Political Marketing: Grasping the realms of Contemporary India

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ABSTRACT  
Political marketing is a phenomenon that has swept the world of politics in a big way. It is primarily associated with western democracies such as the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Germany, and France, as well as countries such as Australia and New Zealand. However, it has gained prominence in countries such as India as a result of increased public awareness and the impact of phenomena such as social networking, which has brought political parties and leaders closer to voters than ever before. This research paper looks at marketing through the lens of politics and elections. It also highlights the distinctions that exist between an election institution and a real market. At the same time, it emphasises the 'industry' aspect of marketing and how it relates to politics. Overall, this research paper will examine how the two distinct identities of politics and marketing are changing in today’s political environment.

Keywords: Politics; Marketing; Market; Political Parties.

I. INTRODUCTION  
Both marketing and politics literature have undervalued the applicability of marketing domains to political realms. The marketing side of politics has received little attention from political scientists. They are more preoccupied with the technical components, processes, mechanisms, and policies that are typically linked with the phenomenon of politics, therefore they overlook the marketing viewpoint. The reason for this is easy to understand, given that marketing is seen as a somewhat trivialised
phrase that doesn't generally resonate with politics, which is seen as a matter of serious debate and deliberation, which is quite different from the dynamism associated with marketing.

Because politics involves a large number of people, the principles that drive marketing as a phenomenon could be used to better comprehend the numerous patterns that emerge during a political event such as an election. This is because marketers, as experts in their field, have a certain level of understanding, knowledge, and information that is appropriately supplemented by technical abilities that play a critical role in determining the analytical part as well as the persuading principles that help voters decide their allegiance.

Because of the intersection of politics and marketing, Harrop (1990) proposes that marketing gives a new perspective to the political arena, explaining, to some extent, the changes in electoral behaviour. Because of the ever-increasing complexities involved with the area of politics and political activities, politics has recently become interdisciplinary in character, bringing together psephologists, social scientists, political observers, sociologists, economists, and a host of other specialists. Participating in political activities is no longer limited to voting on election day. Instead, with social media permeating every aspect of our lives, it has become a 24x7 activity, bringing the leader and party closer to the voter and more open to examination than ever before.

**Political and marketing parallels**

A marketing manager's difficulty may be similar to those encountered by those in charge of a political party's or leader's campaign. After segmenting the market, each department has the job of attracting and maintaining the targeted demographic, as is typical of the marketing phenomenon. Similarly, the consumer-citizen is at the heart of the decision of who should be in charge of a country's/state's/local body's political affairs.

Political parties are similar to marketing-oriented businesses in this way. They must persuade voters to buy into their manifesto/agenda, which acts as the product, resulting in true buy-in. In many aspects, the commitment that a political party/leader (such as Mr Narendra Modi's campaign during the recent Lok Sabha election), the means of communication utilised by both marketing-oriented firms and political outfits of today, and the convincing necessary are all the same.

When it comes to defining political marketing, Clemente (2002) has been very forthright. He believes that it serves as a starting point for studying numerous patterns in public opinion, political issues, events, and other related notions that are at the heart of politics. Furthermore, he claims that political thoughts and ideas may be promoted in the same way that products are.

Political marketing has an impact on voter decisions in a specific event or for a specific cause. It employs a variety of tactics used by product marketing companies. Paid publicity, advertising, mailing services, road shows, engaged social networking services (the size of which peaked during the previous general election), personal selling (in the form of door-to-door campaigning), and the like are examples.
According to Reid (1988), electing a political representative is one that has its roots in the marketplace and is thus influenced by marketing ideas. According to him, the driving factors behind a political event such as an election have their roots in marketing.

Denton (1988) discusses how the presidential campaign and the concept of presidency in the United States are highly influenced by the concept of market positioning, in which candidates present their image in a way that resonates with their different support bases. Consider the upcoming presidential election in the United States, where Republican nominee Donald Trump was elected to run for president despite being mocked and frequently sending contradictory and ambiguous messages. His core support base believed in his slogan, "Let's Make America Great Again," and his rhetoric against immigration, outsourcing, and people of certain religions and colours. Similarly, Democrat contender Hillary Clinton has been able to capitalise on her image as Secretary of State, gaining support from voters who believe in her ability to handle international matters.

Political consultants, according to O'Shaughnessy (1990), can be considered as managers who manage political market products. She also refers to the contemporary political atmosphere as one that is influenced by marketing principles. She's even gone so far as to compare voting to making a purchase, albeit a psychological one. She goes on to say that the public appearances made by political leaders in the form of rallies and road shows at the request of the political party to which they are affiliated, as well as the volunteers working at various levels in the structure of a political party, are to be considered the distribution or place aspect of the marketing strategy as found in that political entity.

Then there's Harrop (1990), who draws parallels between politics and services marketing due to the intangible nature of both products. In the same way that the product in services cannot be seen, touched, or felt, the primary product in politics, the election promises on which individuals vote, is intangible.

As can be seen from the preceding discussion, the majority of the thinkers who have expressed their opinions on the similarities (and differences between politics and marketing, which are the topics of discussion in the next sub-heading) are of American descent and have done so during the 1980s and 1990s. This raises an intriguing point about the concept of political marketing: it is a relatively new phenomena. Political marketing is mentioned in the broader scheme of things for political specialists in Western democracies as well as countries like Japan as early as the 1970s.

This is because American society has long been a consumerist, materialistic civilization in which every phenomenon is examined through the lens of consumerism. As a result, it's no surprise that politics is no exception. However, in countries like India, where politics and marketing are not considered as intertwined, such a mindset has shifted dramatically in recent years, thanks to the emergence of social networking, which has brought politicians and parties closer to voters than ever before.
The information revolution has made the US Presidential Election the most watched political event on the planet, with a lot riding on the next president of the world's most powerful country. Even the current presidential campaign is generating a lot of buzz, and the election will be one of the most closely watched events on the planet. The irony is that, due to the issues surrounding the nomination process and the weak and acrimonious backgrounds of both nominees, the voter in the United States is losing interest in the whole process. Even so, the typical believer and supporter of democracy around the world has been following the presidential election in the world's oldest democracy.

Political marketing has become more prominent than ever before in all modern democracies throughout the world, including India. The previous general election was fought just as much in the virtual world as it was in the real world. No political party, regardless of its stance on social networking, could afford to ignore it any longer.

**How Politics and Marketing Differ?**

Though there are many parallels between politics and marketing, it is important to remember that the former is concerned with selling a party's or leader's ideology, philosophy, and manifesto, whereas the latter is concerned with selling tangible goods and intangible services with a certain level of assurance. In the context of politics, however, this is not always the case.

Another point of distinction between the two is the assurance of performance, which is particularly important in marketing. Customer care and after-sales service are two significant factors that contribute to marketing accountability. In the event that the product fails to meet the customer's expectations, the organisation may still be held liable. In the context of politics, no such provision exists. Once a government has been elected by voters for a set period of time (4 years in the United States, 5 years in India), the elected party/accountability leader's is not in question until the next election (though this is changing due to increased voter awareness and constant scrutiny that the elected government faces in the wake of information and technology revolutions).

Simultaneously, with elections for various positions taking place at the federal, state, and local levels, there is an opportunity to reconnect with voters. If the central government fails to deliver on its promises made before the election, the electorate has little choice but to express their dissatisfaction by voting in a different way. Following the Lok Sabha election, the results of the immediate elections for the Bihar and Delhi assembly were not to the BJP's liking. At the same time, if a democratically elected political party has a majority in the house, it is nearly impossible to dethrone it before it completes its term.

Mauser (1983) identified the strategic contrasts that distinguish politics and marketing, as well as how they might be considered as having distinct characteristics. One would be tempted to conclude that, as an American thinker, his thoughts are insightful and worthy of attention. He believes that a commercial market, in the sense of being a trading area, brings together a diverse group of businesses that engage in a variety of trade activities. When it comes to politics, on the other hand, the underlying system is smaller and contains a lesser number of political parties (one could be
tempted to remark that in a democracy like India, there are a huge number of parties, 1761 to be exact). However, this is a drop in the bucket when compared to the scarcity of enterprises in the commercial market that engage in multi-level trading).

Another of Mauser's insightful observations is that commercial markets are open all year and business is conducted on a continuous basis, whereas the most important event in politics, namely elections, occurs only once every few years, and once the excitement surrounding them has died down after the results have been announced, there is little engagement with the consumer-citizen until the next election. This does not occur in markets, where trade and engagement continue.

The aspect of profit, which is the characteristic of all trade, is the next distinction. Profit motives drive market-based transactions. Politics, on the other hand, isn't about generating money; it's about doing good for the country and its people. Though it is true that many election triumphs have been followed by different frauds and money-making scandals on the part of elected officials, this is not the way to conduct political affairs, and such politicians are removed from office whenever they are found guilty of the same.

To 'straight-jacket' the two notions together, according to O'Shaughnessy (1990), is an overly simplified approach. She claims that the inclination to characterise candidates as goods and voters as consumers leads to an unnecessary comparison between politics and marketing, while the truth is far more complex and requires a great deal of thought, understanding, and careful observation.

II. CONCLUSION

To sum up, the research paper discussed the various aspects of politics and marketing, as well as how similar and dissimilar they are. The paper built on a variety of political marketing definitions, concepts, and parameters. It was pointed out that political marketing is concerned with the merging of the two concepts in such a way that they have characteristics that contribute to the creation of a successful political marketing setup. Various thinkers, mostly from the American think tank, have opined on how politics and marketing are similar or different.

Theorists have come to the conclusion that the two concepts are intertwined at various points in time. Simultaneously, some of them believe that politics and marketing are two distinct concepts that cannot be easily merged. Furthermore, the paper discussed the numerous similarities and differences that exist between the two concepts, as well as how they are influencing the current political scenario in contemporary political setups found around the world in countries that practise democracy, allowing voters to choose between political entities.

Another aspect of this research paper that was highlighted was viewing the electorate as consumer-citizens with the power to influence the competing political entities' future prospects. The paper discussed how voters behave like consumers in different situations and what factors political parties should consider if they want voters to vote for them.
III. REFERENCES