, Rae Bareilly, Amethi, Jalaun, Jhansi, Hamirpur, Banda, Fatehpur, Kaushambi, Barabanki, Faizabad, Kaiserganj, Gonda, Bangaon, Barrackpur, Howrah, Uluberia, Sreerampur, Hooghly, Arambag, Baramulla, Ladakh
May 25	Bihar, Haryana, Jharkhand, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, NCT of Delhi	Valmiki Nagar, Paschim Champaran, Purvi Champaran, Sheohar, Vaishali, Gopalganj, Siwan, Maharajganj, Ambala, Kurukshetra, Sirsa, Hisar, Karnal, Sonapat, Rohtak, Bhiwani-Mahendragarh, Gurgaon, Faridabad, Giridih, Dhanbad, Ranchi, Jamshedpur, Sambalpur, Keonjhar, Dhenkanal, Puri, Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Sultanpur, Pratapgarh, Phulpur, Allahabad, Ambedkar Nagar, Shrawasti,

Phase	States and UTs	Constituencies
		Domariyaganj, Basti, Sant Kabir Nagar, Lalganj, Azamgarh, Jaunpur, Machhlisahr, Bhadohi, Tamluk, Kanthi, Ghatal, Jhargram, Medinipur, Purulia, Bankura, Bishnupur, Chandni Chowk, North East Delhi, East Delhi, New Delhi, North West Delhi, West Delhi, South Delhi
June 1	Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Chandigarh	Nalanda, Patna Sahib, Pataliputra, Arrah, Buxar, Sasaram, Karakat, Jahanabad, Kangra, Mandi, Hamirpur, Shimla, Rajmahal, Dumka, Godda, Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Khadoor Sahib, Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur, Anandpur Sahib, Ludhiana, Fatehgarh Sahib, Faridkot, Firozpur, Bathinda, Sangrur, Patiala, Maharajganj, Gorakhpur, Kushi Nagar, Deoria, Banegaon, Ghosi, Salempur, Ballia, Ghazipur, Chandauli, Varanasi, Mirzapur, Robertsganj, Dum.

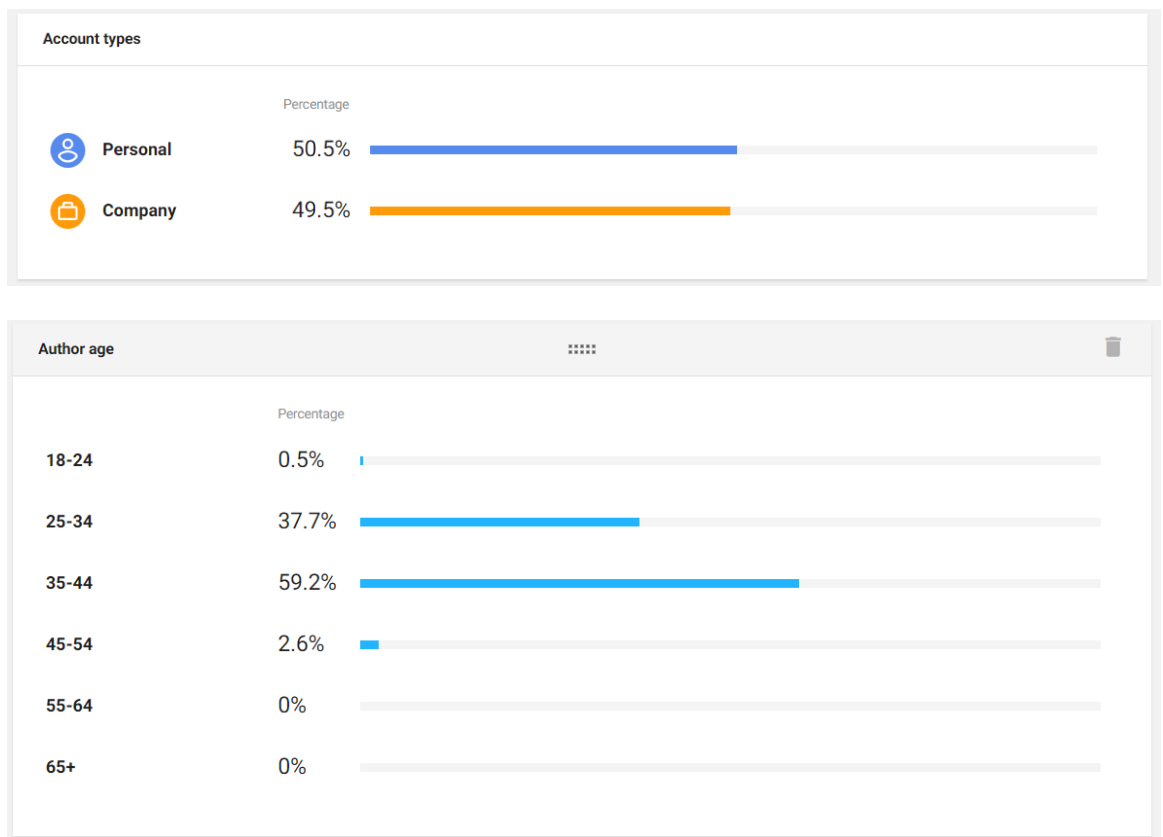
Phase	States and UTs	Constituencies
		Dum, Barasat, Basirhat, Jaynagar, Mathurapur, Diamond Harbour, Jadavpur, Kolkata Dakshin, Kolkata Uttar, Chandigarh.

Phase 2: Summarising the information gathered:



Sources by mentions

	Mentions	Difference	Percentage
Instagram	256.5K	+2.5K%	96.6%
Twitter	8.6K	+47.8K%	3.2%
Reddit	463	+4.1K%	0.2%
News/Blogs	6		0.0%
Facebook	0		0.0%
Vimeo	0		0.0%
Web	0		0.0%



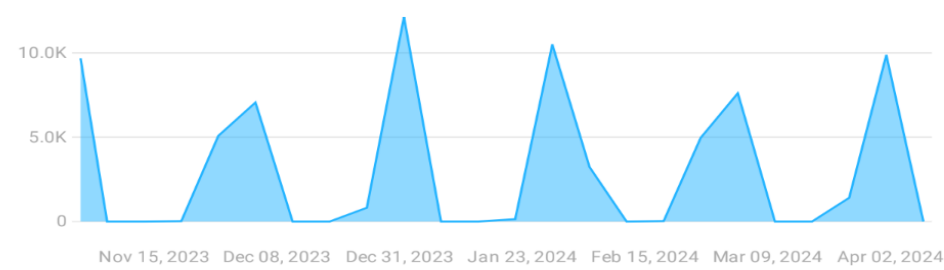
3.9 Data Analysis

3.9.1 Phase 1: Collecting General Data

- Date Range – Last Six months, from November 2023 to April 2024
- Alerts – Based on popular party terms.
 - Alert 1 – BJP (as defined on sec 3.7)
 - Based on the chronology above, about 72K mentions were gathered for study.

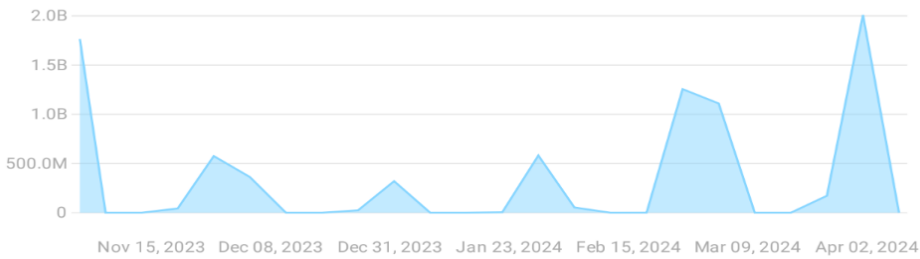
Mentions

72.6K +14%



Reach

8.3B +91%



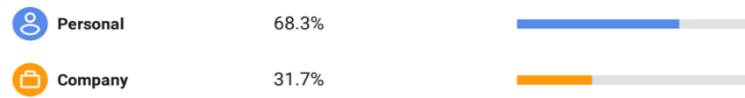
○ The sources of these references

Sources by mentions

	Mentions	Difference	Percentage
Instagram	60.4K	+9%	83.2%
News/Blogs	9.8K	+40%	13.5%
Twitter	2.4K	+69%	3.3%

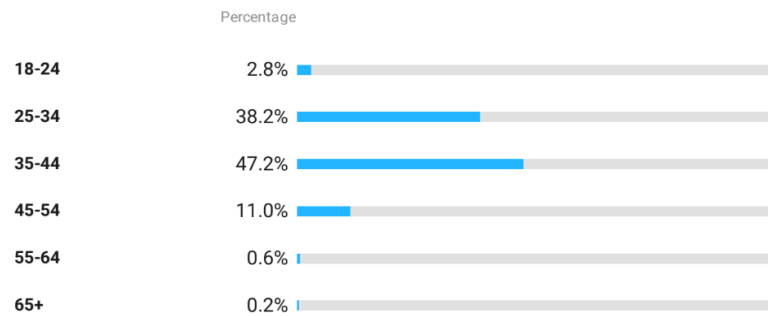
- The type of account used for these mentions

Account types



- The age group of the authors for these mentions.

Author age



- Key Players in the BJP Party

Twitter: Top influencers							
		Audience	Mentions			Audience	Mentions
	Amit Shah (Modi ...)	34.8M	1		Sambit Patra (Mo...)	7.9M	2
	AajTak	22.2M	1		AAP	6.5M	1
	BJP	21.8M	38		News18	4.7M	1
	ABP News	13.8M	1		Dr. S. Jaishankar ...	3.1M	1
	Congress	10.4M	1		Business Today	1.2M	1

News/Blogs: Top influencers

97

www.livemint.com

97.9M

15

96

www.businesstod..

32.0M

1

97

www.elle.com

26.7M

1

98

www.ndtv.com

24.5M

4

97

www.outlookindi..

13.1M

3

97

indianexpress.com

13.0M

1

95

www.financialexp..

8.9M

1

86

naslovi.net

8.1M

1

93

www.aljazeera.co..

7.7M

2

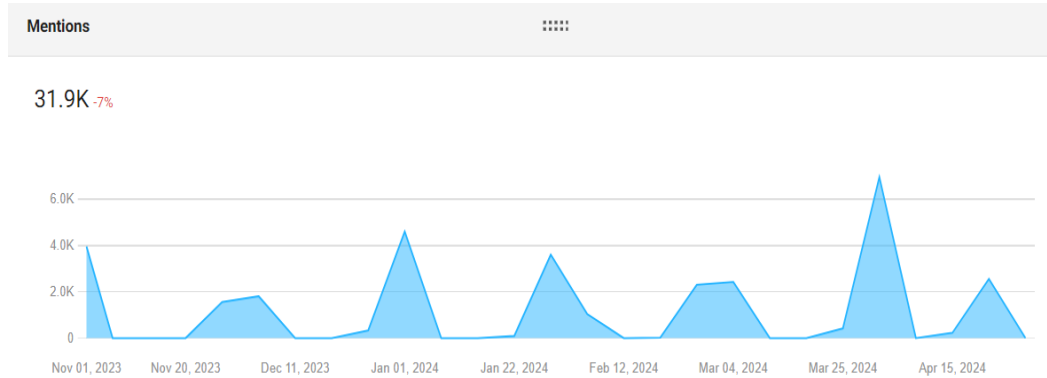
93

www.thehindu.co..

7.3M

5

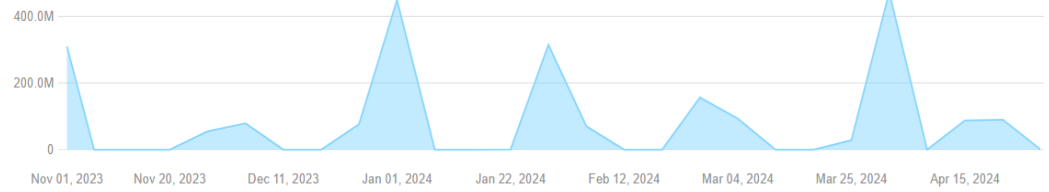
- Alert 2 – APP (as defined on sec 3.7)
 - Based on the chronology above, about 31.9K mentions were gathered for study.



Reach

.....

2.3B -28%



Sources by mentions

	Mentions	Difference	Percentage
Instagram	21.3K	+60%	66.6%
Web	9.0K	-55%	28.3%
Twitter	1.6K	+105%	5.1%

Account types

.....

	Percentage
Personal	68.6%
Company	31.4%

Author age

.....

	Percentage
18-24	1.3%
25-34	36.4%
35-44	55.4%
45-54	6.0%
55-64	0.6%
65+	0.3%

Twitter: Top influencers

	Audience	Mentions		Audience	Mentions
 Arvind Kejriwal @ArvindKejriwal	27.4M	1	 ANI @ANI	8.2M	5
 AajTak @aajtak	22.2M	3	 Zee News @ZeeNews	6.8M	2
 The Times Of India @timesofindia	14.7M	2	 AAP @AamAadmiParty	6.5M	29
 ABP News @ABPNews	13.9M	4	 News18 @CNNnews18	4.7M	3
 TIMES NOW @TimesNow	10.3M	1	 Economic Times @EconomicTimes	4.3M	2

News/Blogs: Top influencers

No data

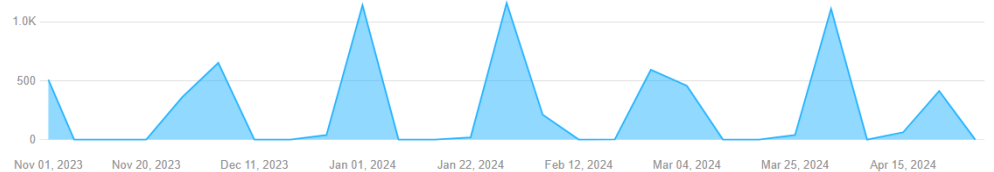
Instagram: Top influencers

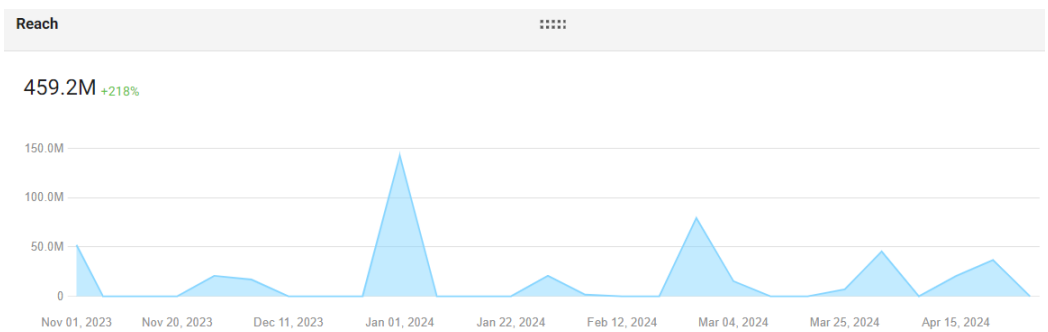
No data

Alert 3 – TMC (as defined on sec 3.7)

Mentions

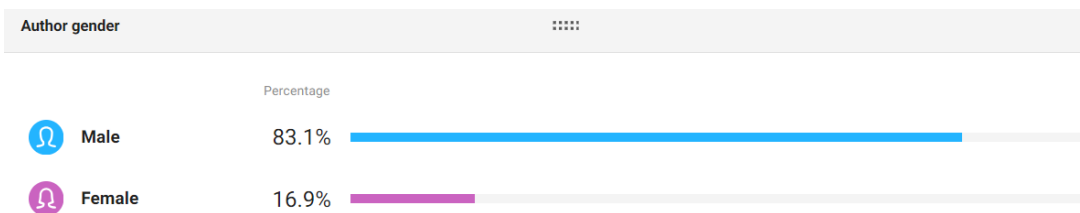
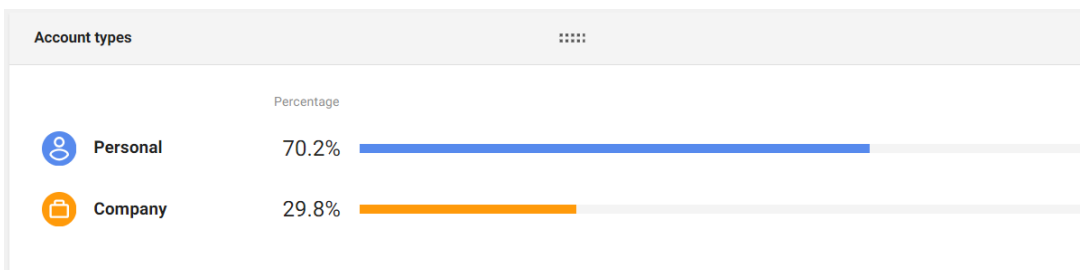
6.8K +113%





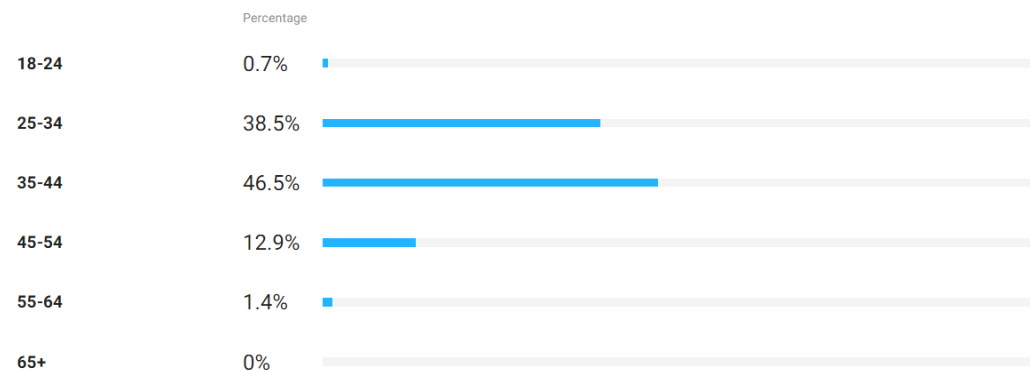
Sources by mentions

	Mentions	Difference	Percentage
Instagram	5.3K	+108%	77.8%
Twitter	1.5K	+131%	21.6%
Web	42	+83%	0.6%



Author age

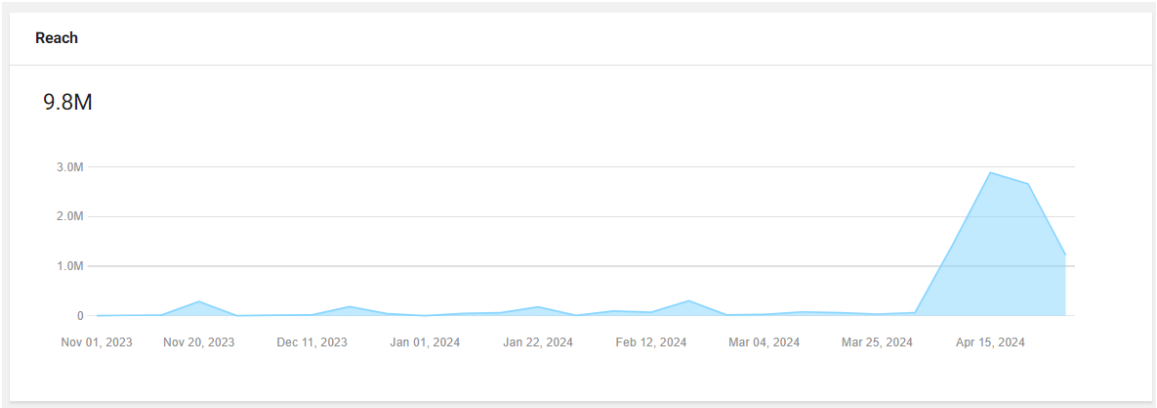
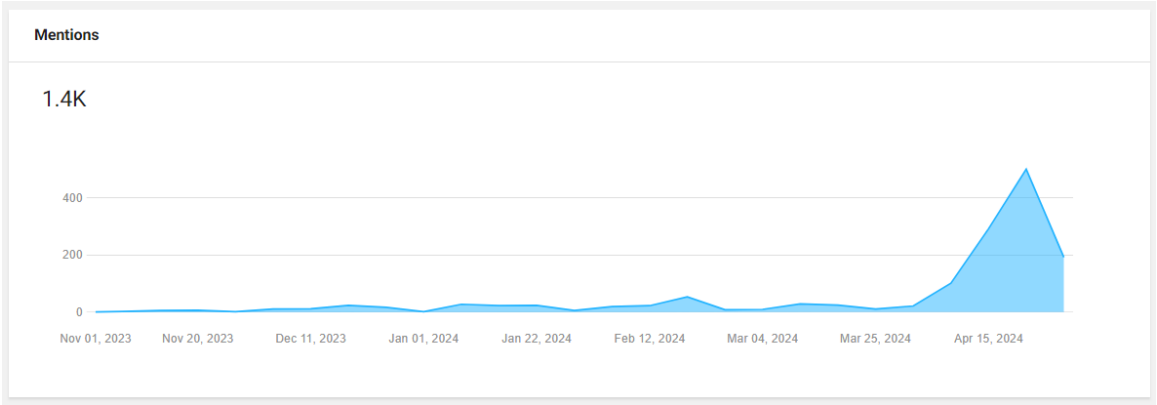
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Twitter: Top influencers

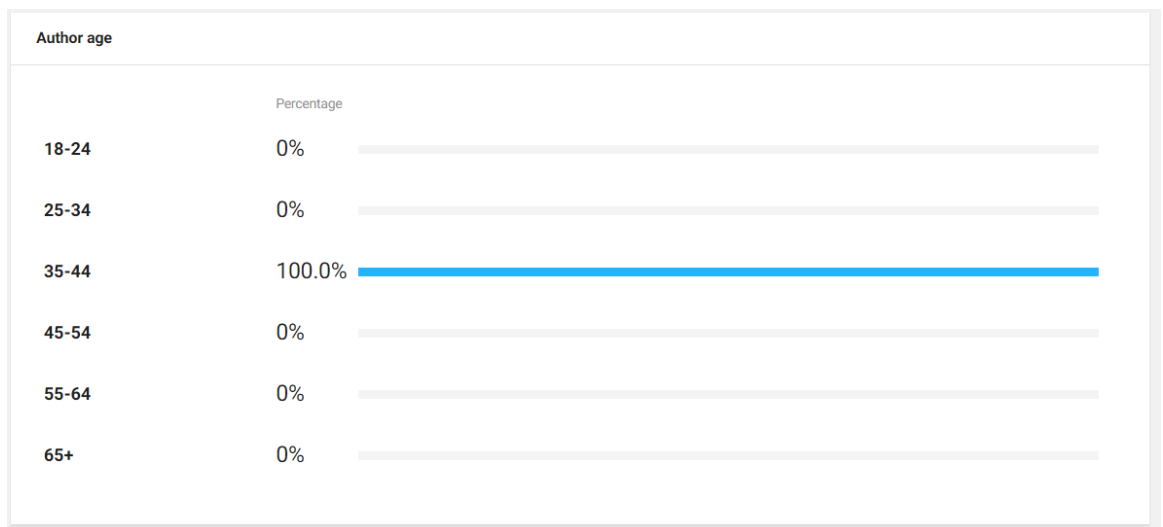
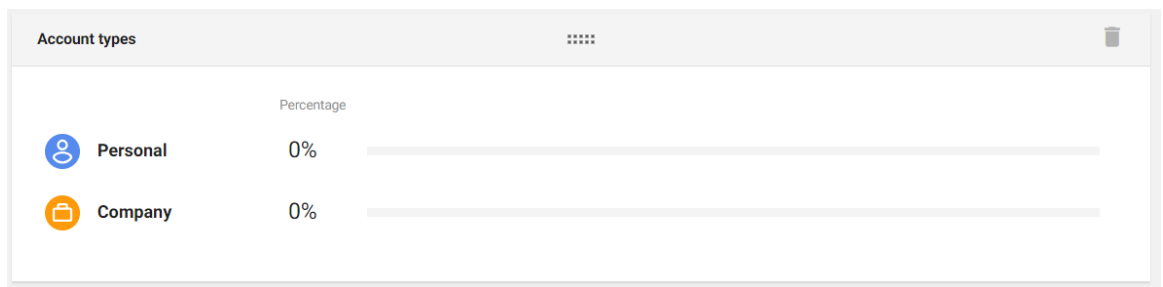
	Audience	Mentions		Audience	Mentions		
	Narendra Modi @narendramodi	94.3M	1		IndiaToday @IndiaToday	6.3M	3
	PMO India @PMOIndia	56.0M	1		Economic Times @EconomicTimes	4.4M	1
	The Times Of India @timesofindia	14.7M	1		Sagarika Ghose @sagarikaghose	4.1M	7
	Hindustan Times @htTweets	8.7M	1		Republic Bharat - ... @Republic_Bharat	2.0M	1
	Mamata Banerjee @MamataOfficial	7.4M	7		News24 @news24tvchannel	1.7M	4

Alert 4 – Congress (as defined on sec 3.7)



Sources by mentions

	Mentions	Difference	Percentage
Instagram	1.4K		99.6%
Web	6		0.4%
Twitter	0		0.0%



3.9.2 Phase 1: Data Collection Summary

Political Party	Mentions in Thousands (K)	Reach In Billions of (B) / Millions (M)	Key Observations
BJP	72K	8.2B	- Authors Age Group 25-34:38.2% 35-44:47.2% - Source Of Mention - Instagram:83.2% - News/Blogs:13.5% - Twitter:3.3% - Account Type - Company:31.7 - Personal:68.3

			● Gender ○ Male:77.2% ○ Female:22.8%
APP	31.9K	2.3B	● Authors Age Group ○ 25-34:36% ○ 35-44:55.4 ● Source Of Mention ○ Instagram:66.6% ○ News/Blogs:28.3% ○ Twitter:5.1% ● Account Type ○ Company:31.4% ○ Personal:68.6 ● Gender ○ Male:86.3% ○ Female:13.7%
TMC	7.8K	459M	● Authors Age Group ○ 25-34:38.5% ○ 35-44:46.5% ● Source Of Mention ○ Instagram:77.8% ○ News/Blogs:21.6% ○ Twitter:0.5% ● Account Type ○ Company:29.8% ○ Personal:70.2% ● Gender ○ Male:83.1% ○ Female:16.9%
Congress	4.2K	33M	● Authors Age Group ○ 25-34:100% ● Source Of Mention ○ Instagram:99% ○ Twitter:1% ● Account Type ○ Company:81.8% ○ Personal:18.2% ● Gender ○ Male:100%

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Summary of Social Media Mentions by Political Party

1. Total Mentions and Reach

- BJP is the most talked about party, with 72,000 mentions and a reach of 8.2 billion.
- AAP comes next with 31.9K mentions and a reach of 2.3B.
- TMC and Congress are far behind, with 7.8K and 4.2K mentions, respectively. Congress has the lowest reach, with only 33 million people seeing it.

2. Age Group of Authors:

- The majority of authors are between the ages of 25 and 44.
 - BJP and TMC: 25–34 (around 38%) and 35–44 (about 46–47%)
 - AAP: More skewed toward 35–44 (55.4%)
 - Congress: 100% of mentions came from those aged 25 to 34, which suggests that the demographics are not very diverse.

3. Source of Mentions

- Instagram is the main platform for everyone:

- Highest for Congress (99%), followed by BJP (83.2%), TMC (77.8%), and AAP (66.6%)
- News and blogs are very important for AAP (28.3%) and TMC (21.6%).
- There isn't much of a Twitter presence, especially for TMC (0.5%) and Congress (1%).

4. Account Type

- Most mentions come from personal accounts from all sides (around 68–70%).
 - Exception: Congress, where 81.8% of the money comes from corporation accounts, which could mean that the group is campaigning or working together.

5. Gender Breakdown

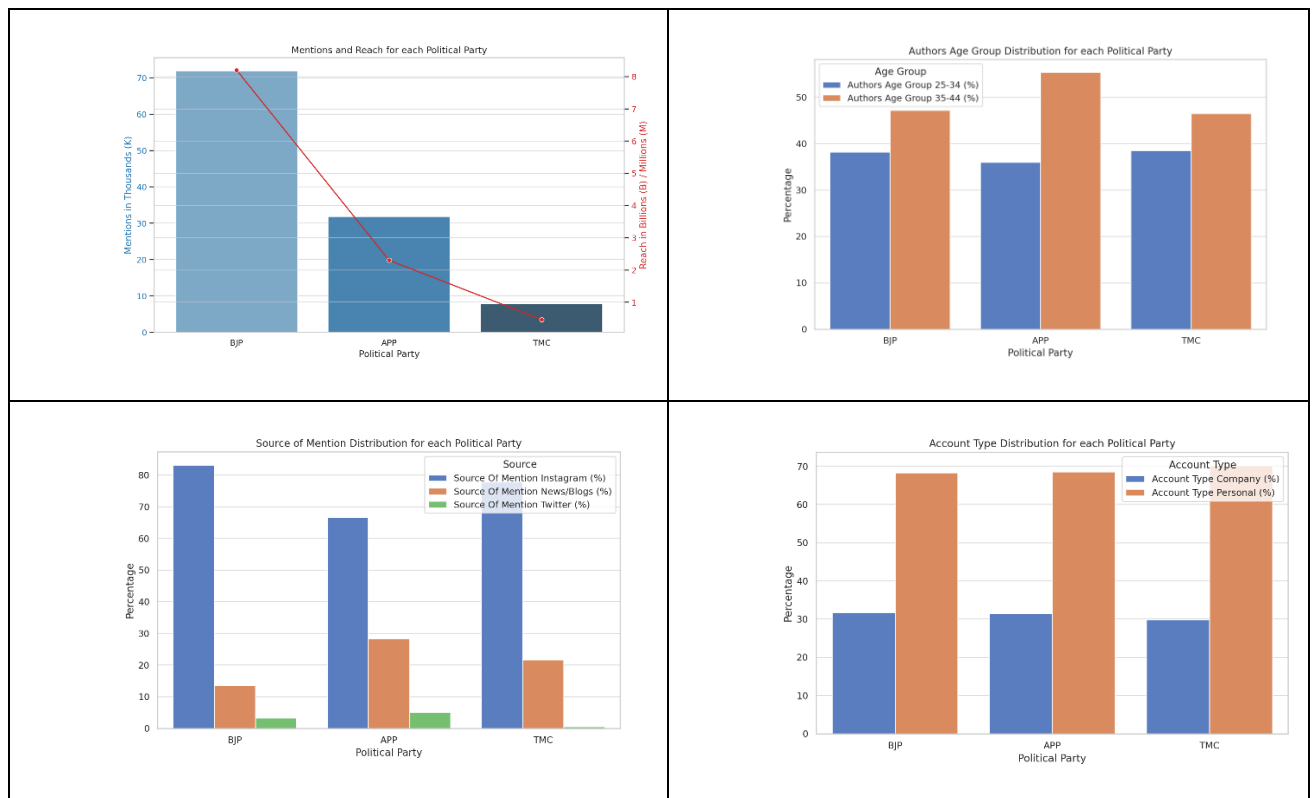
- Male authors are in charge of all parties.
 - All of Congress's authors are men.
 - AAP (86.3%) and TMC (83.1%) have a lot of men in their ranks.
 - BJP is the most gender-balanced party, although it still has more men than women (77.2% men, 22.8% women).

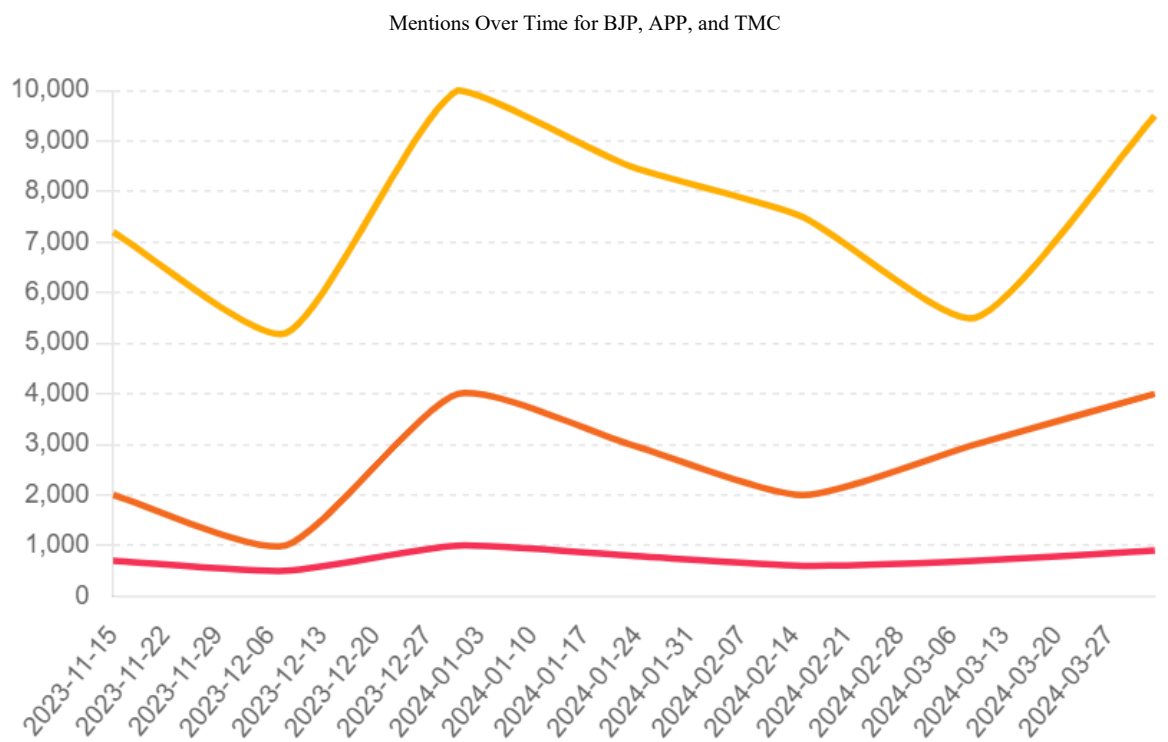
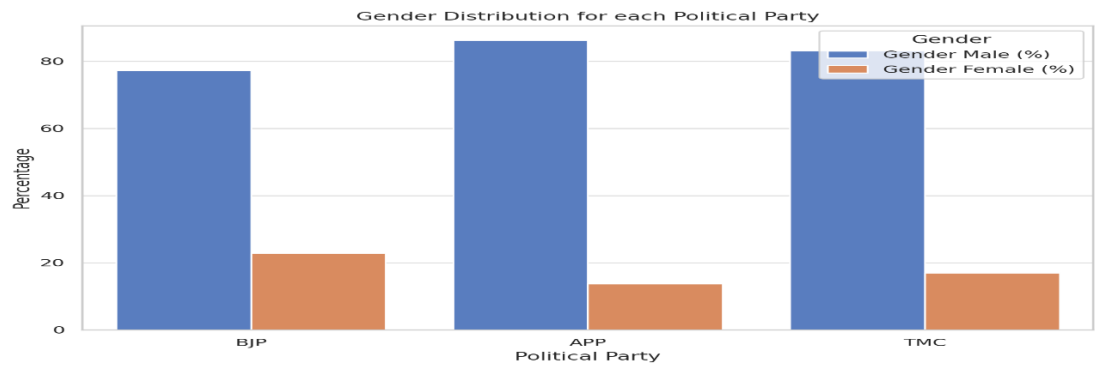
Important Things to Know

- BJP has the most followers and the most reach, which means they have a huge and diverse social media presence.
- AAP has a strong middle-aged demographic and a wider platform spread.

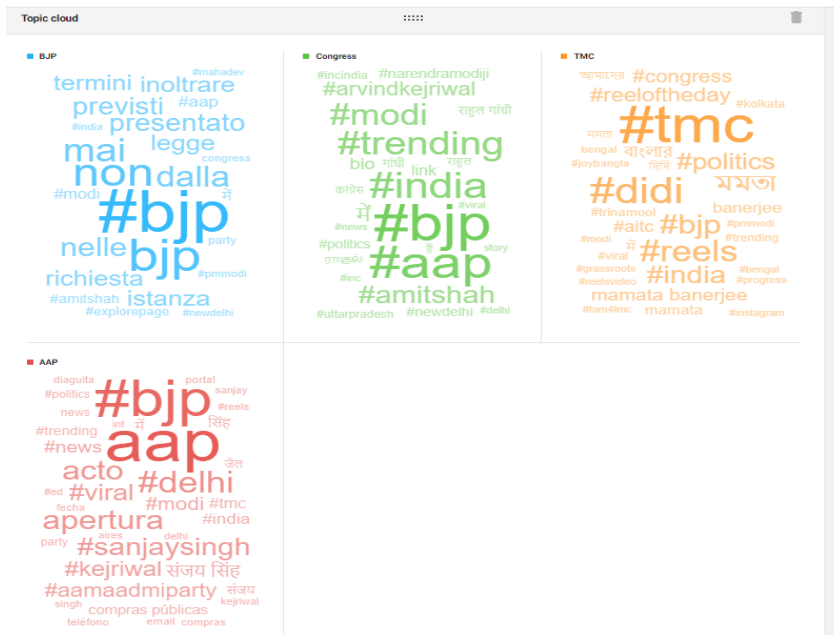
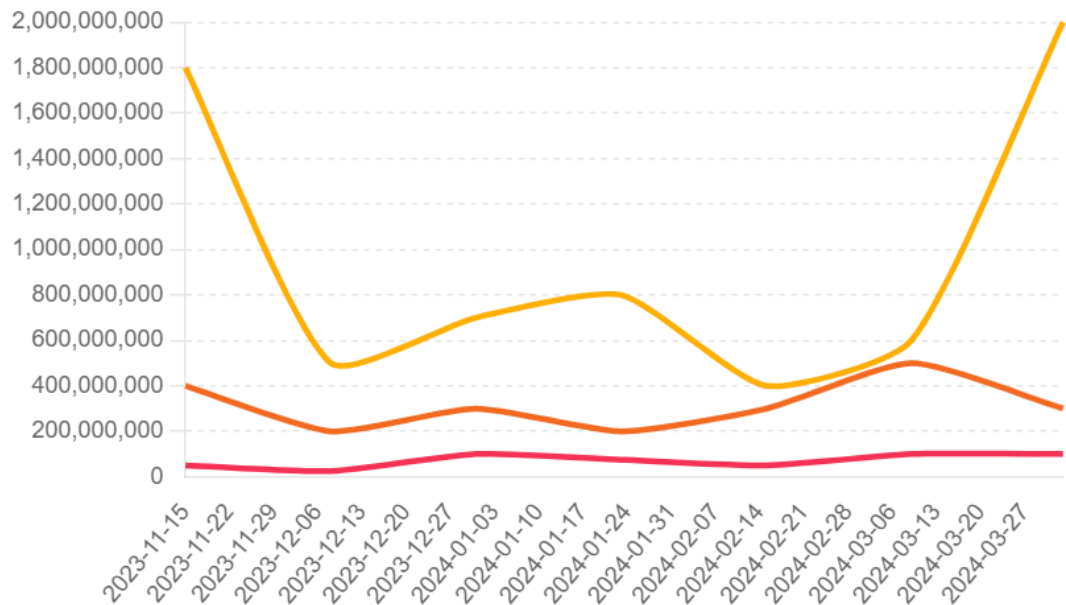
- Both TMC and Congress are marginal players with few digital interactions and a narrow range of demographics.
- Instagram is the most popular site for political discussions.
- There isn't much diversity in gender and age in online mentions, especially for Congress.

3.9.3 Phase 1: Detailed Data Visualization





Reach Over Time for BJP, APP, and TMC



3.9.4 Phase 1: Summary of the facts or the visualization

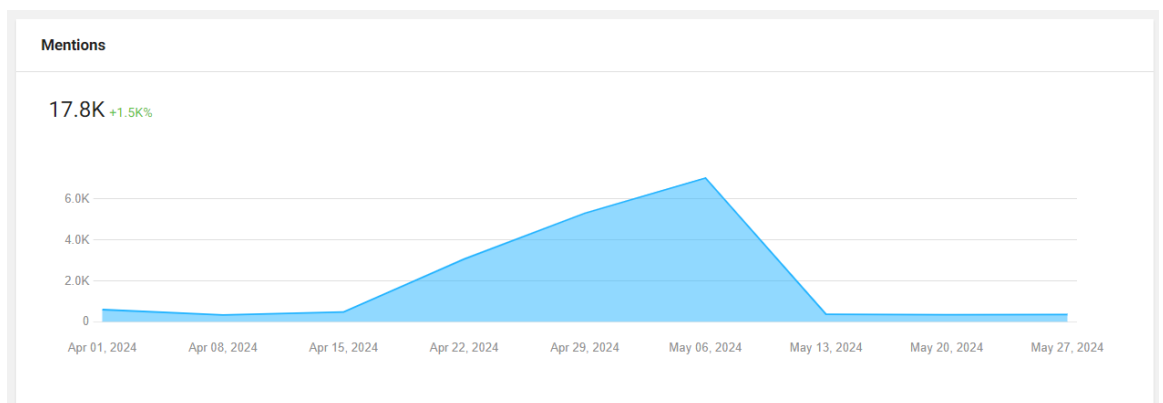
- There are a lot of talks and views for each political party
 - The BJP has the most mentions and views, followed by the APP and then the TMC.
- Age Distribution of Authors by Political Party:
 - The age group 35–44 has a higher percentage of authors for all three parties than the age group 25–34. The APP has the biggest percentage of authors aged 35–44.
- Different Political Parties' Main Source of Mentions:
 - All parties get most of their mentions from Instagram, but the BJP has the biggest percentage of Instagram mentions. Bloggers and Twitter are secondary sources, though in different amounts.
- Distribution of Account Types for Each Political Party:
 - In all parties, personal accounts have more mentions than company accounts. TMC has the biggest percentage of personal account mentions.
- Distribution of Men and Women for Each Political Party:
 - Men are more likely than women to mention all parties, with APP having the highest number of male mentions.
- Mentions Over Time:

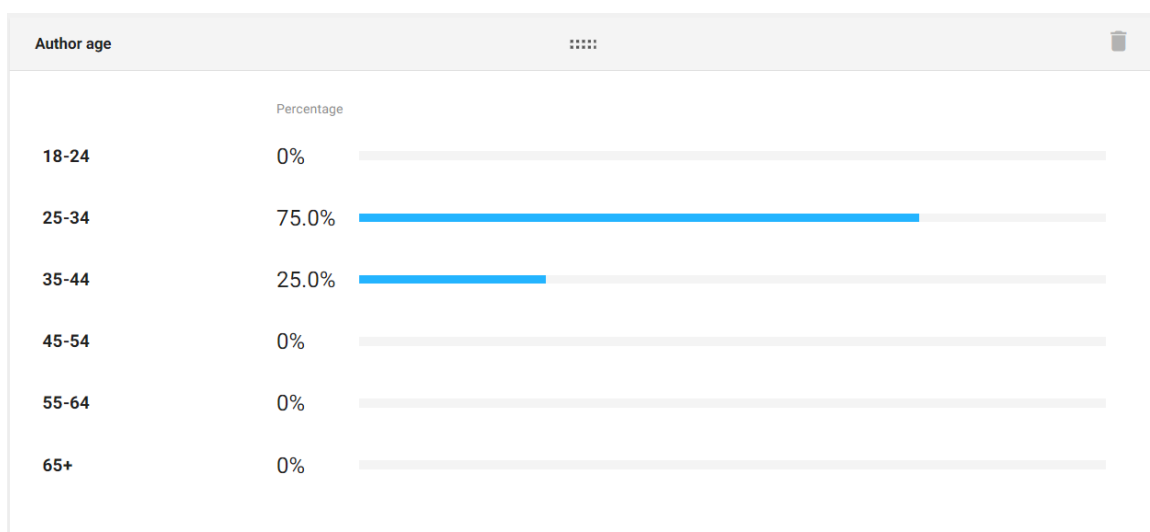
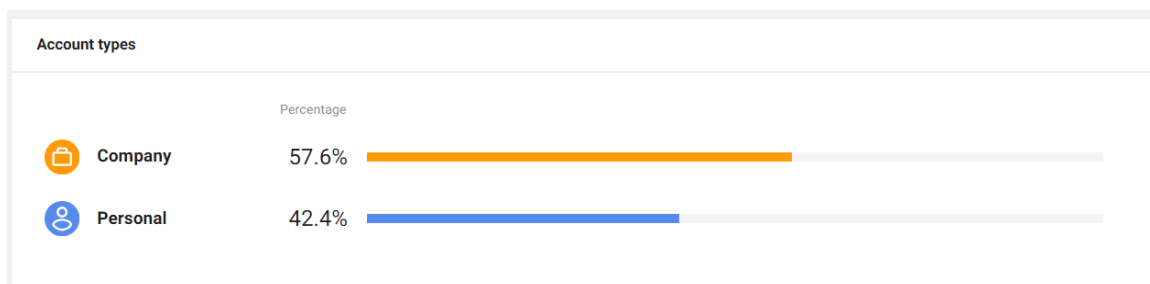
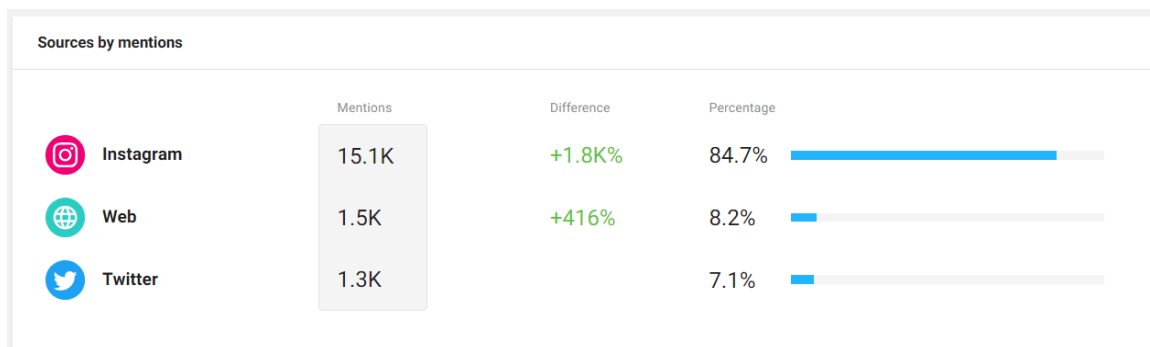
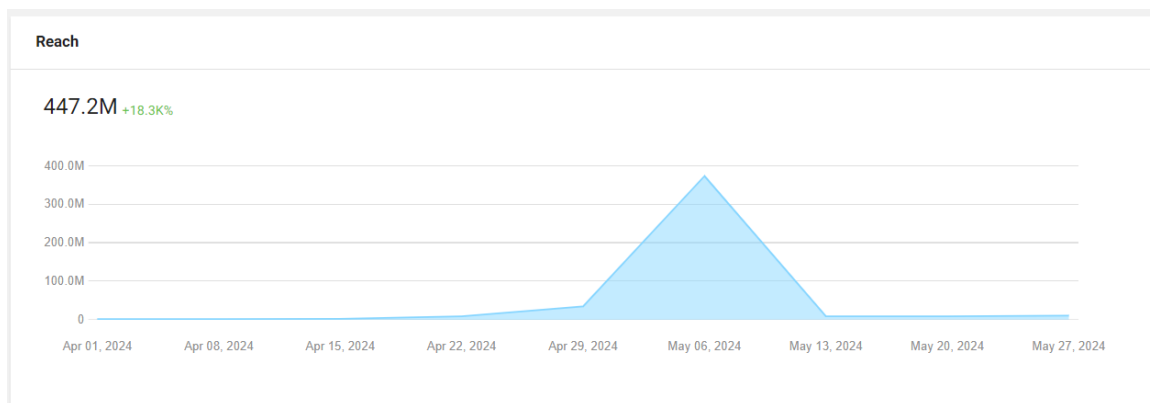
- The trends look about the same overall. First, the time graph illustrates the frequency of social media use, which is relatively consistent across all three major parties.
- Reach Over Time:
 - The line shows that the BJP's audience has grown a lot over time as the election dates get closer.

These images show the main similarities and differences between how each political party is talked about and the types of people who write about them.

3.9.5 Phase 2: Data collection (Location Specific)

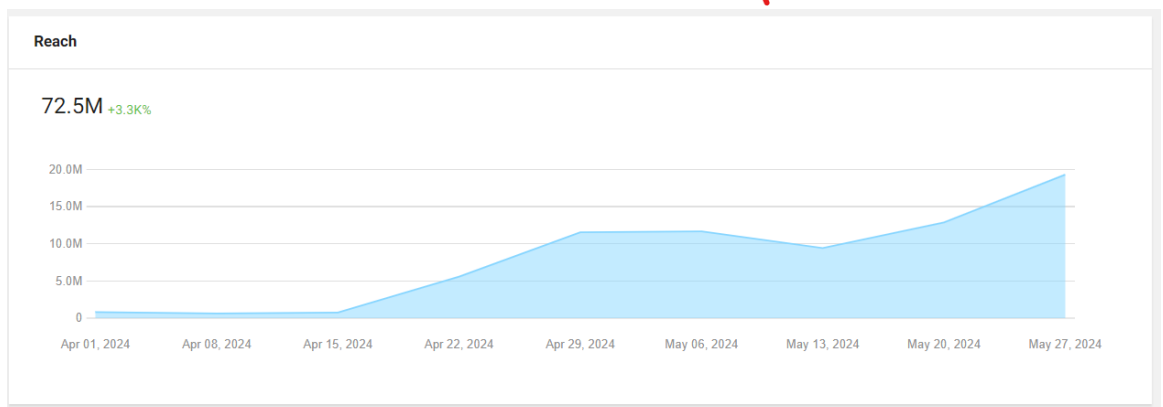
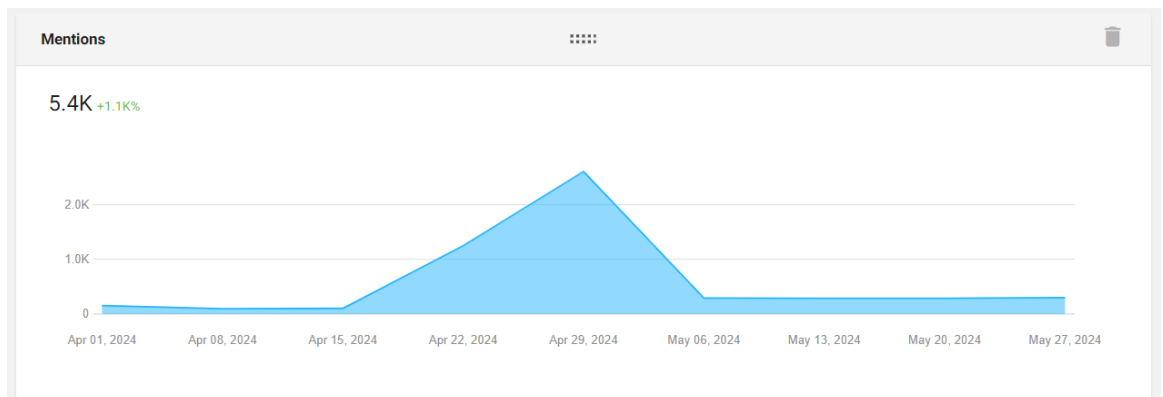
- Date Range – 1st April 2024 to 1st June 2024
- Alerts – Built from popular party hashtags.
- **Alert 1 – BJP – In Karnataka**

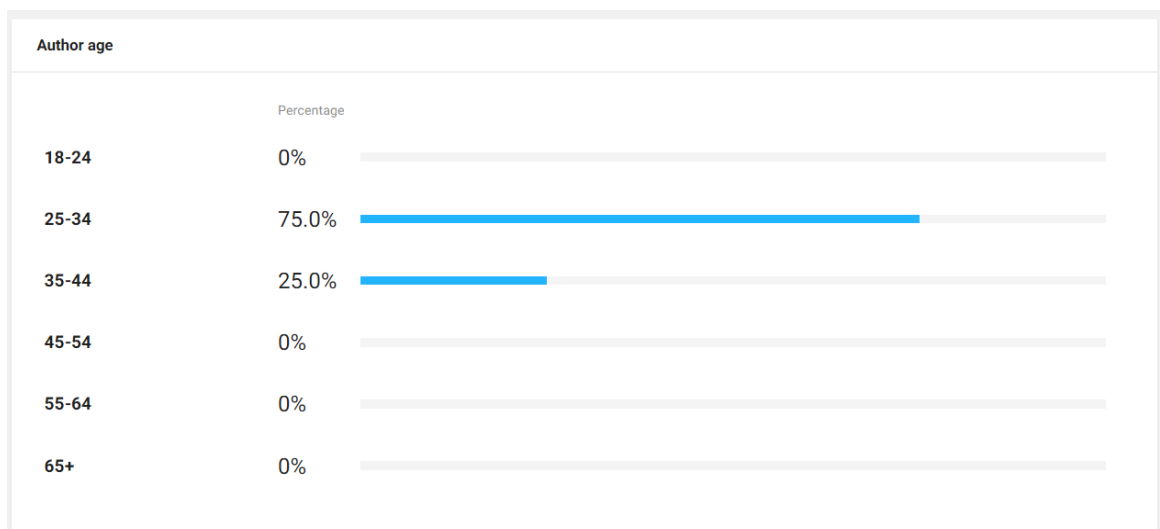
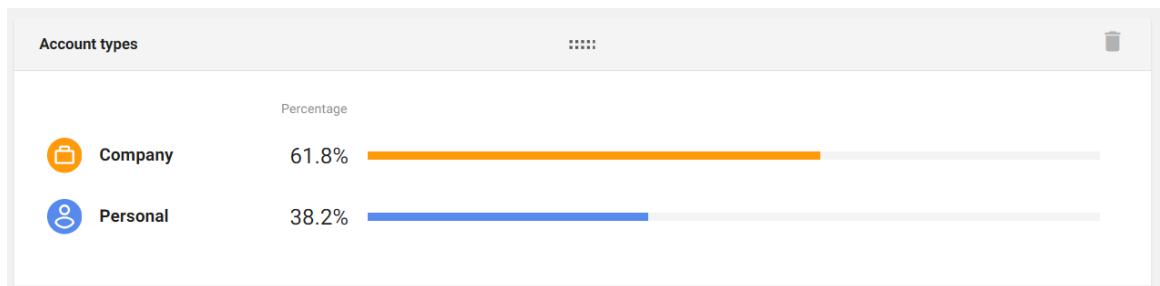
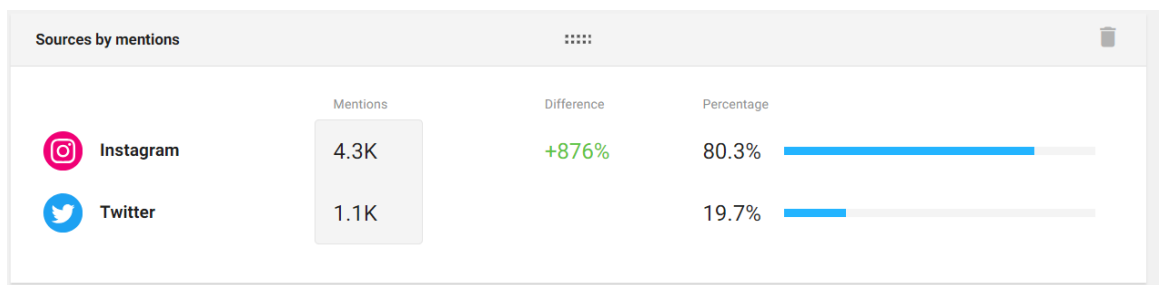




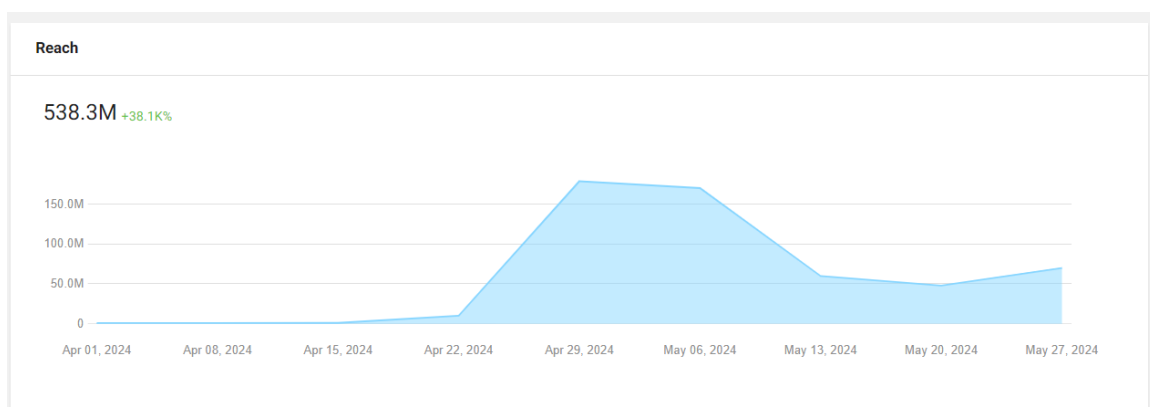
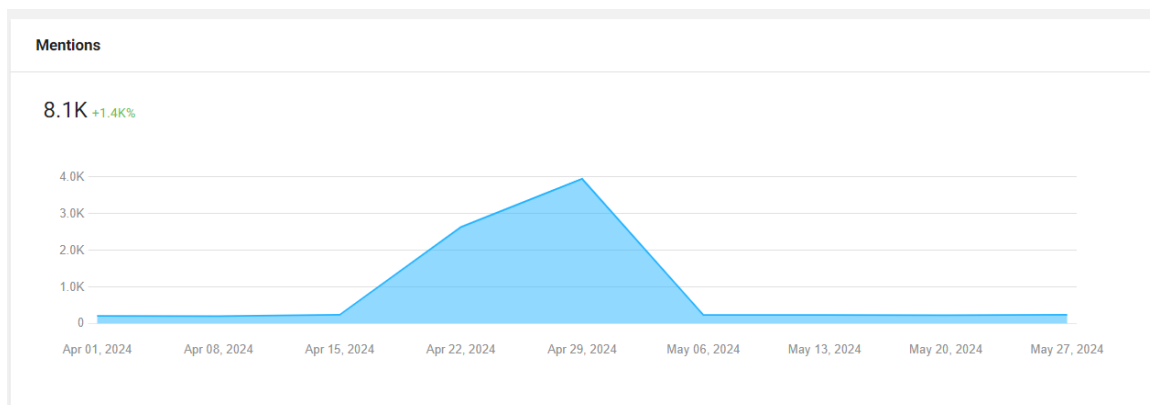
Top influencers							
	Audience	Mentions		Audience	Mentions		
	Amit Shah (Modi ...) @AmitShah	34.9M	1		The Hindu @the_hindu	8.2M	1
	BJP @BJP4India	21.9M	8		Sambit Patra (Mo...) @sambitswaraj	8.0M	4
	ABP News @ABPNews	13.9M	1		AAP @AamAadmiParty	6.5M	1
	Congress @INCIndia	10.5M	4		Keshav Prasad M... @kpmaurya1	4.8M	1
	TIMES NOW @TimesNow	10.3M	1		BJP Uttar Pradesh @BJP4UP	4.7M	3

- Alert 2 – Congress – In Karnataka



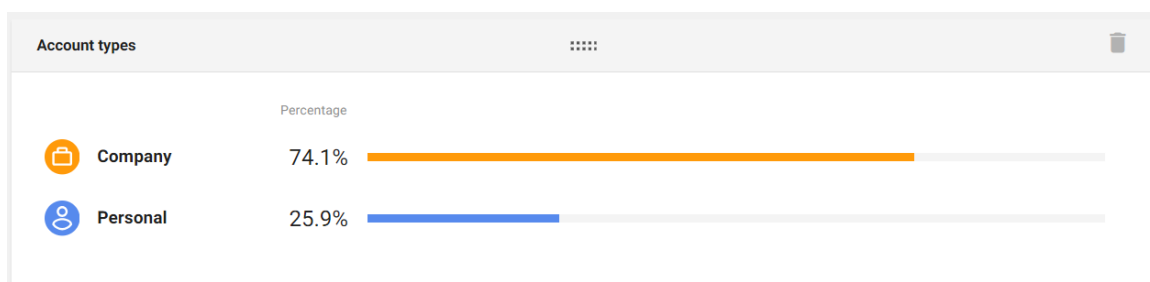


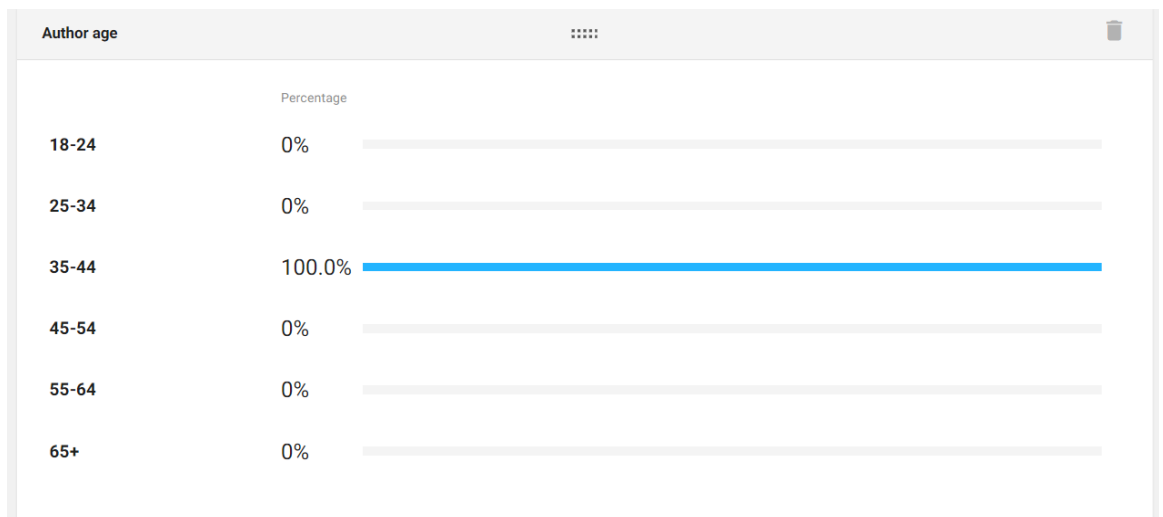
- **Alert 3 – BJP – In Uttar Pradesh**



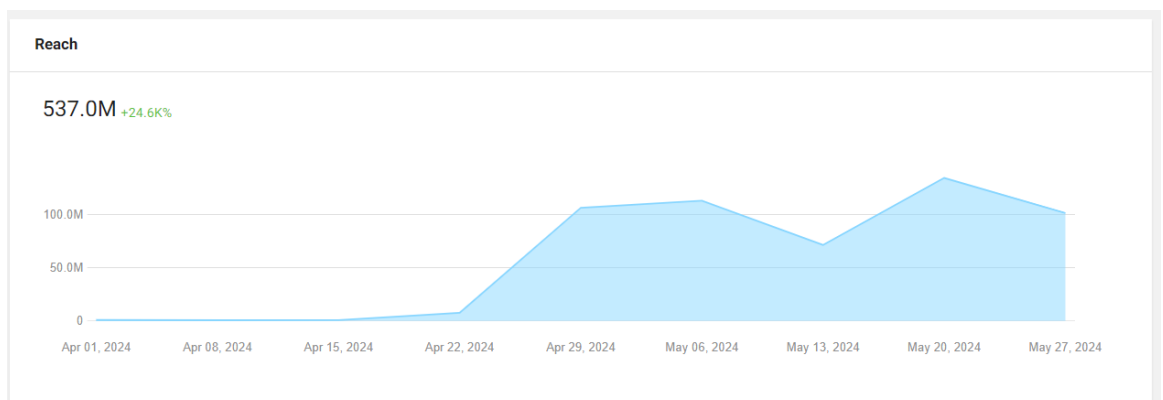
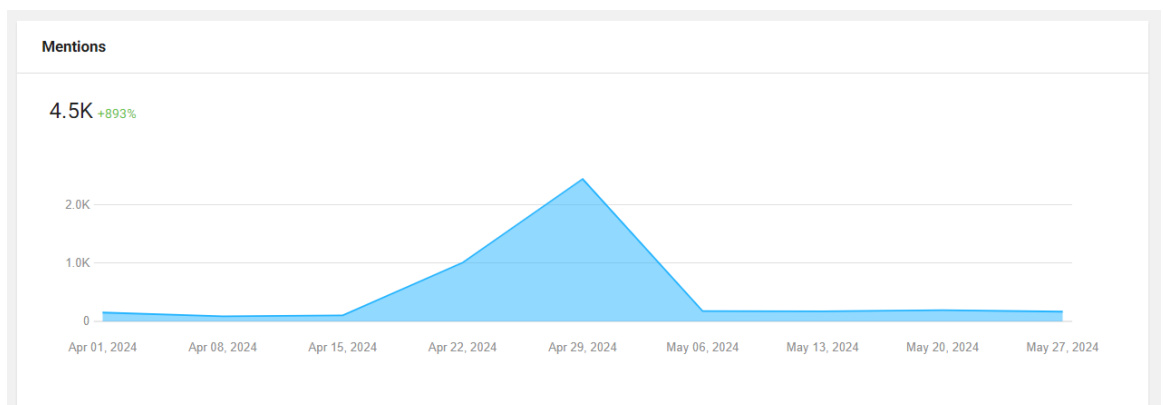
Sources by mentions

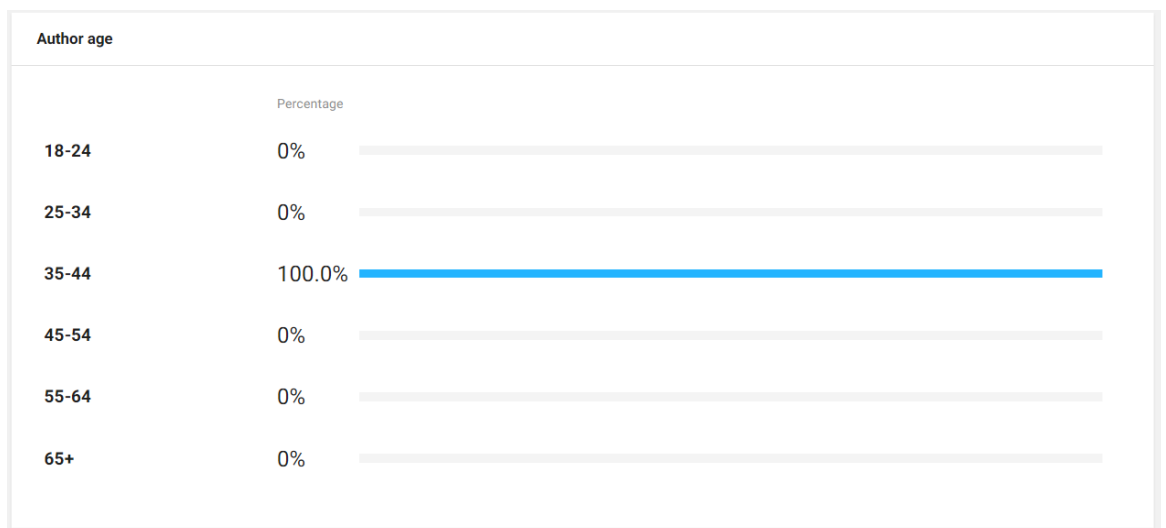
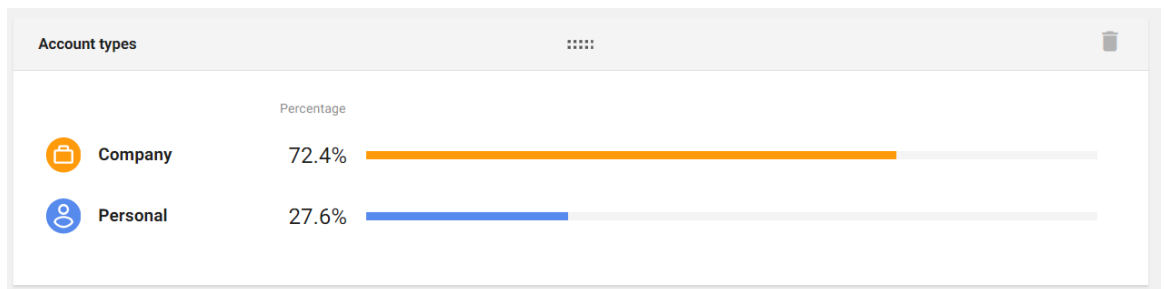
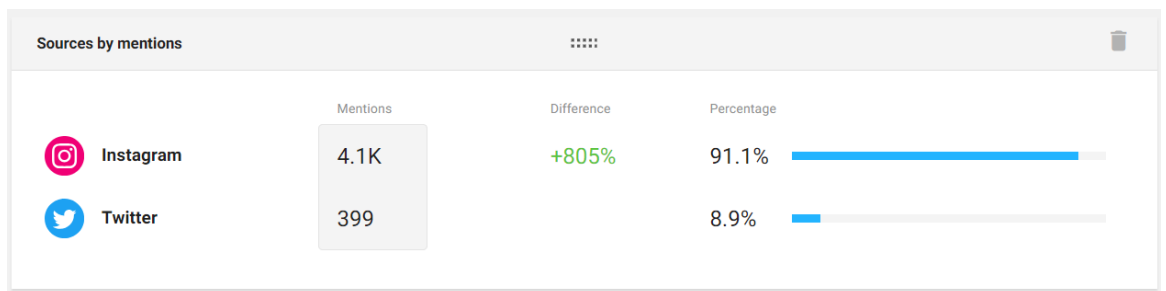
	Mentions	Difference	Percentage
Instagram	7.7K	+1.3K%	94.7%
Twitter	431		5.3%



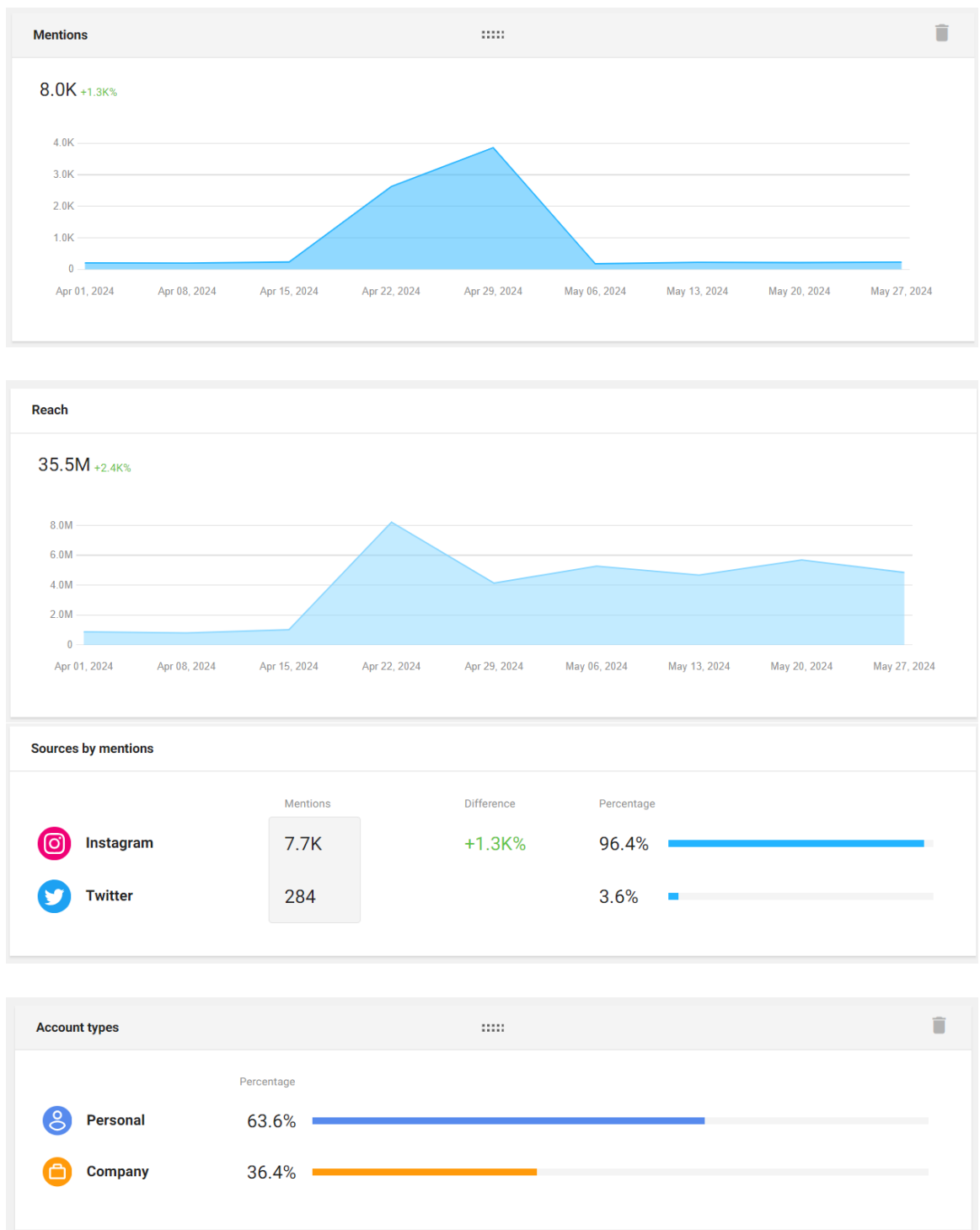


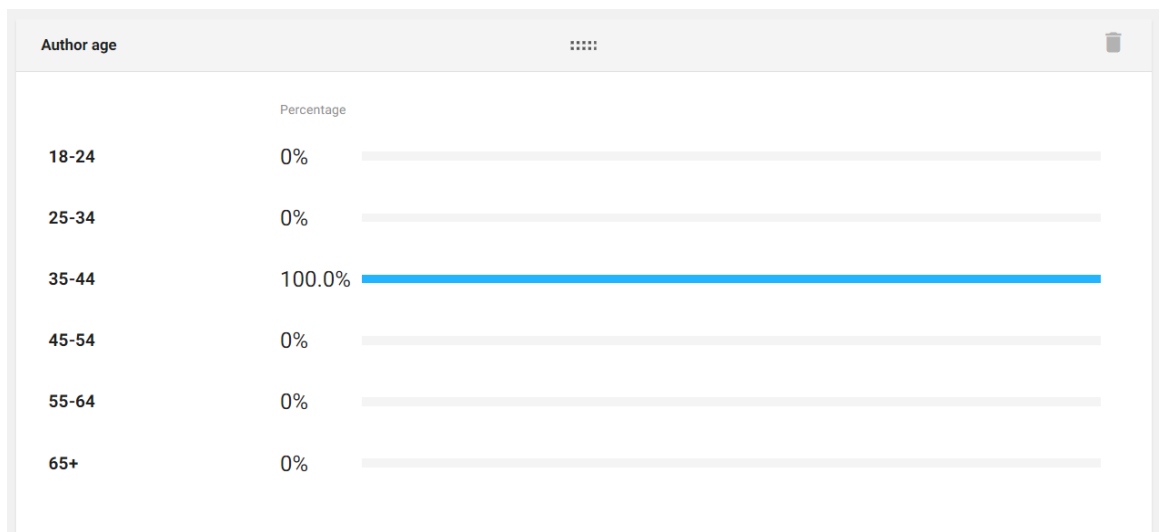
- **Alert 4 – Congress – In Uttar Pradesh**



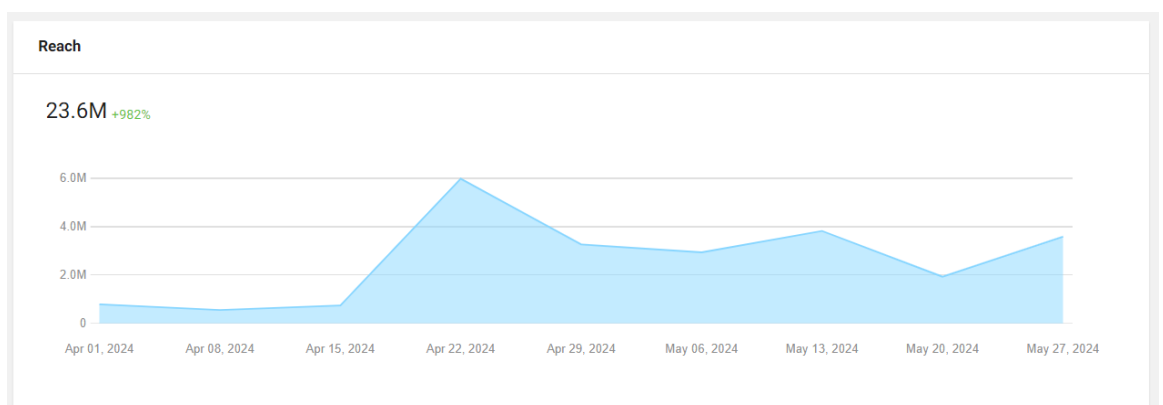
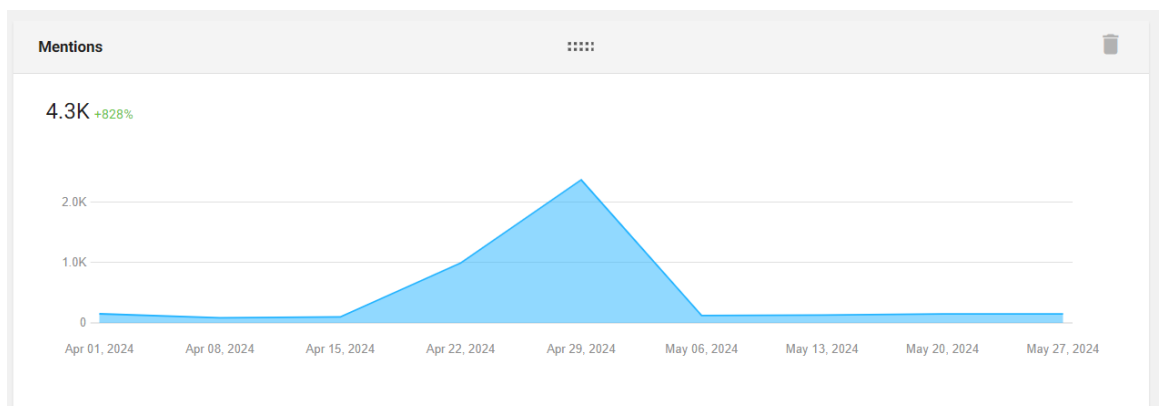


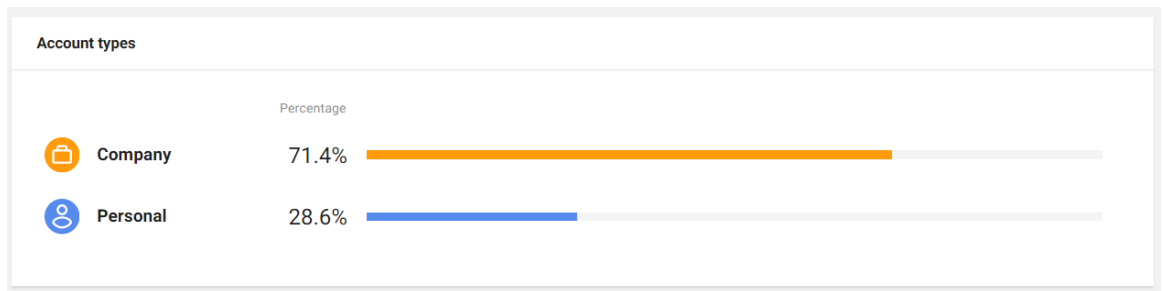
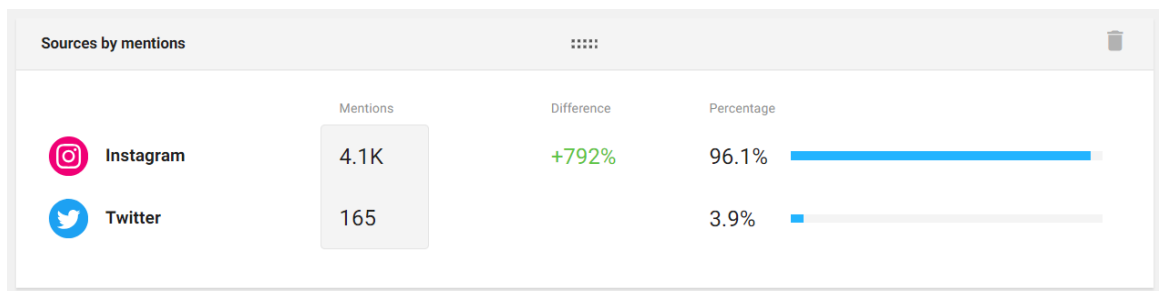
- **Alert 6 – BJP – In West Bengal**



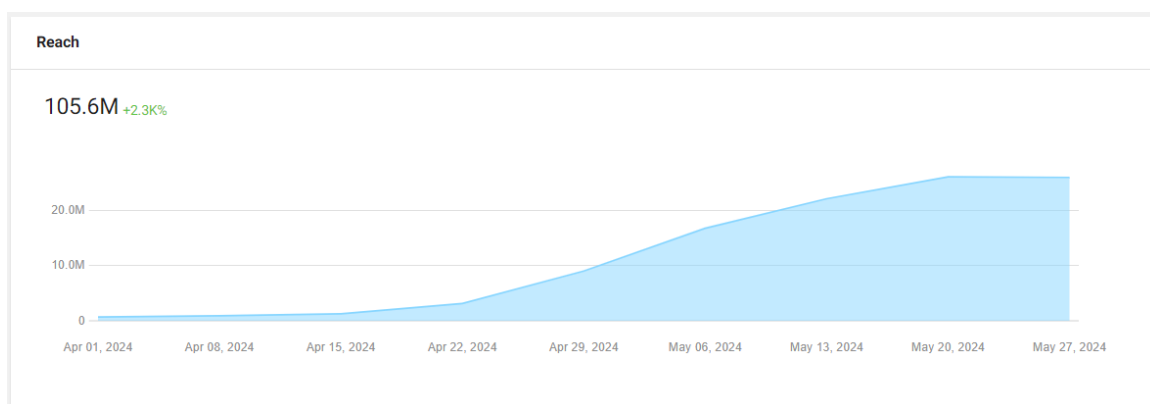
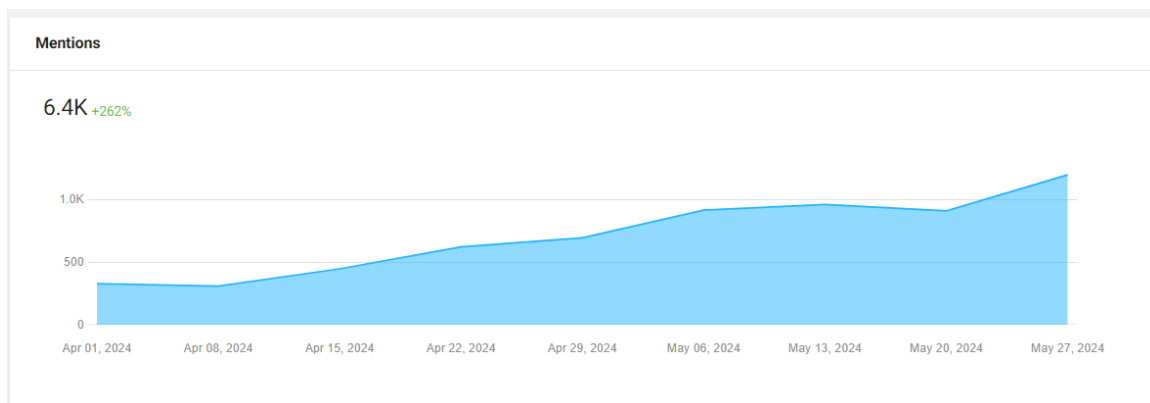


- Alert 7 – Congress – In West Bengal



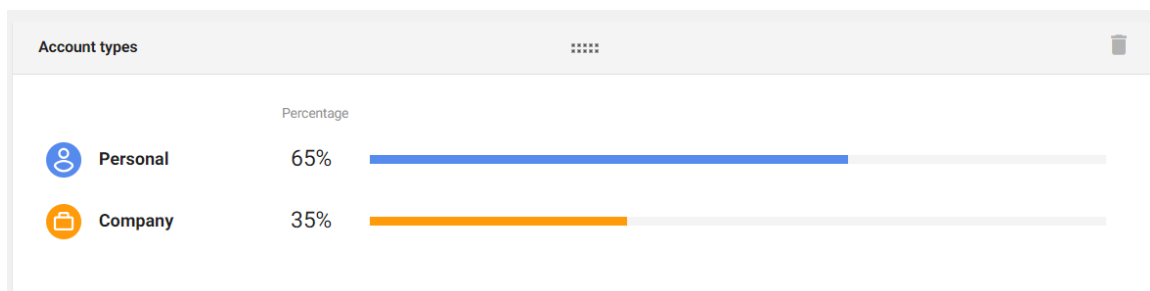


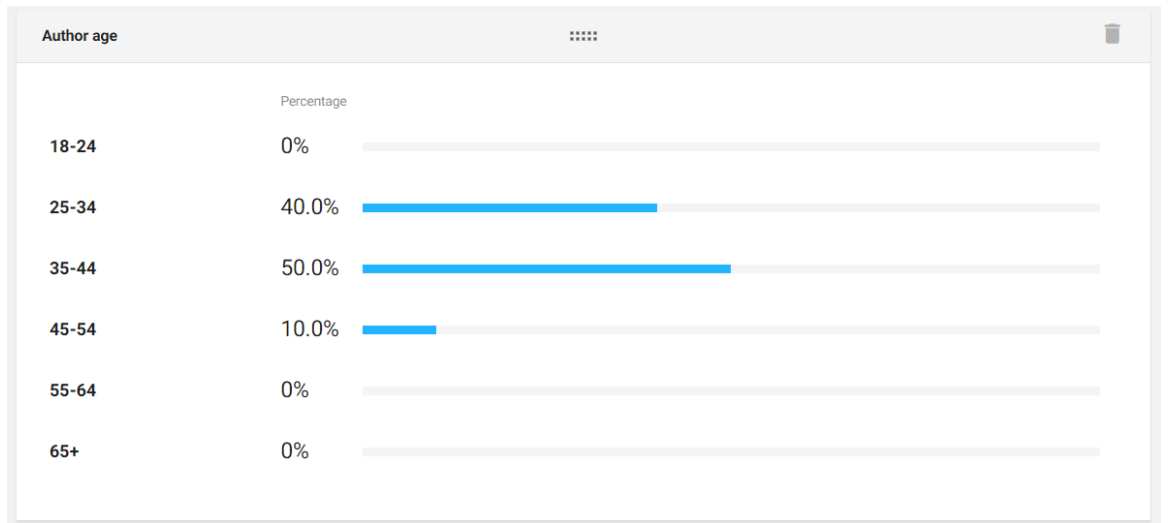
- **Alert 8 – TMC – In West Bengal**



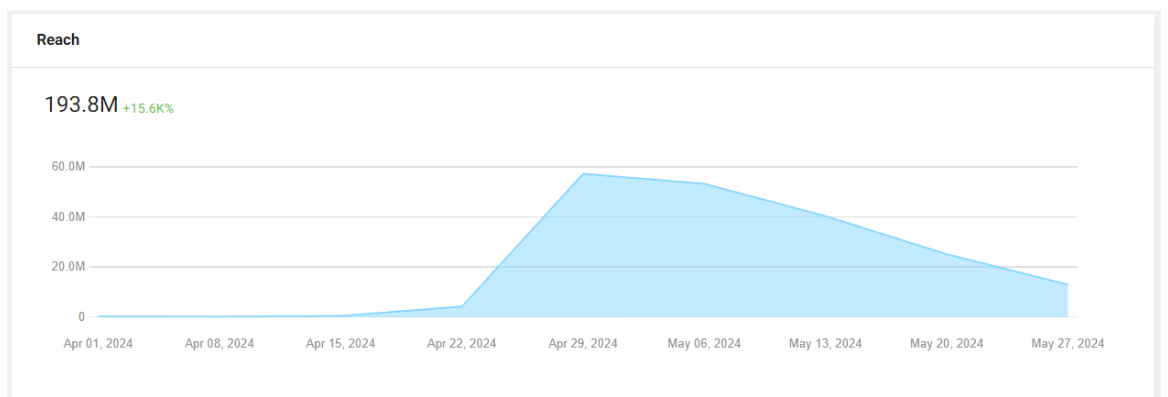
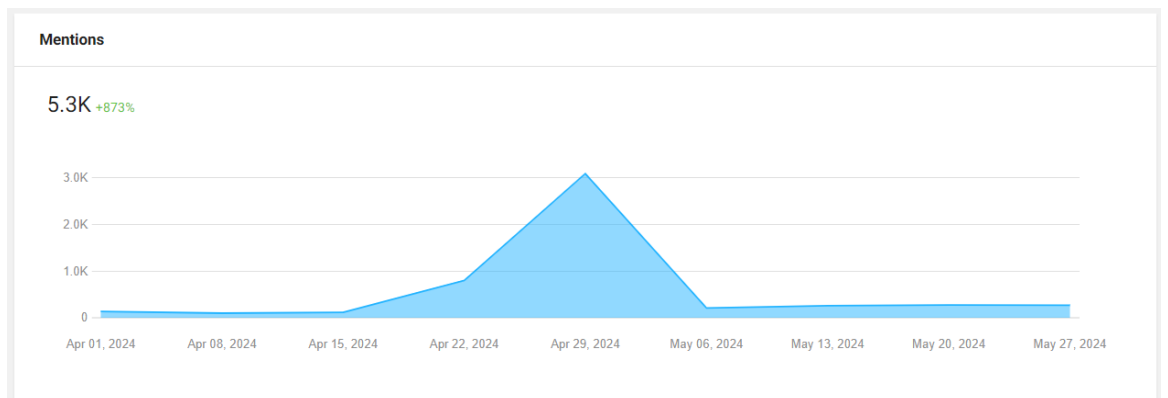
Sources by mentions

	Mentions	Difference	Percentage
Instagram	5.6K	+216%	87.3%
Twitter	812		12.7%

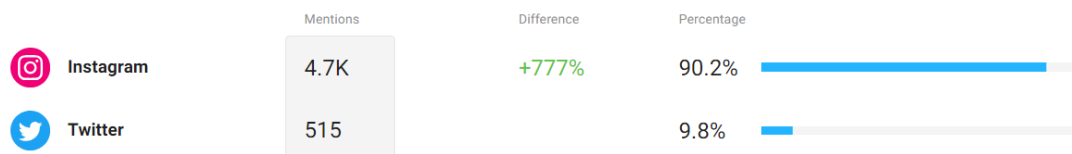




- Alert 9 – BJP – In Delhi



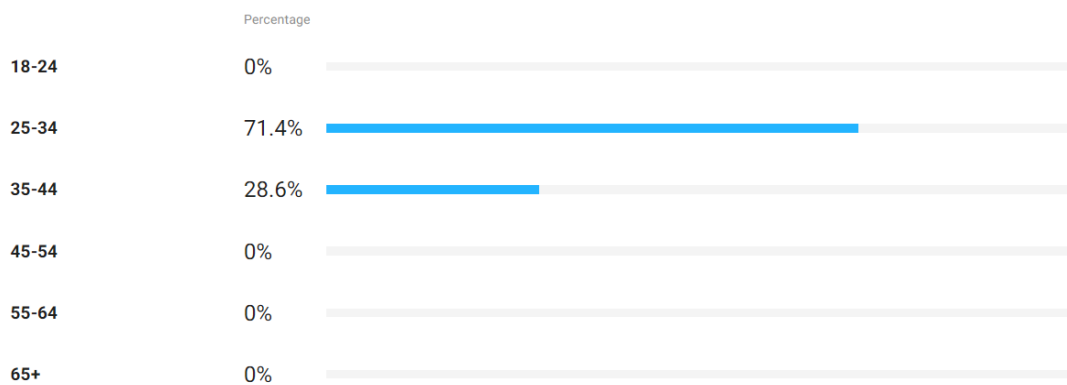
Sources by mentions



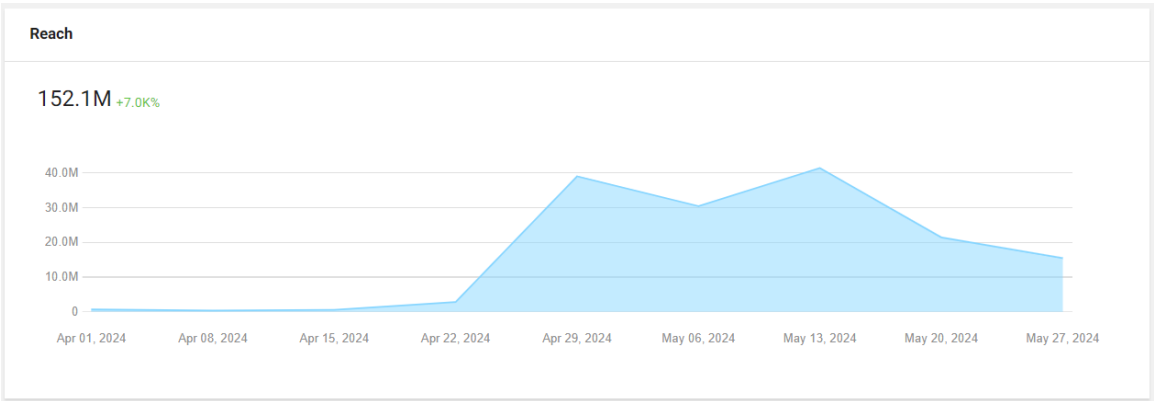
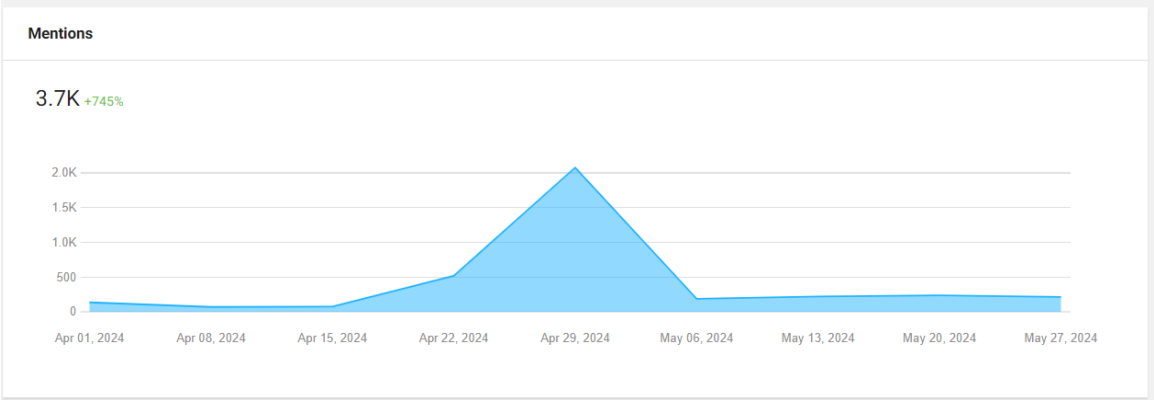
Account types



Author age

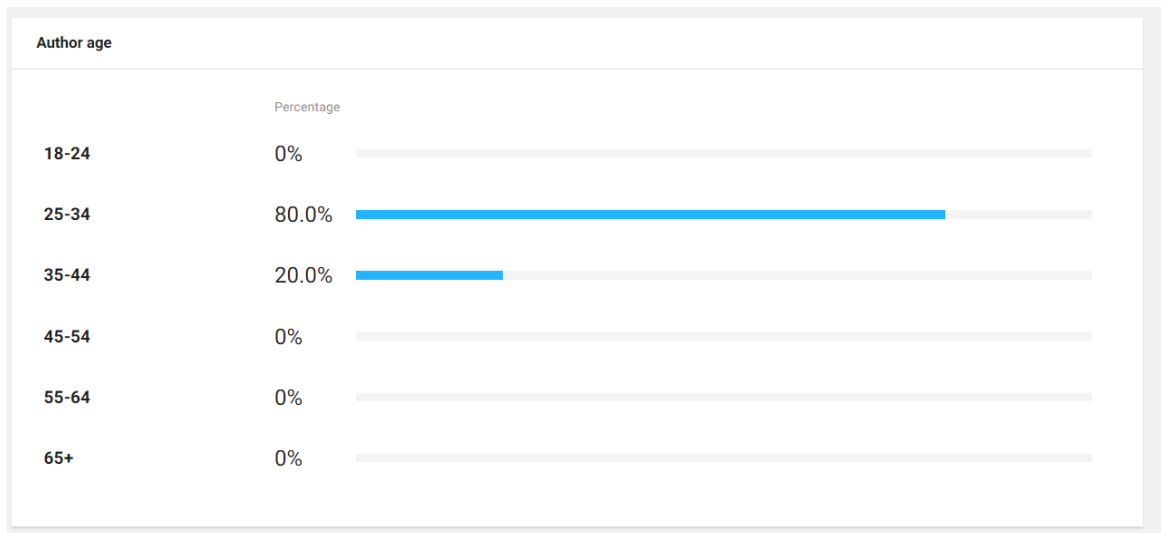
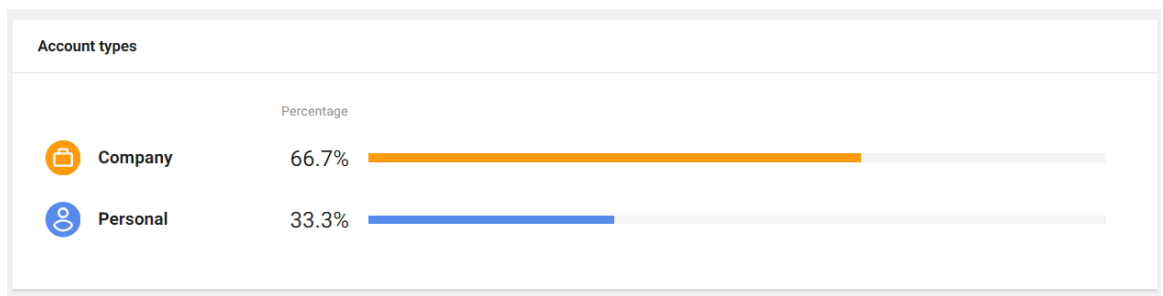


• **Alert 10 – Congress – In Delhi**

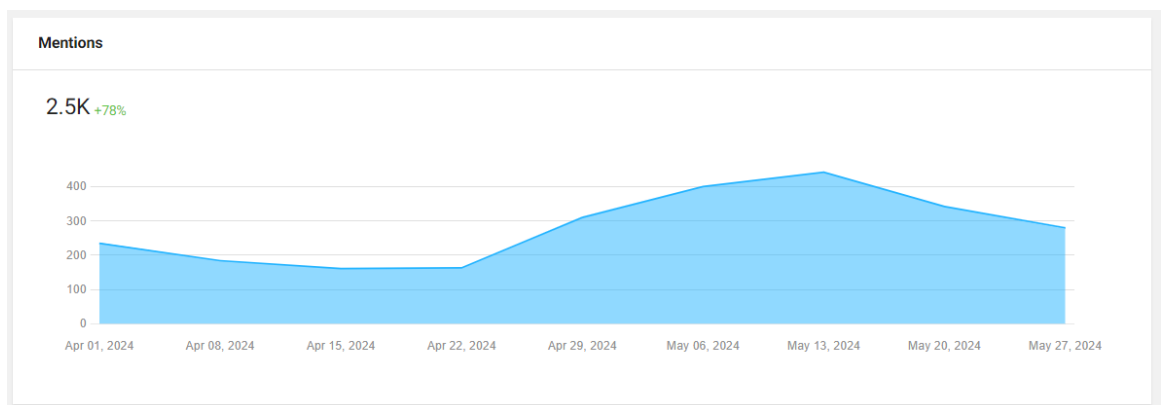


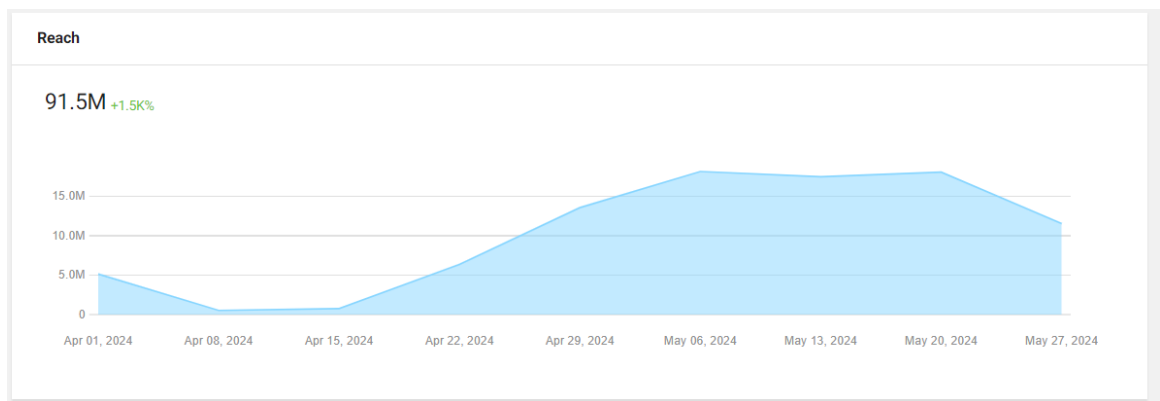
Sources by mentions

	Mentions	Difference	Percentage
Instagram	3.2K	+614%	84.5%
Twitter	578		15.5%



- **Alert 11 – AAP – In Delhi**



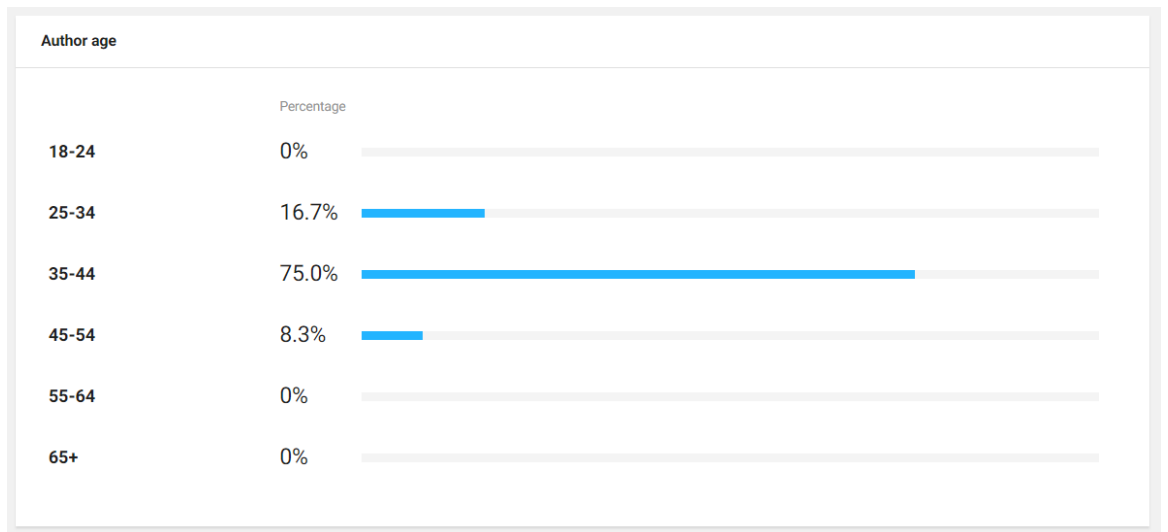


Sources by mentions ⋮ 🗑️

	Mentions	Difference	Percentage
Instagram	1.5K	+10%	61.0%
Twitter	981	+5.4K%	39.0%

Account types

	Percentage
Personal	68.8%
Company	31.3%



3.9.6 Phase 2: Summary of data / visualization

Political Party	Location	Mentions in Thousands (K)	Reach In Billions of (B) / Millions (M)	Key Observations
BJP	Karnataka	17.8K	447.2M	- Authors Age Group 25-34:75% 35-44:25% - Source Of Mention - Instagram:84.7% - News/Blogs:8.2% - Twitter:7.1% - Account Type - Company:57.6 - Personal:42.4 - Gender - Male:85% - Female:15%
Congress	Karnataka	5.4K	72.5M	- Authors Age Group 25-34:75% 35-44:25% - Source Of Mention

				○ Instagram:80.3% ○ Twitter:19.7% ● Account Type ○ Company:61.8% ○ Personal:38.2% ● Gender ○ Male:84.6% ○ Female:15.4%
BJP	Uttar Pradesh	8.1K	538M	● Authors Age Group ○ 25-34:0% ○ 35-44:100% ● Source Of Mention ○ Instagram:94.7% ○ Twitter:5.3% ● Account Type ○ Company:74.1% ○ Personal:25.9% ● Gender ○ Male:100% ○ Female:0%
Congress	Uttar Pradesh	4.5K	537M	● Authors Age Group ○ 25-34:0% ○ 35-44:100% ● Source Of Mention ○ Instagram:91.1% ○ Twitter:8.9% ● Account Type ○ Company:72.4% ○ Personal:27.6% ● Gender ○ Male:100% ○ Female:0%
BJP	West Bengal	8.0K	35.5M	● Authors Age Group ○ 25-34:0% ○ 35-44:100% ● Source Of Mention ○ Instagram:96.4% ○ Twitter:3.6% ● Account Type ○ Company:36.4%

				○ Personal:63.6% ● Gender ○ Male:57.1% ○ Female:42.9%
Congress	West Bengal	4.3K	23.6M	● Authors Age Group ○ 25-34:0% ○ 35-44:100% ● Source Of Mention ○ Instagram:96.4% ○ Twitter:3.6% ● Account Type ○ Company:71.4% ○ Personal:28.6% ● Gender ○ Male:50% ○ Female:50%
TMC	West Bengal	6.4K	105.6M	● Authors Age Group ○ 25-34:10% ○ 35-44:50% ○ 45-54:10% ● Source Of Mention ○ Instagram:87% ○ Twitter:13% ● Account Type ○ Company:65% ○ Personal:35% ● Gender ○ Male:92% ○ Female:8%
APP	Delhi	2.5K	91.5M	● Authors Age Group ○ 25-34:16.7% ○ 35-44:75% ○ 45-54:8.3% ● Source Of Mention ○ Instagram:61% ○ Twitter:39% ● Account Type ○ Company:69% ○ Personal:31%

				- Gender - Male:91% - Female:9%
BJP	Delhi	5.3K	193.8M	- Authors Age Group 25-34:71.4% 35-44:28.6% - Source Of Mention - Instagram:90.2% - Twitter:9.8% - Account Type - Company:60.5% - Personal:39.5% - Gender - Male:80% - Female:20%
Congress	Delhi	3.7K	152.1M	- Authors Age Group 25-34:80% 35-44:20% - Source Of Mention - Instagram:84.5% - Twitter:15.5% - Account Type - Company:66.7% - Personal:33.3% - Gender - Male:80% - Female:20%

Summary: Location-Based Mentions of Political Parties

1. Karnataka

- It's BJP with 17.8K mentions and a reach of 447.2M, and it's Congress with 5.4K mentions and a reach of 72.5M.

- The main platform for both parties is Instagram, with 80% to 85% of the viewers being between the ages of 25 and 34.
- Most of the posts on BJP and Congress come from business accounts (57.6% to 61.8%) and men (85%).

2. Uttar Pradesh

- Congress and BJP both have about 537 million supporters, but BJP has slightly more comments (8.1K vs. 4.5K).
- All comments come from people aged 35 to 44, which suggests that older people are interested.
- More than 90% of the comments are on Instagram, and all of them are from male users.
- More than 70% of my sources are company accounts.

3. West Bengal

- BJP has the most mentions (8.0K), but TMC has the most impact (105.6M), even more than Congress (23.6M) and BJP (35.5M).
- TMC has the widest range of ages and genders, with 8% women and ages 25 to 54 represented.
- This Congress has the most equal numbers of men and women (50% men and 50% women).
- Instagram is the main source (96% for BJP and Congress).

4. Delhi

- BJP is still in first place with 5.3K mentions and 193.8M reach, followed by Congress with 3.7K mentions and AAP with 2.5K.
- AAP has the most authors between the ages of 25 and 54 and the biggest Twitter share (39%).
- Both the BJP and the Congress party lean toward people aged 25 to 34 and depend on company accounts (60% to 70%).
- Most writers are men (80% to 91%), with AAP having the highest percentage of male authors.

Key Insights

- The BJP leads in terms of mentions and presence in every state, although the TMC in West Bengal and the AAP in Delhi exhibit significant regional involvement.
- Instagram accounts for the majority of mentions (usually 80%+). Company accounts account for the majority of mentions, indicating coordinated or campaign-driven activity.
- Up to 100% of the conversation is dominated by male users, especially in Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh.
- While the AAP in Delhi has the widest range of ages and platforms, the Congress in West Bengal has the best gender balance.

3.10 Research Design Limitations

India has a lot of different types of people, religions, languages, ages, local problems, political groups' histories, and other things.

Therefore, it is hard to come up with a clear sampling method that works for all political groups and locations. Despite efforts to reduce bias at different stages of data collection, the research design method still has the following problems.

- **Choice of Political Party and Political Region:** India has a lot of political parties, especially small local parties, so only the big ones with a strong presence in the area were looked at. The information was gathered in two steps.
 - **Step 1:** Initially gathered social media information based on the main political groups. [BJP, Congress, APP, TMC]
 - **Step 2:** Social information was gathered based on a region where a certain party has a long history.
 - BJP – Uttar Pradesh
 - Karnataka – Congress
 - West Bengal – TMC
 - Delhi – APP
- **Social media demographics:**
 - It only shows information and opinions of younger people.
 - Especially people aged 25 to 34 and 35 to 44
- **Platform-Specific Bias:**

- Because of different rules and limits, only information from Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, and, to a lesser extent, the web and news was gathered.
- **Quality of the Data:**
 - Fake Accounts: It's hard to figure out what's going on when there are fake accounts.
 - Misinformation: Spreading false information and misinformation can taint data and findings.
- **Problems with content analysis:**
 - Tools: Awario's sentiment analysis tools and methods are used for mood analysis.
 - Language and Tone: It can be hard to figure out how someone feels or what they think because they use different languages, pictures, and local slang.
 - Understanding the Context: Algorithms might have trouble understanding the context of conversations, which could cause them to misunderstand the data.
- **Methodological Limitations:**
 - Analysis Tools: Different analytical tools and methods may not be accurate or reliable, which can make the results less valid.
- **Political and cultural factors:**

- Cultural differences: How people use social media and get involved in politics can be very different depending on their culture.
- Local Religion/Caste Mix: The political climate in different parts of the country is very different depending on the area and caste.

3.11 Conclusion

Some common biases can affect the study because it is based on randomly collected data from social media sites. This was done, however, to make sure that these biases didn't affect the actual data collection.

- **Aswario.com** is a global company that has nothing to do with India. They make their random algorithm to get data from social media and do different kinds of research on it, like figuring out how people feel about it. So, there isn't much risk in using the Awario tool sets that are offered.
- **Quality of the Data**—Many comments are gathered using several queries so that data doesn't come from a single place or social group. Along with collecting mentions, basic information about the people who made them, such as their location, account type, gender, and age, is also gathered so that the data set has the right demographic information.
- Other algorithms, such as mood analysis, are used to test the results and make sure they are correct.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

4.1 Is social media influencing the Indian General Election?

This question will be addressed by a thorough examination of the social media campaigns of the three main Indian National Political parties. India's 2024 general election results can be summed up as follows.

Political Party	Lok Sabha Seats (Out of 547)	Rajya Sabha Seats (Out Of 245)	Comments
BJP	240	97	Forming the Government if India for the third consecutive time.
Congress	99	29	Biggest Opposition Party, Governed India for over 50+ years
TMC	29	13	Major Localized party in Northeastern Part of India, major competitor for BJP in that Area.
APP	3	10	Major Political Party, in capital of India, Delhi.

4.1.1 Criteria for selecting social media activities

The social media campaigns and political actions of these parties were compared using the following criteria.

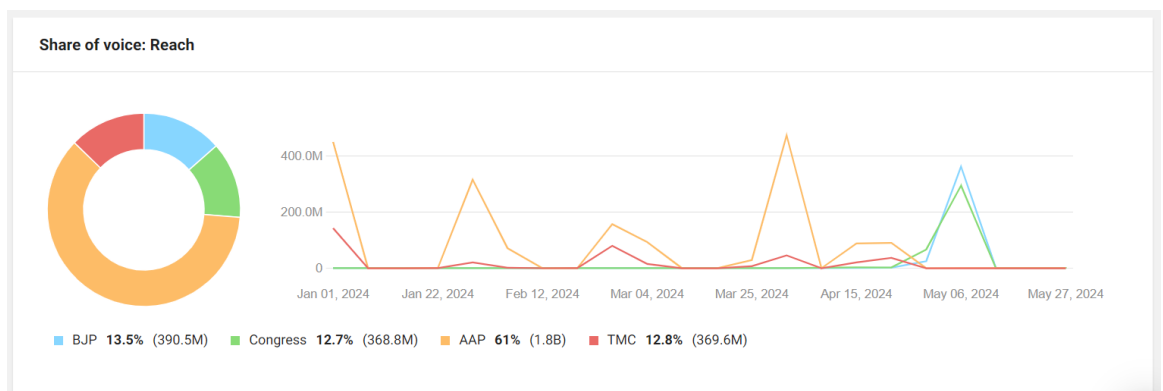
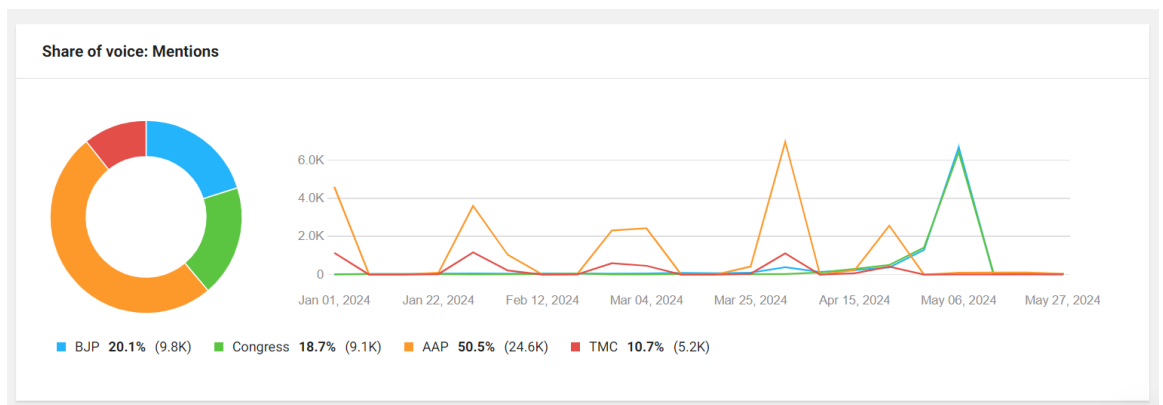
- **Date Range:**

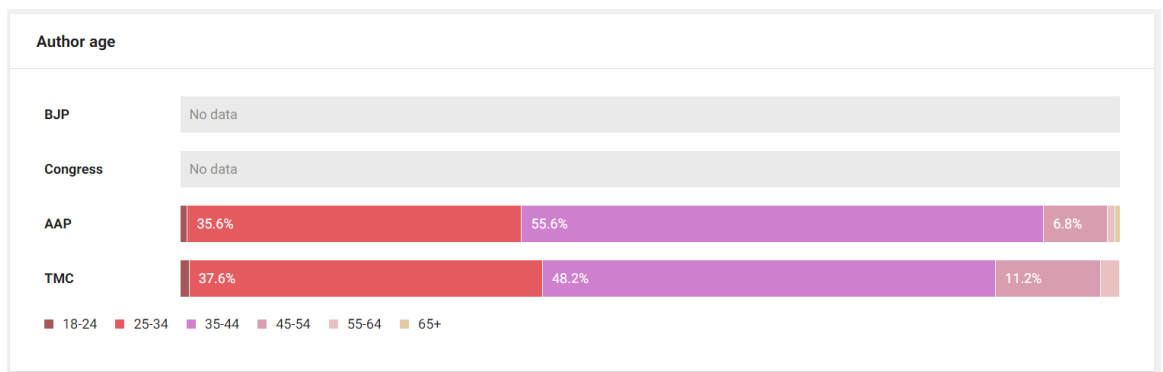
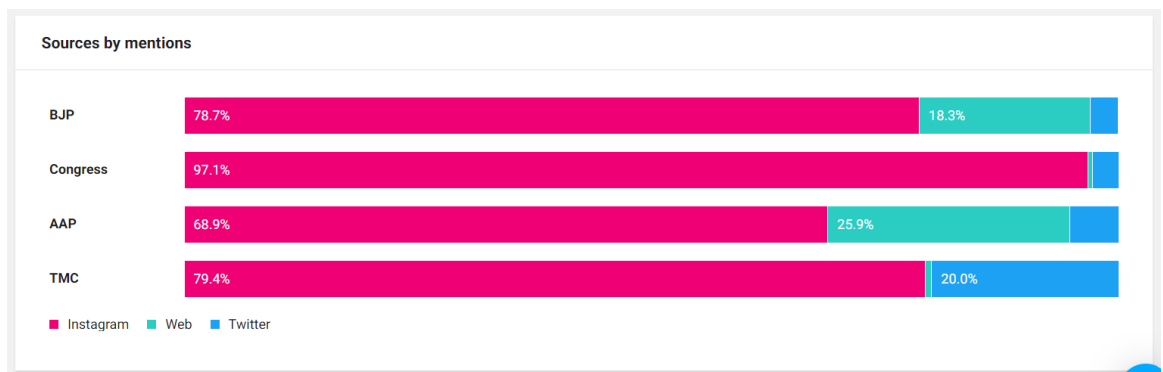
From: 01.01.2024

To: 31.05.2024

- **Geographical Area:** No Bar

4.1.2 Phase 1: Geographical Distribution of Social Media Activity





○ **Analysis summary:**

- The AAP has a strong social media footprint, as shown by its 50.5% share of all mentions.
- The BJP comes in second with 20.1%, followed by Congress with 18.7% and TMC with 10.7%.

- There are clear peaks in the number of times AAP is mentioned in late March and early May 2024.
- Again, AAP has the most reach, with a big 61% share. This means that their information is seen by more people.
- The TMC has a 12.8% following, with 13.5% for the BJP and 12.7% for the Congress.
- AAP's reach has big peaks, like when they're mentioned, especially at the beginning of January and the end of March.
- All parties use Instagram the most, but Congress uses it the most (97.1% of comments come from Instagram).
- People with personal accounts are more likely to use AAP (66.4% of users) and TMC (70.5% of users).
- The people who talk about AAP are younger: 35.6% are between the ages of 18 and 24 and 55.6% are between the ages of 25 and 34.
- TMC also talks to younger people; 37.6% of comments come from people ages 18 to 24 and 48.2% come from people ages 25 to 34.
- Both mentions and reach show that AAP has strong social media tactics and a large and interested audience.
- Personal accounts are talking about AAP and TMC more, which suggests involvement at the local level.
- Younger people are the most active on both AAP and TMC, which shows how important it is for social media efforts to focus on young people.

4.1.3 Phase 2: Activities on social media – West Bengal

The political actions and campaigns of these parties on social media were compared using the following criteria.

○ **Date Range:**

From: 01.01.2024

To: 31.05.2024

○ **Geographical Area:** West Bengal

Share of voice: Mentions

■ BJP - Phase 2 - West Bengal
44.2% 8.6K +5.1K%

■ Congress - Phase 2 - West Bengal
24.8% 4.8K +2.0K%

■ TMC - Phase 2 - West Bengal
31% 6.0K

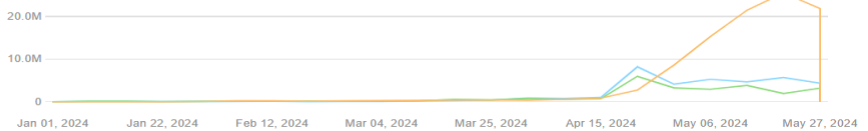


Share of voice: Reach

■ BJP - Phase 2 - West Bengal
22.6% 36.7M +9.2K%

■ Congress - Phase 2 - West Bengal
15.9% 25.9M +2.1K%

■ TMC - Phase 2 - West Bengal
61.5% 99.9M



Sources by mentions

BJP - Phase 2 - W...

96.8%

Congress - Phase ...

96.8%

TMC - Phase 2 - W...

87.1%

12.9%

■ Instagram ■ Twitter

Account types

BJP - Phase 2 - W...

36.4%

63.6%

Congress - Phase ...

71.4%

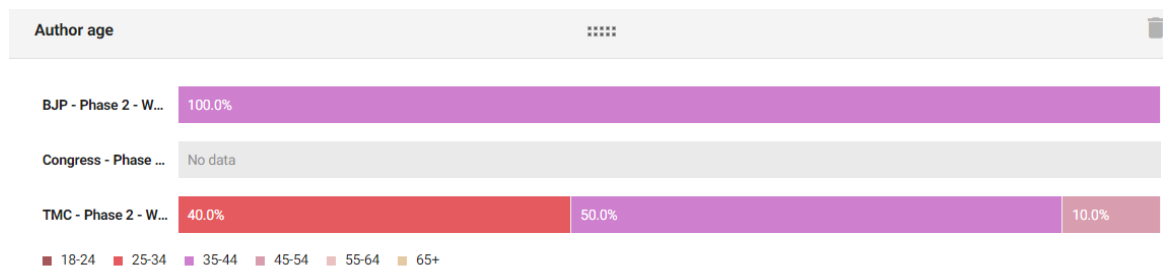
28.6%

TMC - Phase 2 - W...

35%

65%

■ Company ■ Personal



○ **Analysis Summary:**

- The TMC has a much bigger spread in West Bengal than the BJP, but the BJP gets more mentions.
- Instagram is still the most popular social media site for working together on social media.
- The BJP and TMC see more interactions between personal accounts, while the Congress party sees more interactions between company accounts.
- BJP's mentions only come from people between the ages of 25 and 34, while TMC's writers are of a wider range of ages.
- The numbers show that TMC has a bigger reach in terms of volume, but both BJP and TMC are very active on social media.

4.1.3 Phase 2: Activities on social media – Delhi

○ **Date Range:**

From: 01.01.2024

To: 31.05.2024

○ **Geographical Area:** Delhi

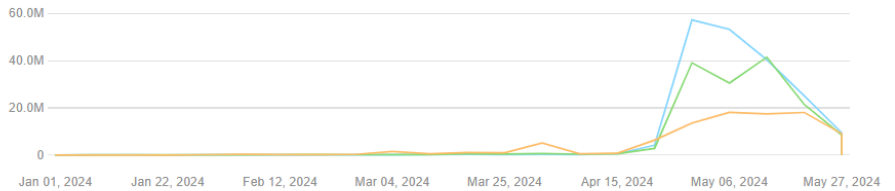
Share of voice: Mentions

BJP - Phase 2 - Delhi 42.1% 5.8K +3.5K%
 Congress - Phase 2 - Delhi 30.8% 4.3K +1.8K%
 APP - Phase 2 - Delhi 27% 3.7K



Share of voice: Reach

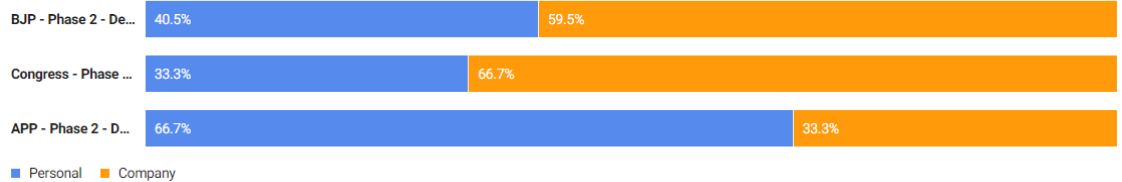
BJP - Phase 2 - Delhi 44.2% 191.8M +48.3K%
 Congress - Phase 2 - Delhi 34% 147.7M +12.8K%
 APP - Phase 2 - Delhi 21.7% 94.3M



Sources by mentions



Account types



Author age



- Analysis Summary:
- Starting in early May 2024, there was a noticeable rise in mentions. The BJP had the biggest peak, followed by Congress and AAP.
- BJP has the most supporters, a lot more than Congress and AAP combined.
- All parties, but especially the BJP, use Instagram as their main outlet for comments.
- Social media accounts for BJP and Congress get more engagement, while accounts for AAP get more engagement from personal accounts.
- BJP and Congress mostly focus on young people (18–24 years old), while AAP reaches out to people of all ages more evenly.
- The large increases in mentions and reach in early May suggest that a lot was going on, probably because of the Delhi Polling event that month.

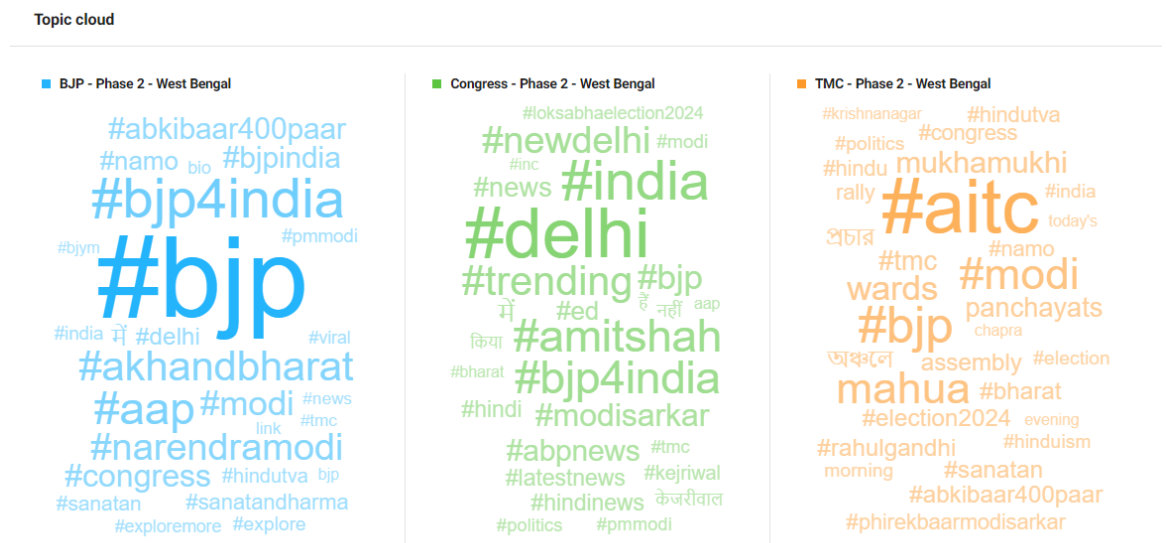
4.2 Feelings on social media sites affecting general elections?

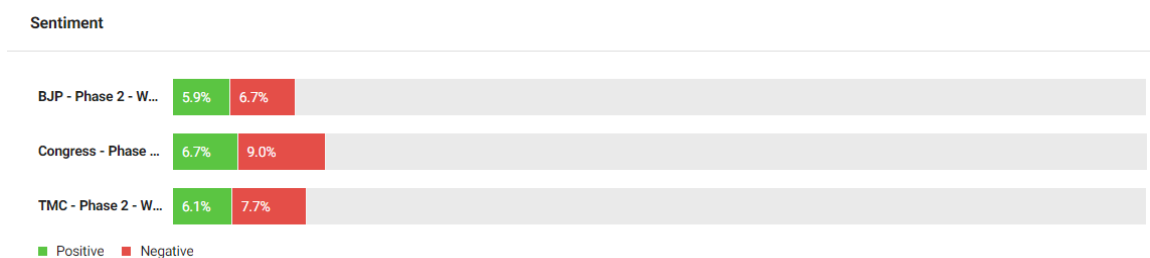
Let's look at and study the proof of the manipulation of social media to affect the Indian general election.

4.2.1 Phase 1: India- Analysis of Top Mentions and Sentiment

- A study of sentiment analysis shows:
 - BJP's 4.3% positive and 5.5% negative numbers don't show a clear direction of public opinion.
 - Congress: 3.6% are positive and 6.5% are negative, which shows that people have a more negative view of them.
 - TMC has a higher negative sentiment (11.4%) than its positive sentiment (7.0%), which means that people have a more negative view of it overall.
 - Additionally, APP has more negative attitudes (7.1%) than positive sentiments (4.0%).
- The BJP secured 240 of the 542 seats in the election.

4.2.2 Phase 2: West Bengal - Analysis of Top Mentions and Sentiment

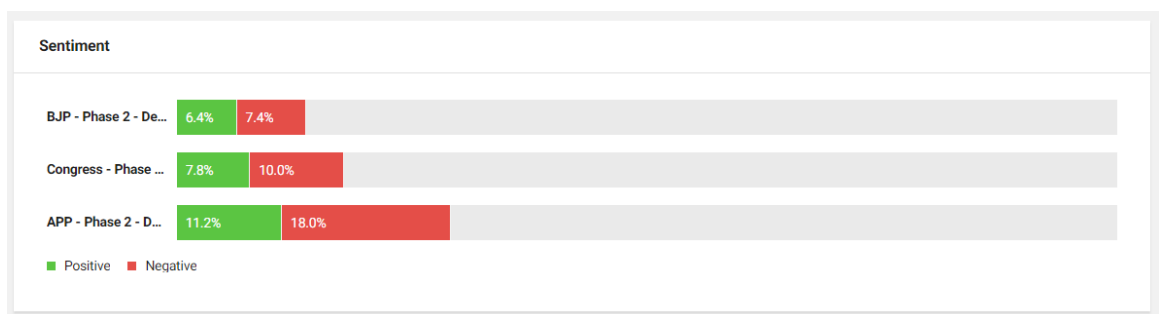
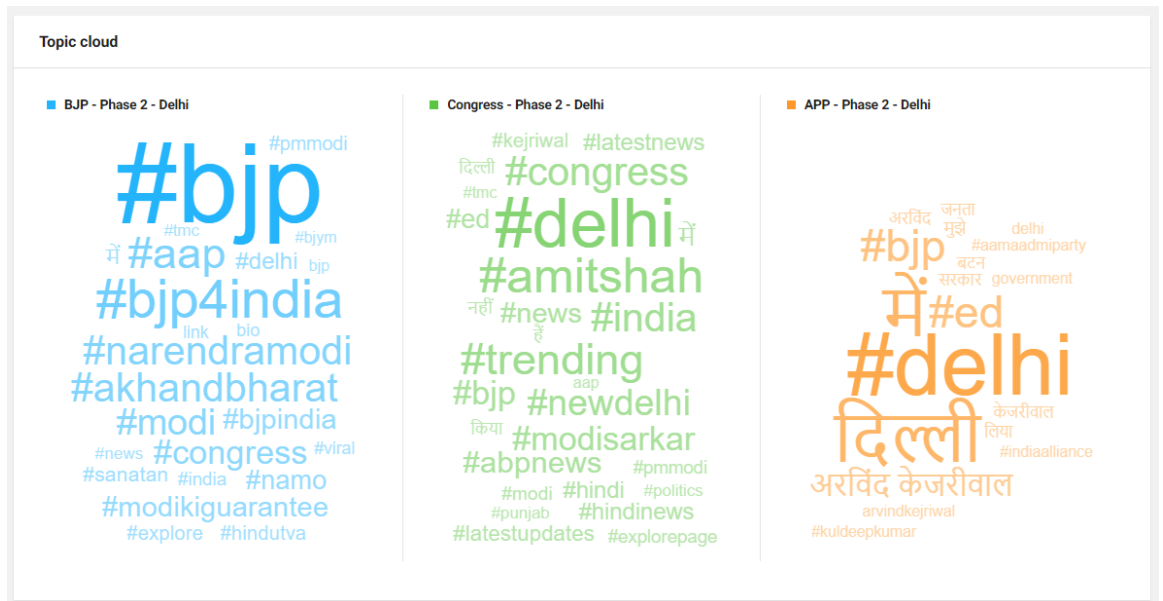




Summary of Analysis

- The major topic cloud doesn't show any large use of controversial hashtags or keywords.
- A study of sentiment analysis reveals:
 - BJP: The party has a lower positive mood (5.9% vs. 6.7%), which means that people have a slightly negative view of it overall.
 - Congress: This party has the most bad feelings (9.0%), while only 6.7% of people feel good about them. In comparison to the other parties, this shows a more negative view.
 - TMC: The party has a good sentiment score of 6.1% and a negative sentiment score of 7.7%. This also shows a more negative overall view, though not as high as Congress.
- The polls showed that TMC got 29 seats and BJP won 12. There were 42 seats in total.

4.2.3 Phase 2: Delhi - Top Mentions & Sentiment Analysis



Analysis Summary

- The major topic cloud doesn't show any large use of polarised keywords or hashtags.
- The study of sentiment analysis reveals:
 - People are most interested in AAP. During this time, the famous leaders of the AAP were going through legal processes, which caused a lot of anger in the public. But they feel very badly about things, and that would have affected the result of their election.

- Congress had fewer people show up and expected more from Delhi.
Because of this, the feelings are more neutral.
- BJP comments are also more neutral, and there isn't a big difference between positive and negative ones.
- Survey Results: APP lost a lot of support in Delhi. A total of seven seats in Delhi were won by the BJP.

4.3 Summary of Findings

The process of gathering data was entirely chance. As a result of the strong support for the opposing parties in Phase 2 locations like Delhi and West Bengal, the ruling party BJP, was expected to put in all of its efforts to win the seats there.

Important Findings:

- No notable hash tags on misleading propaganda or fake news
- No signs of widely divisive messaging
- The majority of sentiment analyses provide neutral feelings, meaning that there aren't any pronouncedly favourable opinions about any political party.
- The only significant age groups engaged on social media are those aged 25–34 and 34–45, indicating that a major group is not active on social media.
- India's population is extremely diverse, making it challenging to think about and assess the population in light of this diversity.

4.4 Conclusion

After carefully going over all the social media data that was gathered, it is clear that there was no major manipulation of social media. There may be some highs and lows related to news and events that only affect a small area, but it is very unlikely that it will have an effect on the whole of India.

- Approximately 1,00,00+ listed studies were gathered at random.
- Phase I (about 35,000 mentions): this phase covered the whole country.
- “Phase 2” (about 650000 mentions) was focused on a particular place where the ruling party and the opposition were expected to have a tough fight.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

5.1 Discussing the Results

The sample data and the analysis done on top of the sample data clearly show that there was no major proof of SMM in India's 2024 general election. When we look at the results of this study, we also need to remember that it was based on a random sample of data from the chosen social media sites, the political regions that were analysed, and the amount of time that the study was conducted.

5.2 Is social media affecting the Indian General Election?

Result: Phase 1 – Data Analysis

- Mentions: “APP received 50.5%, BJP 20.1%, Congress 18.7%, and TMC 10.7%.
 - Reach: APP 61%, BJP 13.5%, Congress 12.7%, TMC 12.8%
 - Shows that social media is utilised extensively for the general election.
- AAP's audience is younger, with 55.6% of mentions coming from people aged 25 to 34 and 35.6% coming from people aged 18 to 24.
- Younger users are also engaged by TMC; users aged 18 to 24 account for 37.6% of mentions, while those aged 25 to 34 account for 48.2%.
- Shows that the majority of Indians do not follow social media activity. Without the attention of the remaining user group, it is challenging to affect the result.

- The Indian voting base is divided by age.

Age Group	Voters (In Million)
18-25	150
26-35	200
36-45	180
45-60	170
60+	100

- According to influencer analysis, news and media agencies are the primary source of these mentions because 40% of the accounts are company-based.
- Lastly, there is no discernible, substantial shift in sentiments, according to the sentiment study.

Therefore, it is impossible for social media to affect the outcome of the Indian general election because of the low percentage of personal accounts, the low presence of other age groups on social media, and the lack of a clear sentiment swing.

Result: Phase 2 – Data Analysis

The results from the mentions gathered for phase 2 are nearly the same. Social media's limited ability to affect the outcome of India's general election is mostly

indicated by the low percentage of personal accounts, the lack of specific sentiment swings, and the low representation of other age groups on the platform.

5.3 Are feelings on social media affecting the general election?

The main goal of the collecting phase data was to find an answer to this question. Phase 1: Information was gathered from all over India, including places that may not have anything to do with local political parties like TMC and Delhi.

Result: Phase 2 – Data Analysis – West Bengal

- The major topic cloud doesn't show any large use of controversial hashtags or keywords.
- A study of sentiment analysis reveals:
 - BJP: The party has a lower positive mood (5.9% vs. 6.7%), which means that people have a slightly negative view of it overall.
 - TMC: The party has a good sentiment score of 6.1% and a negative sentiment score of 6.1% and a negative sentiment score of 7.7%. This also shows a more negative overall view, though not as high as Congress.

Results of the election: Out of 42 seats, TMC won 29, and BJP won 12.

Based on the analysis and results, it looks like the fight between TMC and BJP is very close. At the same time, looking at the topic cloud doesn't show any big signs of any politically charged topics that could change the mood of the cloud.

Result: Phase 2 – Data Analysis – Delhi

- A major topic cloud doesn't show any large use of polarised keywords or hashtags.
- A study of sentiments shows:
 - The people respond most to AAP. But they have strong negative feelings, which would have affected the result of their election.
 - BJP comments are also more neutral, and there isn't a big difference between positive and negative ones.

Survey Results: AAP lost a lot of support in Delhi. A total of seven seats in Delhi were won by the BJP.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) lost influence in Delhi in the 2024 General Election. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won all seven parliamentary seats in the state. The election results show that the fight between the AAP and the BJP was very close.

Analysis of social media, on the other hand, shows a different picture. The topic cloud made from election-related conversations on Twitter, Instagram, and other sites did not show any themes that were heavily politicised or altered that could have swayed voter opinion in a certain direction. That is, there was no clear proof of coordinated campaigns that could explain or link the results of the election.

Along with demographic segmentation (such as age groups and account types), the Phase 2 study also showed two main trends:

- Less activity on social media sites from people over the age of 65.

- Less activity from verified or recognisable voter accounts, with political parties or influencers creating most of the material.

These results show that in places like West Bengal and Delhi, the mood on social media during the election period did not strongly match the actual results of the vote. In those districts, this could mean that digital sentiment didn't have a big or accurate effect on how people voted, especially if offline factors or campaigns on the ground were stronger.

CHAPTER VI: SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 US Context

A lot of attention was paid to the part that social media plays in U.S. elections after the 2016 presidential election. In its Volume II Report on Russian interference, the Senate Intelligence Committee showed how Russian groups, like the Internet Research Agency, used social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to divide American voters and change public opinion (Senate Intelligence Committee, 2019).

More worries came up during the 2020 elections, so the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) released a declassified report detailing how foreign actors, mostly Russia and Iran, were trying to change the results of the elections by spreading false information online (ODNI, 2021).

The U.S. federal government has taken a number of different actions in response. That job is now being done by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). According to CISA (2023), they do cybersecurity checks on election infrastructure, give states tools and resources to protect them, and run public awareness programs to make people more resistant to fake news.

To fight foreign interference, the Department of Justice (DOJ) has stepped up its work. The DOJ has improved how it works with the FBI and U.S. Attorneys to share information about possible foreign threats targeting social media platforms,

according to a report from the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) in 2024 (OIG, 2024).

The United States has taken a wide range of steps to limit the impact of social media on the voting process. The country is getting stronger against election-related fake news and outside interference by combining legislative efforts, agency coordination, private sector cooperation, and academic research. To deal with future problems in the digital information world, we will need to keep investing and being flexible.

A. Countering Misinformation from Abroad

Foreign influence operations, especially those carried out by hostile state actors, pose a serious threat to the integrity of elections in contemporary democracies. The Countering Foreign Propaganda and Disinformation Act was passed by the US Congress in 2016 in response to growing disinformation tactics. The U.S. Department of State's Global Engagement Centre (GEC) was established as a result of this law. Finding, evaluating, and combating foreign propaganda and misinformation campaigns—particularly those aimed at American voters—is the GEC's primary responsibility. In order to identify and stop malicious influence operations, especially those attributed to Russia, China, and Iran—all of whom have been linked to prior attempts to sabotage U.S. electoral processes—the centre collaborates with digital platforms, civil society organisations, and international allies (Congress.gov, 2016).

However, there has been significant investigation of the GEC's efficacy. Political differences in Congress could lead to the Center's defunding, which would impede continued efforts to protect upcoming elections (Gordon and Strobel, 2024).

B. Improving Political Advertising Transparency

Transparency and accountability are challenged by the digital environment's ability to microtarget and anonymously distribute political ads. The Honest Ads Act, a bipartisan initiative that would extend conventional broadcast disclosure laws to online political advertisements, was sponsored by lawmakers in response to this issue. Should it be approved, social media corporations would have to keep public records of political advertisements and reveal who bought and funded them (Congress.gov, 2023).

Several platforms have voluntarily added transparency features even if the bill hasn't been passed yet. For instance, viewers can access political advertisements and associated sponsorship information through Meta's online ad library. Although not required by law, these actions show that the sector understands the problem and is prepared to support election integrity.

C. Working together with Social Media Sites

Lawmakers and federal organisations have always stressed how important it is to work together with private tech companies. Executives from Meta, Google, and Microsoft got together at a Senate Intelligence Committee meeting in September 2024 to talk about threats to the election. The committee stressed the need for better

monitoring systems and the use of tools that can find and stop the spread of fake news in real time (Wired, 2024).

Some of the things that social media companies have done are label misleading material, highlight reliable sources, and remove accounts that act in a coordinated way that isn't real. According to the States United Democracy Centre (2023), platform-level involvement can be seen in Meta's action of labelling posts that say election results were announced too soon and sending users to official government websites.

D. Cybersecurity Assistance and Interagency Coordination

Election infrastructure security is a top priority for the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA). To combat viral election misinformation, it has launched the "Rumour Control" portal, issued threat alerts, and carried out cyber assessments for local election offices (CISA, 2023). Additionally, CISA collaborates with the FBI and the Election Assistance Commission to coordinate responses to cyber threats.

In the meantime, disinformation campaigns supported by foreign entities are tracked and investigated by the Department of Justice (DOJ) in collaboration with the FBI. Identifying and dismantling harmful networks that target American voters is crucial, especially in the run-up to national elections (Brennan Centre for Justice, 2023).

E. Research and Involvement of Civil Society

Research and monitoring resources are made available by academic institutions and civil society organisations to aid in the battle against false information. Organisations such as the Election Integrity Partnership and the Stanford Internet Observatory keep an eye on social media for patterns of misinformation and release studies that educate the public and decision-makers. These groups serve as a liaison between independent scholars, the government, and the tech sector.

Their contributions were particularly noticeable during the election cycles of 2020 and 2022, when reporting tools and real-time dashboards assisted in spotting and stopping the spread of misleading narratives. Their efforts are still crucial in spotting new dangers like synthetic media and deepfakes.

F. Constant Problems and Moral Considerations

Despite making a lot of progress, the US still has a long way to go before it can control how social media affects elections. Closing or cutting funds to important projects like the Global Engagement Centre (GEC) could make it harder to fight disinformation campaigns in the future, both at home and abroad (Gordon and Strobel, 2024) in particular. Meanwhile, the ongoing fight to limit harmful content while protecting the First Amendment creates a tricky legal and moral problem that hasn't been fully fixed yet.

Accelerated progress in artificial intelligence and the widespread use of encrypted communication tools make these problems even worse. Technologies that use generative AI can now quickly and widely make fake news, like deepfakes and

made-up stories. Law enforcement and regulatory bodies also have a hard time finding, tracking, or stopping these digital threats in real time because chat apps use end-to-end encryption. Collectively, these things make the threats to democratic systems more complex.

6.2 Indian Context

During the Indian general elections, there have been many reports and worries about influence on social media. The study was mostly about how it would affect the 2024 general election, but this issue will continue to change for future elections as well. Different groups that are against democracy are trying out the newest trends and ways to control how people feel on social media.

- **Deepfakes and AI:** It has been said that political parties use AI-made material, like deepfake videos, to sway public opinion. One example is a video of Bollywood actor Aamir Khan that was changed with AI to make it look like he was supporting the opposition Congress party. Khan later denied that the video was fake. Some important political leaders have put out deepfake movies, but they were quickly found out and thrown out.
- **Cyber Troops and Misinformation:** Governments and political groups have been known to use "cyber troops" to spread false information on a large scale. Using bots, paid influencers, and strategic communications firms to boost political messages and drown out voices of resistance is one of these things.
- **Campaign management firms and social media influencers:** People have used fake fans to get more attention and political rank on social media.

The good news is that both the Indian government and social media sites have taken steps to fight these attempts and make sure that there are no biases on social media during the general election.

- **Rules and Regulations**
- **Rules for Social Media Platforms**
- **Making People Aware**

6.3 Implications

Social media manipulation is a major threat to the political process, so everyone is working to stop it as much as possible. To lessen the effects of social media abuse and manipulation, both the government and the social media sites themselves are always changing their rules, standards, and systems. The following things will happen if it isn't managed properly.

- a. **Loss of trust in democracy:** Information that has been changed can make people doubt the legitimacy of election results, which can hurt trust in the political process.
- b. **Making Informed Decisions in a Democracy:** Voters need correct information to make informed choices. Voters can be fooled by false information, which can change their choices and the outcome of the poll as a whole.

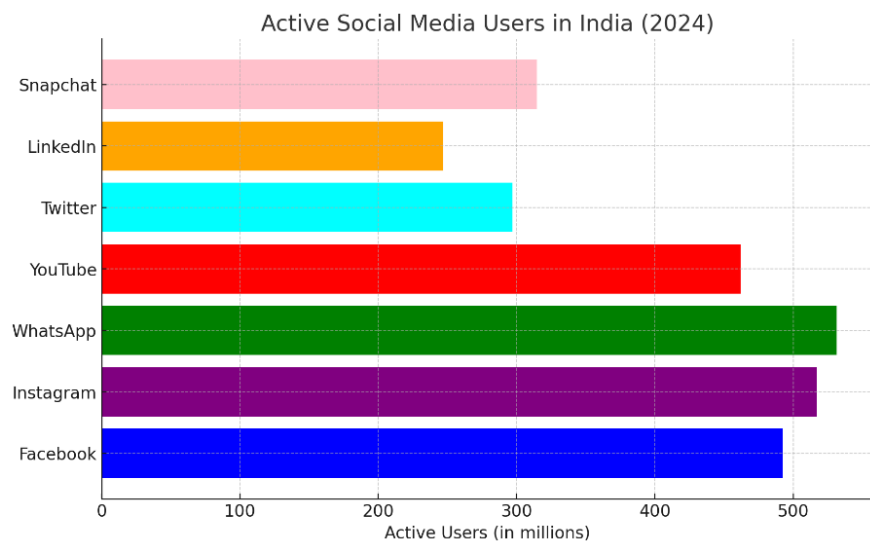
- c. More division: material that has been changed often aims to make societal differences worse, which can cause more political division and social unrest.
- d. Undermining Opponents: Disinformation campaigns can be used to hurt the credibility of political opponents, which makes the election process less fair.
- e. Foreign Interference: There is a chance that foreign groups will use social media manipulation to try to change the results of an election, which could serve their own geopolitical goals at the cost of the sovereignty of the host nation.
- f. Cybersecurity Threats: Bots and other automatic tools that spread false information can be very dangerous to cybersecurity.
- g. Need for Regulation: The fact that fake news is used so often shows how important it is to have strong rules to keep an eye on and manage the material on social media sites.
- h. Thoughts on Ethics: Concerns about the proper use of technology in politics are raised by the unethical nature of using AI and deepfakes for political gain.
- i. Spread of False Information: The fast spread of fake information can change how people think and act, which could lead to bad decisions based on wrong information.

- j. Social Media Addiction: People may spend more time on screens and become addicted to social media if they have to rely on it a lot for campaign information.

6.4 Suggestions for More Research

The sample data and the analysis done on top of the sample data clearly show that there was no major proof of SMM in India's 2024 general election. When we look at the results of this study, we also need to remember that it was based on a random sample of data from the chosen social media sites, the political regions that were analysed, and the amount of time that the study was conducted.

- Randomly chosen from among the 1 billion people who use social media sites like Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter
- It includes the most famous hashtags and keywords for all major parties.
- It also talked about two stages of gathering info. The first phase was a general one for the whole country, and the second phase was very specific to areas where big political battles were expected between different parties.



- DataReportal – Global Digital Insights

- These things about the sample data ensured that it represented the view of the majority of the people. Nevertheless, there is still room for more study, as shown below.
- The same kind of study can be done on other social media sites, like WhatsApp.
- During the study, it was seen that a lot of social influencers have a lot of followers who don't do anything with them. You can find out more about these followers who aren't doing anything to see if they have any political parts to play.
- Several tools and outside businesses are working to raise the influencer grade. Something different can be studied about these groups to find out how they work.

- Some research can be done to find out how Deepfakes and other AI technologies are used in the general election.

6.5 Conclusion

People are still worried about how social media can be used to sway public opinion during elections, but it doesn't look like this is having much of an effect in India. This is mostly because the country is so big and has so many different kinds of people and languages. These factors work together to make it harder for single disinformation efforts to have an impact.

Positively, recent trends show that key players are becoming more aware and taking action. Institutions like the Election Commission of India and other government bodies are focussing more and more on finding and stopping people from abusing digital platforms during election cycles. To make sure that India's political processes stay open and safe, the government and social media companies are working together more and more.

While there are still problems, especially with new technologies like AI-generated material and encrypted messaging, the work of regulatory bodies and platform providers shows a positive way to protect the integrity of elections going forward.

A. Rules and Regulations

- **Election Commission of India (ECI):** The ECI has been proactive in working with social media sites to keep an eye on and control material. The

Voluntary Code of Ethics for Social Media was put in place to make sure that polls are fair.

- **Information Technology (Digital Media Ethics Code and Intermediary Guidelines) Regulations, 2021:** These regulations require social media companies to designate grievance officers, guarantee message traceability, and delete illegal information within predetermined timeframes. Their goal is to hold middlemen more responsible for the information that is posted on their platforms.

B. Platform-Specific Regulations

- **Platform-specific content moderation:** Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and other platforms have standards in place to identify and eliminate false accounts, damaging content, and disinformation. These technologies detect and flag offensive content using AI and machine learning.
- **Platform-specific Ad Transparency:** Social media firms keep ad libraries and publish transparency reports that reveal specifics regarding political advertisements, such as the names of the advertisers and ad spending amounts.
- **Specific programs for each platform:** Collaborations with fact-checking groups have helped platforms step up their fight against fake news. In order to stop the spread of false information, for example, Facebook works with outside fact-checkers.

- **Disclosure rules that are special to the platform:** Political advertisers must tell the platform who they are and where their money comes from. It helps people know who is behind the ads they see when everything is clear.
- **Initiating Actions:** To stop the spread of harmful content, social media companies have done things like deleting accounts that are thought to be involved in planned fake behaviour and making their algorithms smarter to find and stop it.

C. Projects to raise Public Awareness

- People are becoming increasingly aware of fake materials through various communication channels. In several instances, specific counterfeit materials were identified and reported. While all of these ongoing efforts are going on, it is also important to keep doing similar studies to make sure that social media manipulations don't affect general elections or have very little effect on them. Putting in more work on the steps below will help our democracy grow in the age of social media, making sure that people only use social media for its positive effects and not its bad ones.

D. Education and Awareness for Voters

- **Importance:** Voter education is very important to make sure that people know their rights, how to vote, and why it's important to participate in elections. Voter education efforts that work tell people when to register to vote, how to vote, and how their vote affects government.

- **Methods:** There are many ways to do this, such as through public service announcements, social media campaigns, neighbourhood workshops, and working together with civic groups and schools. The goal is to reach a wide range of people, including those who aren't usually heard or who don't vote very often.

E. Information technology and safety measures

- **Importance:** It's important to make sure that systems are safe and reliable because more and more votes use technology. Although technology can make voting run more smoothly, it also brings risks like cyberattacks and false information.
- **Measures:** Security measures include strong cybersecurity procedures, encrypting voter data, sending results safely, and checking election technology on a regular basis. Furthermore, backup plans must be created in case technology fails on voting day.

F. Independent Election Observation

- **Importance:** Independent oversight by impartial groups contributes to election fairness and transparency. Monitors keep an eye on the election process, document any anomalies, and offer an unbiased evaluation of the election's fairness.
- **Activities:** This entails managing voter registration, keeping an eye on polling places, confirming the counting procedure, and making sure elections

are held legally. Independent monitors' reports can boost public trust in the election's outcome.

G. Enhancing Legal Structures

- **Importance:** Preserving the integrity of elections requires a robust legal framework. It guarantees that elections are held fairly and that all parties—voters, candidates, and officials—follow the rules.
- **Measures:** To strengthen legal frameworks, election laws may need to be updated to handle emerging issues like foreign meddling or digital campaigning. It also entails making certain that laws are upheld and that election disputes are resolved transparently.

H. Initiatives for Open Data

- **Importance:** By providing the public with access to election-related data, open data projects foster transparency. Election results, polling station locations, and voter registration information are a few examples of this.
- **Benefits:** These programs boost public confidence, reduce fraud, and enable independent examination of electoral procedures. Additionally, open data makes it possible for scholars, journalists, and civil society to hold election officials responsible.

I. Communication and the Media

- **Importance:** The public is largely informed about elections and candidates by the media. Good communication techniques contribute to the dissemination of impartial and accurate information to voters.
- **Challenges:** It is more crucial than ever to fight false information and make sure voters are given reliable information in the digital era. Election authorities and media outlets must cooperate to deliver fast, accurate, and understandable information.

J. Involvement of Citizens

- **Importance:** A more inclusive democracy is fostered by including citizens in the electoral process. People are more inclined to take part in elections and contribute to the political process when they are actively involved.
- **Strategies:** Public forums, debates, voter registration drives, and promoting civic engagement are all ways to increase involvement. Engagement of young people, under-represented groups, and first-time voters should receive particular focus.

K. Post-Election Evaluations and Audits

- **Significance:** Following elections, audits and reviews are necessary to confirm the results' accuracy and pinpoint areas in need of development. By following these procedures, you may make sure that the election was held correctly and that any inconsistencies are resolved.
- **Procedure:** Voter list reviews, recounts, and assessments of election technology performance are all possible components of post-election audits. In

addition to boosting public trust in the political process, these audits can offer insights for upcoming elections.

Finally, a voting process that includes more people on social media should grow. This will only make the democratic process and general elections stronger.

To protect their voting systems, both India and the U.S. are taking action, but their approaches are very different:

- **India's** approach is more centralised, based on rules, and requires immediate material removal and enforcement.
- **The United States** uses a decentralised, collaborative, and intelligence-led method that focuses on free speech and reducing threats from other countries.

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