

Net-savy politicians log on for Gen Next voters



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Monjib Mochahari 6 March 2009 13025 views

714 MILLION Voters will decide the fate of the formation of the next govt. Will loud election campaigns in the streets be a history?

Surprisingly, the net-bug has bitten several politicians in the country. Campaigning for the forthcoming parliamentary polls, this time, is not just confined to streets, hoardings and loudspeakers. Quite a handful of politicians switching over to new media such as e-mail, webcasts, SMS, MMS, blogs, social networking sites to woo the largest possible voters, especially the younger lot in a quickest manner. In India more than 45 million people have access to Internet and of this 57 percent are aged between 18 to 35 years.

For, NDA's Prime Ministerial candidate, Mr. L.K. Advani, the web has come as a blessing to realised his dream of becoming the next Prime Minister of the country. He is, at the moment, leading the 'e-campaign' with highest number of visitors of approximately more than 5,000 volunteers have enrolled in his web site www.lkadvani.com. There are others politicians like Chirajeevi and Rahul Gandhi are also coping with the race. Chiranjee's www.megafans.com is second a crowd-puller, whereas Gandhi's website www.rahulgandhi.com is the platform for young Indians.

There other politicians who are yet to launch their e-campaign.

Congress MP Priya Dutta is likely to contest from Mumbai's north-central constituency plans to webcast her election speeches and campaign trail on her website www.priyadutt.org. Webcasting is a technology where audio or video is broadcast over the Internet. Supriya Sule, NCP strongman, Sharad Power's daughter announced her willingness to campaign in Facebook on February 4. Similarly, the Maharashtra Navrirman Sena recently launched the party website starting their own blogs, which will be up and running in the next couple of week. Ram Naik, the BJP's leader who is eyeing the North Mumbai is reaching out voters through the internet.

Technology has enabled politicians stay in constant touch with their voters and it's at the moment best alternative force to influence the people. Thanks to former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, who dared to computerise the country. Though, he was criticised for introducing computers, especially the left parties who opposed the whole process of computerisation, fearing job losses, at the moment he deserves much accolades for his vision that he realised two decades back.

In the process of economic liberalisation, since 1990s, the way to informatisation of the country was laid. At the moment, this process of information revolution has totally dismantled the communication gap. What was ever thought as impossible became possible within a span of twenty years.

It's undeniably unarguable, politicians who were earlier opposed to it, actually, have realised its potential capabilities. As a medium of reaching large voters spread across, as the junk of the voters constitute young population who have access to internet, more and more politicians are translating their electoral dreams into the newly introduced medium 'e-campaign' it involves less cost, but higher reachability in short span of time.

To be sure, it's too early to say, who will reap the benefits offered by this media. This will be proved in the forthcoming Lok Sabha polls scheduled for April 16. However, my argument here is that, the technology has come as a blessing not only to the politicians contesting the elections, but also to the voters know about their favourite candidates, as well as of others or the opponents. This new media has opened up a new transparency in whole political set-up. This should be welcomed in a country like ours. This new avenue for the well functioning should be utilised in the best possible manner, especially the young generations who have so much access to the Internet. Yet, the challenge is - it's only the beginning of a revolution; the success of this depends, when everyone has access to it. Moreover, it should be a means to ensure more transparency in the democratic functioning of the state, but not controversies. Its fault-play will be catastrophe indeed. The Election Commission must patrol these proliferation of Net-tactics so that they do not become a propaganda machine, catering only petty political interests.

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