

Framing Politics: Dissecting Bias and Agenda-Setting in Indian National Parties' posts on 'X'

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Abstract

Introduction: Communication on political issues is the cornerstone of democracy. Social media empowers individuals to share political information. A virtual platform like 'X' (formally Twitter) has protected and integrated its online communication channels to establish a virtual social network. Political elites, media professionals, and the public utilize 'X' to provide their opinions and thoughts on a particular issue. The increased accessibility provided by micro-blogging platforms significantly promotes the freedom of expression and strengthens the democratic nation.

Methodology: The present study is quantitative, and a cross-sectional research design with priority coding is used to collect data from the official 'X' handle of four major Indian national political parties. 601 socio-political posts (formally tweets) are analyzed with the content analysis method.

Results: Outgrowth indicates that two-thirds of posts from the authorized 'X' accounts of Indian national political parties of local and almost half of posts of national importance are bias-free. Two-thirds of posts from the authorized 'X' accounts of Indian national political parties of local importance contain a positive agenda, and less than one-fourth of posts have negative agenda. Two-thirds of posts from the authorized 'X' account of Indian national political parties of local importance are propaganda free, and less than one-fourth of posts contain white propaganda.

Findings: The outcome shows that Indian national political parties are sending a positive message through posts of local importance from their official handles. In most posts of local importance, the truth has been presented exaggeratedly.

Keywords: Twitter, political communication, agenda, political bias, and propaganda.

1.0 Introduction

Political communication is as crucial as elections in a democratic society. Its appealing and intentional approach stresses political actors, media, and public involvement. Political communication is an interdisciplinary area with conceptual and empirical foundations in communication, political science, sociology, psychology, marketing, history, and rhetoric (Gonçalves, 2018). Even though its transdisciplinary nature makes it challenging to define, political communication is a type of communication used by political activists to influence certain groups of people (ÇeliK, 2021).

According to one's choice, freedom is the fundamental value of democracy (Ringen, 2009). Communication on political issues is the cornerstone of democracy, and social media empowers individuals to share political information. A virtual platform like 'X' (formerly Twitter) has protected and integrated its online communication channels to establish a virtual social network. 'X' users follow others to view their postings (prefixed with "#") on any subject. The enormous data collection of 'X' offers important understanding of human existence (Borruto, 2015).

1.1 'X': An efficient means of conversation

'X' (formally Twitter) has evolved into an integral part of political campaigns worldwide. It had 611 million active monthly users in April 2024, including 27.3 million in India (Duarte, 2025). 'X' has the constraint that only account holders can post and repost. However, signup is straightforward via web or smartphone applications. Social media platform like 'X' is a double-edged sword for information consumption. It is a low-cost, widely available, universally accessible medium capable of quick information dissemination. However, it can be used to spread false information and misconception.

1.2 Content and location of political posts

Ideologies are essential pillars of nation-building. Socialism advocates democratic control and social ownership of resources, and capitalism relies on private ownership and profit-making of productive means. Political elites, media, and the public generate political communication with their ideologies. Media coverage, campaign communication, platform technology, and user culture

all shape the dynamic communication environment (Jungherr, 2015). 'X' (formally Twitter) generates massive amounts of political insights that can be analyzed to evaluate popular sentiment and predict political trends (Ansari et al., 2020). However, 'X' data shows users' political attention swings but not general sentiment.

Geographic proximity is still a significant factor in political communication, even though digital technology has decoupled distance and conversation intricacy. The concept of a region encompasses much more than simply administrative significance. The regions derived from electronic communication records closely represent regional and local identity (Arthur & Williams, 2019). Recognizing authentic political opinions on social media platforms such as 'X' is highly beneficial in political drives. We also assess regional identity, inter-regional contacts, moods, and the local interests of regional political alliances by monitoring posts on 'X'.

1.3 Characteristics of political posts

According to Collins English Dictionary, bias is the inclination to support and choose one individual or object over another (Dictionary, 2022). Nevertheless, media bias comprises distinct subtypes: Visibility bias, tone bias, and agenda bias (Eberl et al., 2017). In political communication, bias profoundly influences participants and their preferences.

According to Kingdon's classic description, the political agenda is "The catalog of problems to which political actors devote their focus (Walgrave & Van Aelst, 2006)." Social media are now crucial to agenda-setting and political communication. 'X' brings new political agenda-setting challenges and opportunities. Thus, political parties encourage their leaders to address concerns beyond their election campaign issues.

Political propaganda has existed around the globe for a very long time. Propaganda serves the propagandist's needs. It seeks audience response in conjunction with the propagandist's goal. Propaganda influences public opinion and behavior (Lasswell, 1938). Political elites, media professionals, and the public utilize 'X' to provide their opinions and thoughts on a particular issue. Throughout election campaigns, Indian national political parties' posts (formally Tweets) focus on political matters and image-building (Sharma et al., 2022). The increased accessibility provided

by micro-blogging platforms significantly promotes the freedom of expression and strengthens the democratic nation.

1.4 Importance of the study:

Information power plays an essential role in establishing democracy. Every individual or nation can only survive in the modern world with access to information. The public may obtain information from both traditional and social media. This study focuses on social media, specifically X's role in a democratic society, and how Indian national political parties utilize posts. The significance of the current research is as follows:

1. This study helps understand the vision/thought in posts of Indian national political parties.
2. The present study helps understand the significance of the geographical importance of posts of Indian national political parties.
3. This study is constructive in understanding the bias, agenda, and propaganda in posts of Indian national political parties.

2.0 Related work and preliminary discussions:

A literature review includes both a theoretical and practical perspective. This current study section provides a literature review on social media platforms, political communication, bias, agenda, and propaganda. The studies are in chronological sequence, beginning with the earliest and ending with the most recent. Data analysis can use 'X' (Twitter) data due to its volume, variety, and public nature. First, by measuring the life cycle of a topic by counting posts (tweets), and second, by assessing user emotion toward an issue. They want to improve 'X' data processing for activities to analyze users' reactions to different incident classes. Analyzing data and characteristics and modeling descriptive occurrence analysis will follow (Anber et al., 2016).

Pal & Gonawela (2017) segregate 'X' (formally Twitter) political communication research into seven subjective domains. They propose that micro info strategies, such as conceptual evaluation and remarks from individual visitors, can be integrated with big data analytics for a more nuanced and situational comprehension of political messaging.

Guerrero-Solé's (2018) data-driven study of 'X' (formally Twitter) groups and propaganda networks recognizes politicized community structures along political affiliations. Centrality metrics helped identify the most engaged subscribers in the channel and highlight users playing multiple tasks. The repost (retweet) graphs' divisiveness and convergence framework revealed essential aspects of users' visibility, conversations, and involvement in various propaganda components.

Posegga & Jungherr (2019) analyze 'X's' (Twitter's) issue agenda using political hashtags. They compare 'X's' agenda to a representative survey of the people and content analysis of newspapers and TV news programs. They illustrate that the public agenda and 'X' agenda were unrelated. Political conversation on 'X' was more tied to mass media coverage, although channel-specific patterns likely reflected 'X' users' attention, interests, and motivations.

Khatua et al. (2020) explore the intricacy of mixed posts in an open political context and suggest that individuals' mix-posting tendencies disclose their political inclinations covertly. In the scenario of the 2014 Indian General Election, their research indicates that mix-posting can reveal the political beliefs of 'X' users.

Huszár et al. (2022) provide quantifiable results from a massive, lengthy, completely random 'X' study with a random control sample. They provide two results. They looked at posts from elected legislators from prominent political organizations in seven countries. The dominating political right has stronger algorithmic magnification than the prominent political left in six out of seven countries. According to their second US media environment study, algorithmic amplification favors conservative news sources.

3.0 Method and material:

The present part of the study contains research objectives, hypothesis, research design and sample design.

3.1 Objectives of the research:

Ro1. To know the association between socio-political thought and bias in posts on Indian national political parties on "X."

Ro2. To compare the sociopolitical thought and agenda-propaganda in official posts of Indian national political parties on “X.”

Ro3. To analyze the geographical importance of posts and the presence of bias in the official posts of Indian national political parties on “X.”

Ro4. To find the association between the geographical importance of posts and agenda-propaganda in official posts of Indian national political parties on “X.”

3.2 Research hypothesis:

Ha1: There is an association between socio-political thought and agenda in official posts of Indian national political parties.

Ha2: There is an association between socio-political thought and propaganda in official posts of Indian national political parties.

Ha3: There is an association between the geographical importance and agenda in official posts of Indian national political parties.

Ha4: There is an association between geographical importance and propaganda in official posts of Indian national political parties.

3.3 Theoretical framework:

The study is based on framing theory. Media framing theory refers to how mass media 'manufacture' and share facts and information among the people. The media emphasizes certain events and then frames them in a specific way to support or refute various perspectives.

3.4 Research design:

We employed a cross-sectional research approach to collect data for this quantitative investigation. For the research method concern, the content analysis method is applied to analyze the text in numbers. We developed a codebook based on priory coding.

3.5 Sample design:

All posts (formally tweets) constitute the universe for the present study. Posts posted by Indian politicians are the population for the study. Posts posted on the official 'X' (formally Twitter) handle of Indian National parties are part of the sampling frame or element for the present study. Socio-political posts of Indian national political parties are a sampling unit of the study. We collected 601 posts from the official 'X' handle of national political parties of India. Only four national political parties, namely the Bhartiya Janata Party, the Indian National Congress, the All India Trinamool Congress, and the Communist Party of India (CPI), are part of the study because of their active social media presence. We applied a purposive sampling technique to gather data.

3.6 Duration of the study:

From May to July 2021, we accumulated posts from India's authorized 'X' accounts of select national political parties.

3.7 Variable of the study:

We collected primary data from posts and measured variables on nominal and ordinal scales. We measured independent variables like the geographical importance of posts, vision and thought in posts, bias, agenda, and propaganda in the present study.

3.7 Research tool and technique:

We used Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0 for data analysis and representation. We also utilized MS Office for data representation in a good way.

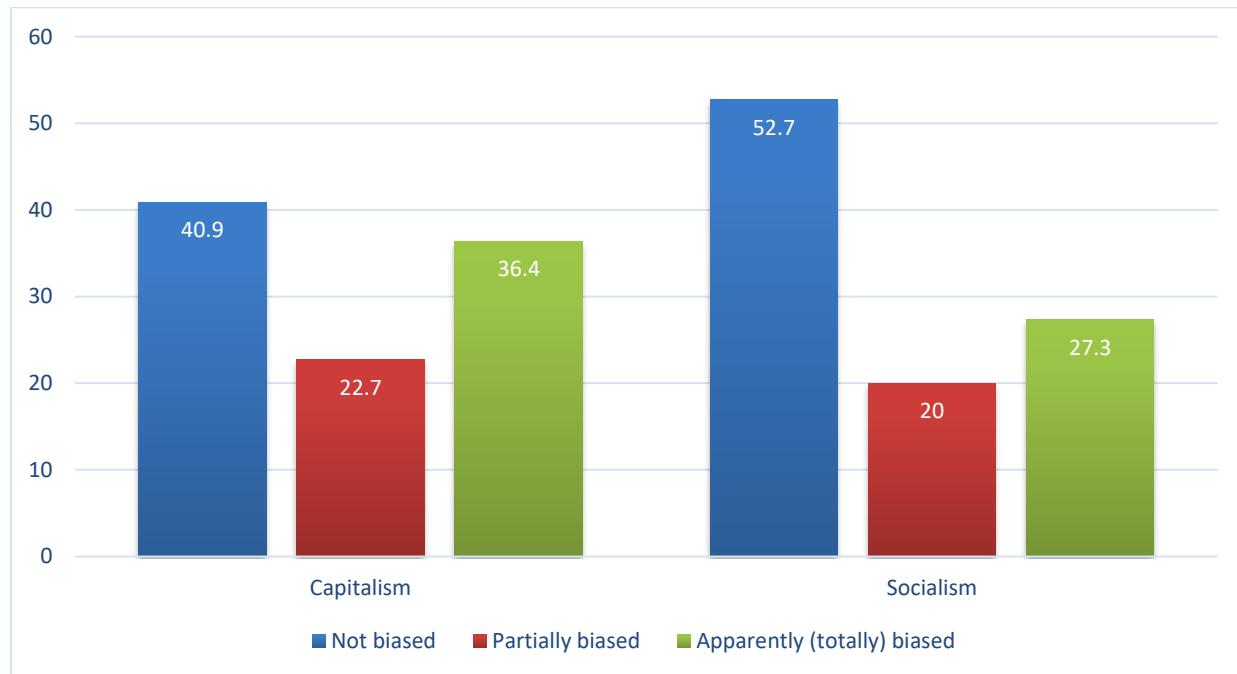
4.0 Data analysis and interpretation

Data analysis is a crucial component of any research work. This section analyzes the data using many concepts and theoretical reasons. The term analysis denotes a closely comparable activity performed to synthesize gathered data and structure it in a format that produces answers to the queries. It entails examining the data to uncover intrinsic truths. After data collection for this study, the data has been examined in two parts. The cross-tabulation approach is used in the first section to test the association between the two variables. In the second section, the hypothesis is examined using the chi-square test.

4.1 Data analysis – first part (Cross-tabulation)

In addition to gathering the data, it is crucial to analyze it based on the relevant factors. After gathering data more efficiently, its correct display and analysis are also required. Cross-tabulation was used to examine the data presented in the research section by the study's objectives. The data has been attractively represented through bar graphs.

4.1: Association between vision-thought in the posts and bias in posts from the authorized 'X' account of Indian national political parties.

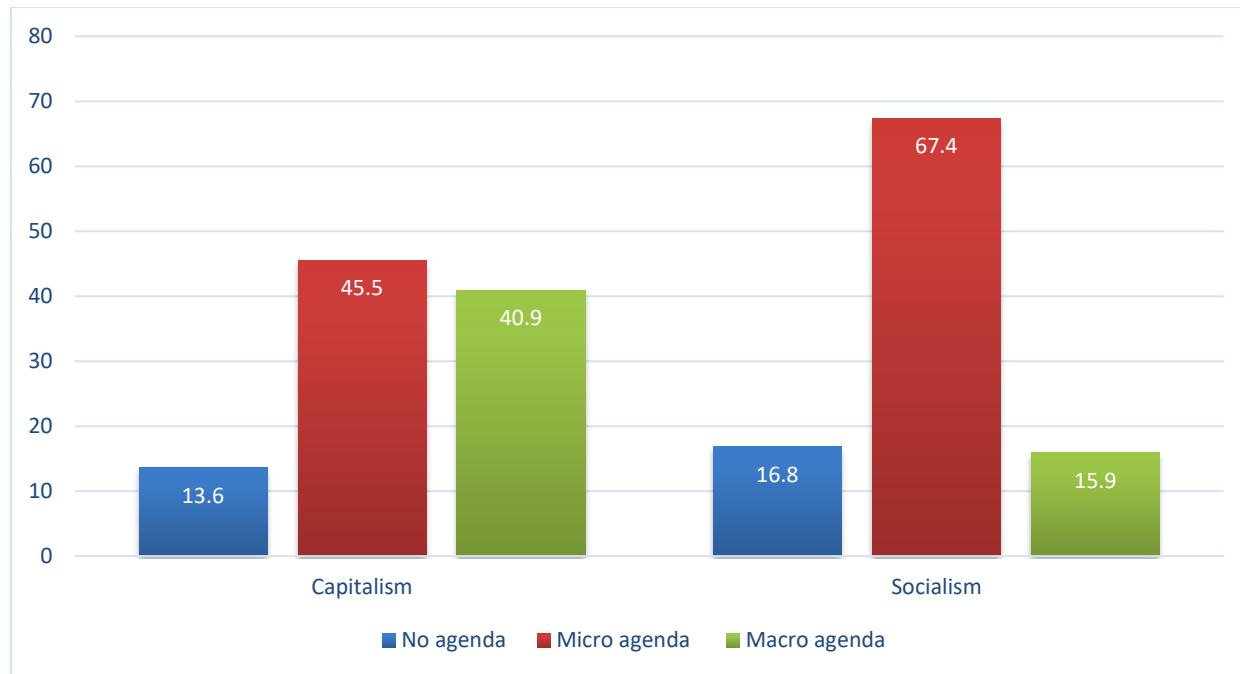


Graph 4.1: Cross-tabulation between vision-thought in the posts and bias in posts from the authorized 'X' account of Indian national political parties.

Social media has increased user-generated content due to its simplicity. Mainly 'X' provides an ideal ground for the analytical study of societal occurrences. Graph 4.1 shows that 40.9% of posts from the authorized 'X' account of Indian national political parties with a capitalist vision/thought are not biased. 22.7% of posts are partially biased, and 36.4% are apparently or totally biased. While 52.7% of posts from the authorized 'X' account of Indian national political parties with a socialist vision/thought are not biased. 20.0% of posts are partially biased, and 27.3% are apparently or totally biased. The overall 52.2% of posts out from the authorized 'X' account of

Indian national political parties having capitalist and socialist visions/thoughts are not biased. 20.1% are partially biased, and 27.6 are apparently or totally biased.

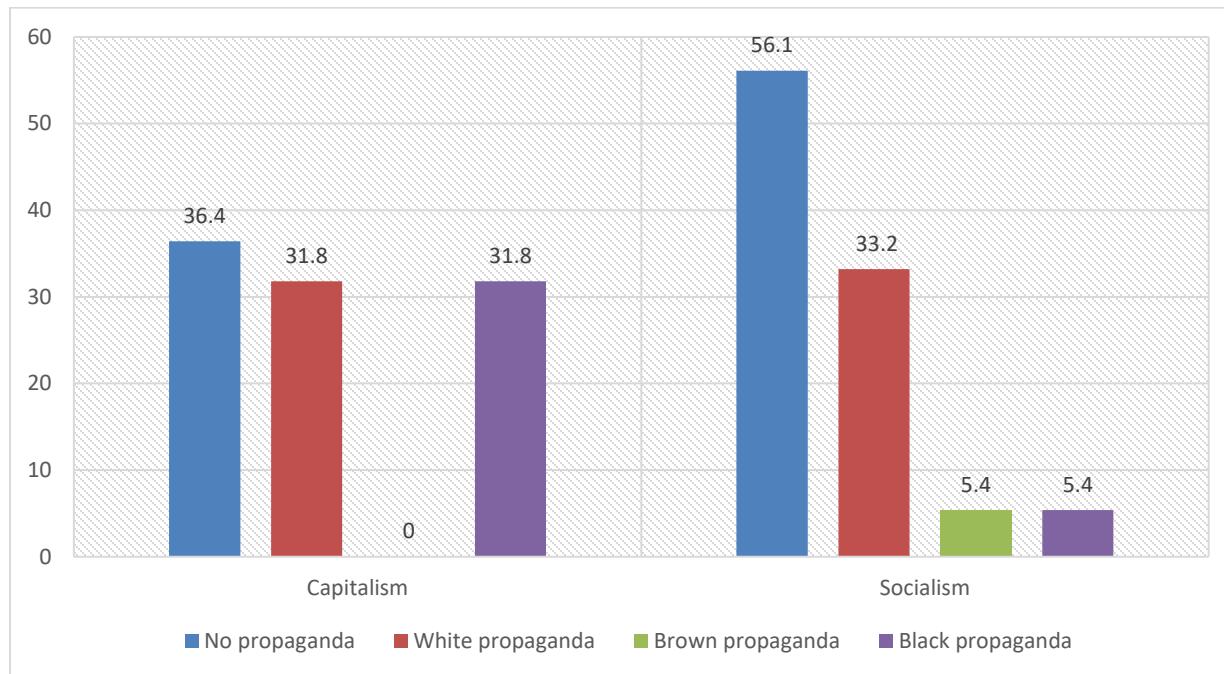
4.2: Association between vision-thought in the posts and the presence of agenda in posts from the authorized 'X' account of Indian national political parties.



Graph 4.2: Cross-tabulation between vision-thought in the posts and the presence of agenda in posts out from authorized 'X' accounts of Indian national political parties.

'X' has become a popular platform for spreading messages because users can write them quickly and anonymously. Graph 4.2 indicates that 13.6% of posts from authorized accounts of Indian national political parties with a capitalist vision/thought have no agenda. 45.5% of posts have micro agenda, and 40.9% have macro agenda. While 16.8% of posts from the authorized 'X' account of Indian national political parties with a socialist vision/thought have no agenda. 67.4% of posts have micro agenda, and 15.9% have macro agenda. Overall, 16.6% of posts from the authorized account of Indian national political parties have capitalist and socialist visions/thoughts with no agenda. 66.6% have micro agenda, and 16.8% of posts have macro agenda.

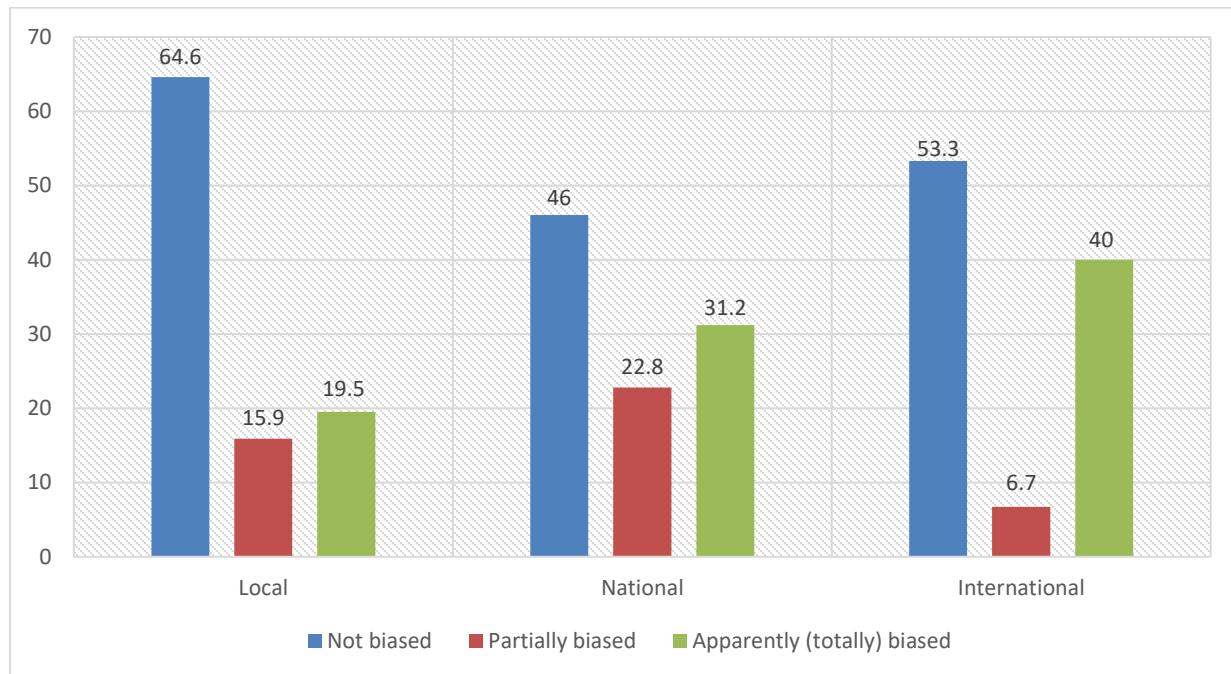
4.3: Association between vision-thought in the posts and the presence of propaganda in posts from the authorized 'X' account of Indian national political parties.



Graph 4.3: Cross-tabulation between vision-thought in the posts and the presence of propaganda in posts from authorized 'X' accounts of Indian national political parties.

‘X’ has matured into an innovative, technologically advanced advocacy tool due to its capacity to host political and social engagement. Graph 4.3 reveals that 36.4% of posts from authorized ‘X’ accounts of Indian national political parties with a capitalist vision/thought are propaganda free. 31.8% of posts have white propaganda, and 31.8% have black propaganda. There was no brown propaganda in posts with a capitalist vision/thought. While 56.1% of posts from the authorized account of Indian national political parties with a socialist vision/thought have no propaganda. 33.2% of posts have white propaganda, 5.4% have brown, and 5.4% of those with socialist vision/thought have black propaganda. Overall, 54.4% of posts from the authorized ‘X’ account of Indian national political parties having capitalist and socialist visions/thoughts have no propaganda. 33.1% have white propaganda, 5.2% have brown propaganda, and 6.3% of posts have black propaganda.

4.4: Association between the geographical importance of the posts and the presence of bias in posts from the authorized ‘X’ account of Indian national political parties.

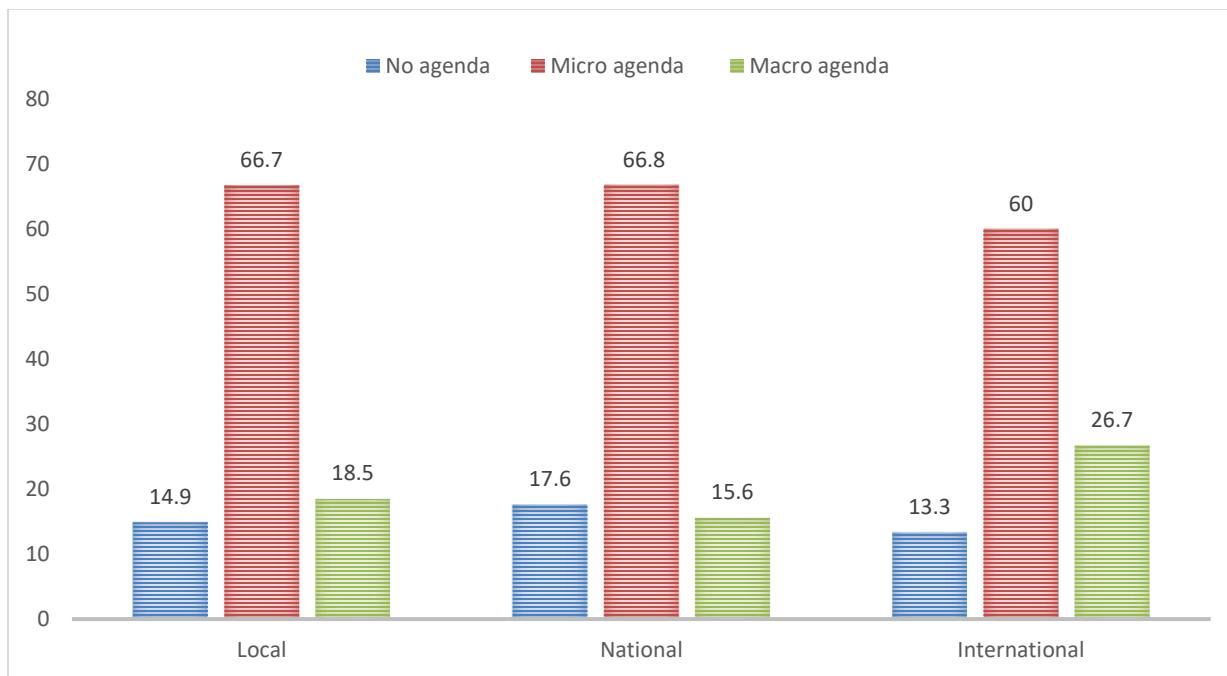


Graph 4.4: Cross-tabulation between the geographical importance of the posts and the presence of bias in posts out from authorized 'X' accounts of Indian national political parties.

'X' users express their opinions in 280 characters, and instant messengers enable them to interact with one another. Posts disclose personally relevant material with social relevance. Graph 4.4 disclose that 64.5% of posts from the authorized 'X' account of Indian national political parties of local importance are not biased. 15.9% of posts are partially biased, and 19.5% are apparently or totally biased. While 46.0% of posts from the authorized 'X' account of Indian national political parties of national importance are not biased. 22.8% of posts are partially biased, and 31.2% of posts of national importance are apparently or totally biased.

On the other hand, 53.3% of posts from the authorized 'X' accounts of Indian national political parties of international importance are not biased. 6.7% of posts are partially biased, and 40.0% of posts of international importance are apparently or totally biased. 54.2% of posts from the authorized accounts of Indian national political parties of local, national, and international importance are not biased. 20.1% are partially biased, and 27.6% of posts are totally biased.

4.5: Association between the geographical importance of the posts and the presence of agenda in posts from the authorized ‘X’ account of Indian national political parties.

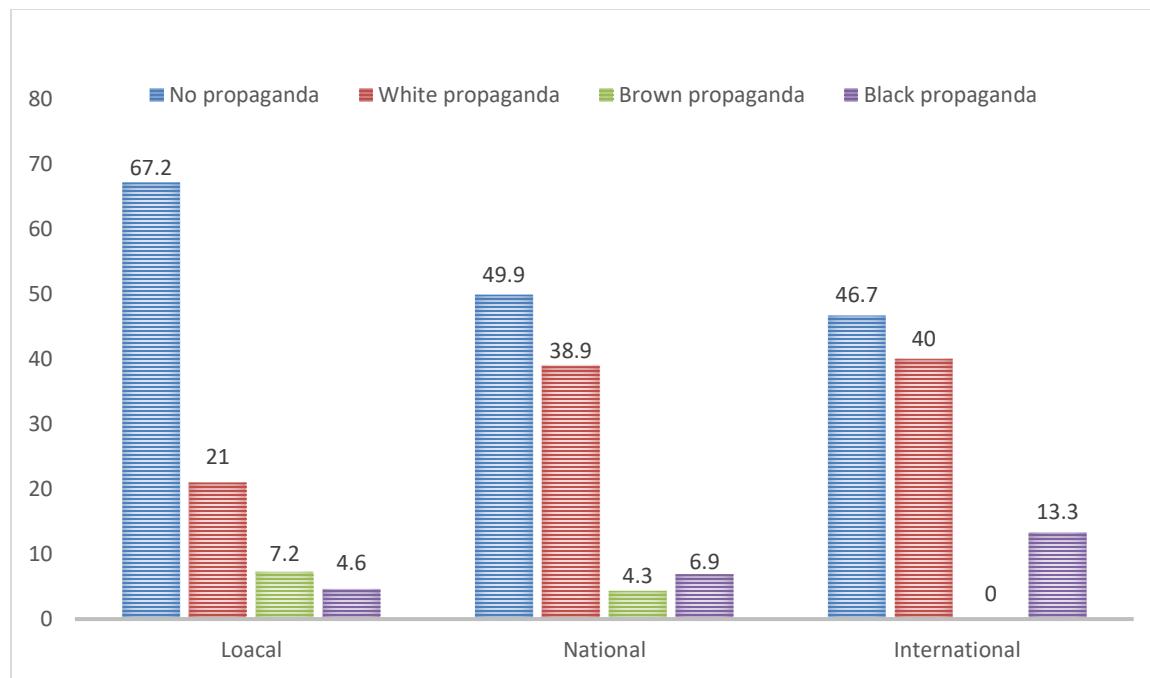


Graph 4.5: Cross-tabulation between the geographical importance of the posts and the presence of agenda in posts out from the authorized ‘X’ account of Indian national political parties.

‘X’ (formally Twitter) is a dynamic, approachable, and effective platform for the global communication of opinions, concepts, and future visions. Graph 4.5 indicates that 14.9% of posts from authorized ‘X’ accounts of Indian national political parties of local importance have no agenda. 66.7% have a micro agenda, and 18.5% of posts have macro agenda. While 17.7% of posts from the authorized ‘X’ account of Indian national political parties of national importance have no agenda. 66.8% of posts have a micro agenda, and 15.6% of posts of national importance have a macro agenda.

On the other hand, 13.3% of posts from the authorized ‘X’ accounts of Indian national political parties of international importance have no agenda. 60.0% of posts have micro agenda, and 26.7% of posts of international importance have macro agenda. Overall, 16.6% of posts from authorized ‘X’ accounts of Indian national political parties of local, national, and international importance have no agenda. 66.6% of posts have micro agenda, and 16.8% have macro agenda.

4.6: Association between the geographical importance of the posts and the presence of propaganda in posts from the authorized 'X' accounts of Indian national political parties.



Graph 4.3: Cross-tabulation between the geographical importance of the posts and the presence of propaganda in posts from the authorized 'X' accounts of Indian national political parties.

'X's' (Twitter's) appropriate and equitable utilization is an engaging trend that can be encouraged despite its obstacles. Graph 4.6 denotes that 67.2% of posts from the authorized 'X' accounts of Indian national political parties of local importance have no propaganda. 21.0% of posts have white propaganda, 7.2% have brown propaganda, and 4.6% of posts of local importance have black propaganda. While 49.9% of posts from the authorized 'X' accounts of Indian national political parties of national importance have no propaganda. 38.9% of posts have white propaganda, 4.3% of posts have brown propaganda, and 6.9% of posts of national importance have black propaganda.

On the other hand, 46.7% of posts from the authorized 'X' accounts of Indian national political parties of international importance have no propaganda. 40.0% of posts have white propaganda, and 13.3% of posts of international importance have black propaganda. Posts of international importance do not have brown propaganda. Overall, 55.4% of posts from the authorized 'X' accounts of Indian national political parties of local, national, and international importance have no propaganda. 33.1% of posts have white propaganda, 5.2% have brown propaganda, and 6.3% have black propaganda.

4.2 Data analysis (Second part): Chi-square test

In the offered portion of the research, the data have been examined using the chi-square test following the research objectives. The data has been presented neatly in tables.

Ho1: There is no association between socio-political thought and agenda in official posts of Indian national political parties.

Pearson Chi-Square	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
9.546 ^a	2		.008

There is an association between socio-political thought and agenda in official posts of Indian national political parties because Pearson p-value (0.008) is less than the significance value, i.e., 0.05. Hence, we reject the null hypothesis "There is no association between socio-political thought and agenda in official posts of Indian national political parties."

Ho2: There is no association between socio-political thought and propaganda in official posts of Indian national political parties.

Pearson Chi-Square	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
26.161 ^a	3		.000

There is an association between socio-political thought and propaganda in official posts of Indian national political parties because Pearson p-value (0.000) is less than the significance value, i.e., 0.05. Hence, we reject the null hypothesis "There is an association between socio-political thought and propaganda in official posts of Indian national political parties."

Ho3: There is no association between the geographical importance and agenda in official posts of Indian national political parties.

Pearson Chi-Square	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
2.327 ^a	4		.676

There is no association between the geographical importance and agenda in official posts of Indian national political parties because Pearson's p-value (0.676) is more than the significance value, i.e., 0.05. Hence, we failed to reject the null hypothesis "There is no association between the geographical importance and agenda in official posts of Indian national political parties."

Ho4: There is no association between geographical importance and propaganda in official posts of Indian national political parties.

Pearson Chi-Square	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
25.077 ^a	6		.000

There is an association between geographical importance and propaganda in official posts of Indian national political parties because Pearson p-value (0.000) is less than the significance value, i.e., 0.05. Hence, we reject the null hypothesis "There is no association between geographical importance and propaganda in official posts of Indian national political parties."

5.0 Result:

More than one-third of posts (tweets) from the authorized 'X' (formally Twitter) accounts of Indian national political parties with a capitalist perspective and half with a socialist standpoint are bias-free. Less than one-fourth of posts from the authorized 'X' accounts of Indian national political parties with socialist and capitalist viewpoints are partially biased. At the same time, one-third of posts from the authorized 'X' accounts of Indian national political parties of capitalism and more than one-fourth of posts socialist approach is apparently biased.

Nearly half of the capitalism-minded posts from the authorized ‘X’ accounts of Indian national political parties have positive, whereas more than one-third have negative agenda. On the other hand, two-thirds of posts from the authorized ‘X’ account of Indian national political parties with socialist viewpoints have positive agendas. In contrast, less than one-fourth of posts have negative agenda. A specific segment of posts from the authorized ‘X’ accounts of Indian national political parties with capitalist and socialist approaches have no agenda.

One-third of posts from the authorized ‘X’ accounts of Indian national political parties with a capitalist perspective are propaganda free. One-third of posts contain white propaganda, while one-third contain black propaganda. There was no brown propaganda in posts with a capitalist vision/thought. More than half of posts from the authorized ‘X’ accounts of Indian national political parties with socialist viewpoints are propaganda free. One-third of posts with a socialist orientation contain white propaganda, while a certain fraction contains brown and black propaganda.

Two-thirds of posts from the authorized ‘X’ accounts of Indian national political parties of local and almost half of posts of national importance are bias-free. In comparison, less than one-fourth of posts from the authorized ‘X’ accounts of Indian national political parties of local importance are apparently or totally biased. Almost one-fourth of posts of national importance are partially biased, and almost one-third of posts are apparently or totally biased. More than half of posts from the authorized ‘X’ accounts of Indian national political parties of international importance contain no bias, and more than one-third of posts are apparently biased.

Two-thirds of posts from the authorized ‘X’ accounts of Indian national political parties of local importance contain a positive agenda, and less than one-fourth of posts have a negative agenda. Two-thirds of posts from the authorized ‘X’ accounts of Indian national political parties of national importance contain positive agenda, and less than one-fourth of posts have no agenda. Almost two-thirds of posts from the authorized ‘X’ accounts of Indian national political parties of international importance contain a positive agenda, and one-fourth of posts have negative agenda.

Two-thirds of posts from the authorized ‘X’ accounts of Indian national political parties of local importance are propaganda free, and less than one-fourth of posts contain white propaganda. Half of the posts from the authorized ‘X’ accounts of Indian national political parties of national

importance are propaganda free, and more than one-third have white propaganda. Almost half of the posts from the authorized 'X' accounts of Indian national political parties of international importance are propaganda free. More than one-third of posts have white propaganda. A certain fraction of black propaganda also presents posts from the authorized 'X' accounts of Indian national political parties of local, national, and international importance. Posts from the authorized 'X' accounts of Indian national political parties of international significance do not contain brown propaganda; however, posts of local and national significance do.

Discussion:

The digital footprints of 'X' (formally Twitter) users' participatory behavior are a valued asset for political communication experts. To the extent of our information, only a few investigations have examined the mechanics and growth of such conduct in political disputes, notwithstanding the plethora of research on 'X' interaction.

In a study, Sharma & Goyal (2018) attempted to comprehend the agenda, propaganda, media priming, and media interpretation of official BJP posts. Their analyses show that most BJP official 'X' messages have minimal or positive motives and no propaganda. Comparatively, the scope of the present study expands from a single political party to four national political parties in India. Moreover, provide incitement regarding the geographical significance, vision/thought, bias, agenda, and propaganda of political posts on 'X'.

Ansari et al. (2020) seek to investigate posts and extract political attitudes from them. Besides retrieving posts referencing the 2019 General Elections in India, they assessed 'X' users' perceptions of the major national political parties participating in the polls. In contrast, the present analysis goes beyond the perspective of political parties, which influences the political preferences of the general users. Furthermore, it broadened the scope from the 2019 general election to the routine dissemination of political information via posts.

Bhatnagar & Choubey (2021) state in their study that with the expansion of the micro-blogging websites "X," more individuals are starting to express their views on various urgent issues on online social networks. They studied their data in the context of business analysis and policy analysis. On the other hand, the current study includes the socio-political perspective and

locational information of Indian national political parties, which impacts the political inclinations of the broader population.

Tumasjan et al. (2010) use over 100,000 political-party or politician-related texts related to the German federal election to examine if 'X' (formally Twitter) is used for political discourse and whether online political opinion matches offline emotion. They discovered that 'X' is rife with political discourse and accurately predicts election outcomes or reflects political relationships. The present study discusses the routine political communication of Indian national political parties through "X." Also, study the presence of socio-political thought and temperament of the posts.

Conclusion:

Recognizing emerging trends in all political, economic, and cultural spheres is required for strategic planning. This paper used 'X' posts to analyze developing patterns and popular perceptions. Our study finds that posts from the authorized 'X' (formally Twitter) accounts of four major Indian national political parties with a socialist vision/thought are fairer than posts with a capitalist approach. Posts from the authorized 'X' accounts of Indian national political parties with socialist perspectives send more positive messages than those with capitalist viewpoints. The posts from the authorized 'X' accounts of Indian national political parties with socialist perspective information are closer to the truth than those with a capitalist viewpoint. The posts of local geographical importance from the official 'X' handle of Indian national political parties are less impartial than those of national and international geographical importance. Posts of international importance have more favoritism than local and national posts. The posts of local and national geographical importance from the official 'X' handle of Indian national political parties have more positive information than those of international geographical importance. In the posts of national and international geographical importance from the official 'X' handle of Indian national political parties, the truth has been presented exaggeratedly. Most posts of local importance have information that is closer to the truth.

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