COORDINATION OF POLITICAL MOVEMENTS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

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ABSTRACT:

This research paper explores how the use of social media in politics has continued to grow in recent times in modern political systems. Social media enable individuals to share knowledge, experiences, opinions, and ideas among each other. With regard to political sector, social media can be an enabler for participation and democracy among citizens. Politicians around the world are increasingly using social media platforms as a means to engage with the public and conduct election campaigns. However, the true impact of social media campaigns on political outcomes remains untested and empirical evidence is scant. With affordable access to the internet, its accessibility has increased in India in the last decade. Due to this, the use of social media platforms also increased simultaneously. The popularity and accessibility of the internet in India have drastically changed. This research aims to review the existing literature on this issue to explore the impact of social media on political participation.

KEYWORDS: *Political Participation, Social Media.*

INTRODUCTION

Social media has become a dominant force in modern political mobilization, transforming the way individuals and groups engage in political activities. This systematic review explores the role of social media platforms in facilitating political mobilization, highlighting their impact on information dissemination, grassroots organizing, public opinion formation, and the challenges they pose, such as misinformation and government surveillance. The review draws on key case studies, including the Arab Spring, the movement, and the 2020 around the world protests, to analyze the ways in which social media has been instrumental in advancing political causes. It also examines the limitations of social media in political mobilization, including issues of slacktivism and the difficulty in converting online engagement into tangible political change. Additionally, the review explores the risks associated with the use of social media for political activism, such as digital surveillance.

Social media has become an essential instrument for political mobilization in the 21st century. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter (now X), Instagram, and YouTube have revolutionized the ways individuals and organizations engage in political activism, disseminate information, and form movements. These digital platforms enable rapid, wide-reaching communication and have facilitated

both global and local campaigns with unprecedented speed and scale. The transformative influence of social media is evident in a range of high-profile political movements, such as the Arab Spring, the global #MeToo campaign, the Black Lives Matter movement, and the 2019–2020 Hong Kong protests. These examples demonstrate how social media can amplify marginalized voices, promote real-time coordination of collective actions, and foster decentralized grassroots mobilization that challenges traditional political structures (Baxter & Marcella, 2012).

However, the democratisation of social media as a political communication platform in India has not meant its professionalisation as an information-sharing one. Unimpeded by the gatekeeping function of traditional media for content accuracy and ethics of responsible reporting, political parties are using social media for a divisive campaign of religious and caste politics. For instance, a report by the Oxford Internet Institute identified India as one of the 10 major countries of organised social media manipulation (Bradshaw and Howard 2018). The Indian news channel NDTV mined hate speech and "dog-whistling" content (coded messages pandering to caste and religious biases), and found that divisive rhetoric by senior politicians had increased almost 500 per cent over the last four years (Jaishwal, Jain, and Singh 2018). The Observer Research Foundation, meanwhile, mapped hate speech on social media and found religio-cultural practices to be the explicit basis for hate comments mostly aimed at the Muslim community (Mirchandani 2018). Whereas opposition parties accuse the BJP of religious polarisation to shift attention from the country's flagging economy, the INC has responded with its own campaign of fear and anger. As a consequence, the increase in polarising content within the social media campaigns of India's major political parties has emerged as a defining characteristic of the 2019 electoral contest.

In a democracy, political communication plays an important role. Traditional media like television and newspaper reports make awareness, cover political activities of the political parties, and inform voters. It works like a watchdog too. With the growing popularity of the internet, social media platforms called new media have emerged as a new mode of communication. Social media, audio-video, and pictures can transfer to a large audience at low cost and within a less period of time. Moreover, the content is recorded and archive able. It can be transferred beyond geographic proximity. Anyone can access the content beyond time and location. The internet has also gradually become accessible to common people. Political parties use the internet, especially social media, to communicate with voters. Therefore, it is important to analyse how social media plays a role in political participation.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:
To understand the concept of Coordination of political movements through social media. To examine how social media impacts political decision-making. To identify challenges social media poses to sovereign authority. To highlight opportunities created by social media for nation-states.

Research Methodology: This study is based on secondary sources of data such as articles, books, journals, research papers, websites and other sources.

Social media: Social media is a new driver of the convergent media sector. Social media is the websites and applications that enable users to create and share content in electronic form and to participate in social networks. According to the encyclopaedia Britannica, social media refers to technologies, platforms and services that enable individuals to engage in communication from one-to-one, one-to many and many-to-many. According to American social media scholar Howard Rheingold, social media make it possible for everyone to be simultaneously producer, distributor, and consumer.

Social Media Mobilization: Social media mobilisation is social media marketing of a product. As companies do marking of a product on social media, political parties market their ideologies, opinions

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etc., and the non-party users are the consumers of those party sellers. Although none take money in return for the view, the purpose of selling is mobilisation.

Social Media in Political movement: Political participation, for this study, is the "actions taken by citizens on an individual or collective basis to identify and address matters of public concern. Political movement is the driving force of democracy and is the core of Civic engagement. The traditional forms of political participation are voting, working for a political party, political demonstration, protests, marches, signing petitions, writing political articles, raising money for charitable causes and helping people in need. In the digital era, especially in social media platforms, the boundaries like linguistic, geographical and national have decreased in the interconnected world, and the exposure of political participation has increased.

Online political participation of youth: Internet, especially in social media, Indian youth views recent issues in political spheres and shares viewpoints. There are numerous numbers of groups on social media to discuss political issues. Youth become online members. The membership, in most cases does not require any membership criteria. Only one social media account can join those forums. Therefore it is easy to view and share opinions.

Virtual Campaigning and social media: Hence social media has gained more popularity in India. There are high chances to reach voters over social media platforms. Sometimes, voters unwillingly come to be exposed to the political party's well-articulated content. The repeated viewing of such content impacts voters, and voters started to be influenced by the content. The frequencies of use of social media are different. Some use it daily, some use it frequently, and others occasionally. The high frequency of using social media increases the probability of exposure to virtual campaigning. It is easier to reach voters on social media platforms, and therefore, it is easy to conduct virtual campaigning. Therefore, political parties share their opinions about various issues and comments about opponent parties and activities. In recent times, virtual campaign over social media has become more popular among all political parties in India. Several Facebook pages, WhatsApp groups, and virtual campaigns exist for the parties. Over these platforms, volunteers of the parties share information about the parties, and they share new announcements and activities of the parties, jokes, and cartoons about opponent parties. However, it has been observed that the jokes and criticisms about opponent political parties sometimes deteriorate.

Social media and Indian Youth: As per the election commission of India report, 75% of youth voters registered voters. According to data, Indian youth are more engaged in non-political issues in social media rather than political matters. Non-Political matters like environmental concerns, Political Parties, Government Administrative agencies, and NGOs use social media platforms to mobilise, educate and increase voters' awareness. With the growing demand for the internet and availability, the demand and use of social media have increased in India. Social media plays a role as an alternative to electronic and print media. People find it to use and share their own story or favourite party— political parties use this exposure for their benefit and to mobilise voters. In the recent election in India, it is obvious that some party actively uses social media, forms social media or IT cell to mobile voters.

CHALLENGES FOR POLITICAL MOVEMENTS:
- Misinformation & Disinformation: False narratives, doctored images, and conspiracy theories spread rapidly, distorting facts and influencing voters, often faster than corrections can.
- Polarization & Echo Chambers: Algorithms feed users content confirming existing beliefs, limiting exposure to other views and intensifying ideological divides, making compromise difficult.

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- Foreign Interference & Manipulation: Bots, fake accounts, and targeted campaigns by state and non-state actors manipulate public discourse and elections, undermining democratic processes.
- Privacy & Data Exploitation: User data is mined and monetized, creating vulnerabilities for manipulation and surveillance, impacting personal freedoms.
- Hate Speech & Radicalization: Platforms provide fertile ground for extremist ideologies and hate speech, which can incite real-world violence and threaten national security.
- Content Moderation Dilemmas: Platforms struggle to enforce rules fairly, sometimes censoring legitimate speech (e.g., discussing hate) while failing to stop harmful propaganda, notes this YouTube video on content moderation.
- Lack of Regulation: Political ads and campaigns on social media often face less oversight than traditional media, creating ethical and regulatory gaps.

CONCLUSION:

Social media has revolutionized political mobilization by enabling direct, real-time engagement and expanding access to political discourse and participation. This review underscores its role in energizing movements, informing voters, and shaping democratic engagement. Yet, these benefits are tempered by risks misinformation, polarization, and manipulation threaten the integrity of political processes. As digital platforms become central to political life, fostering digital literacy, transparency, and ethical communication is essential. Balancing innovation with accountability will determine whether social media advances or undermines democracy. When harnessed responsibly, it remains a powerful catalyst for inclusive, participatory, and dynamic political transformation in the digital age.

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