

## **SOCIAL MEDIA: THE LATEST PERSUASION PLATFORM FOR INDIAN POLITICS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

My paper looks into the rise of social media platforms within Indian politics, how they are used to influence citizens by creating favourable images that can influence public decisions during elections. My findings also identified social media platforms as a bane and boon both, with the capability of not only sharing the information at lightning speed across the nation, while also with capabilities of distracting and confusing citizens through fake and misleading information thus driving their decision. It also highlights how social media has had a massive impact on the Indian political system. Public is more aware of what each political party's goal is and what it will be offering to them in the future, providing them the recognition they need. Unlike earlier, today's youth is also quite involved in understanding their government and choosing someone who is a visionary leader and is willing to cater to the needs of the masses ethically. Having said that, the wrongdoings of the government or its council of ministers are being brought into light by the emergence of social media. People are more vocal about their views and opinions, making it difficult for anything to be hidden. In order to prove my findings and hypothesis, I have also included examples of different campaigns which were social media driven. These campaigns are mainly a result of the reaction of the masses which made them go ahead with the proceedings. I have also critically analysed my article by citing examples for the same.

### **Objectives**

- To learn about the impact of social media on Indian politics and to carry out extensive research on how social media and digital marketing has affected the overall political system.
- To study the adaptability of social media in election campaigns.
- To understand the effectiveness and longevity of online political campaigns.
- To study the amount of election budget directed towards online campaigns.

- To analyse the impact of negative advertising on social media.
- To carry out a comparison on how social media impacted elections in India and the western world.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Online social media (OSM) platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube have seen tremendous growth in use in India. In addition to these services, WhatsApp, which has 200 million users worldwide, is the most popular one-to-one messaging service. India has 462 million Internet users, of which 250+ million use Facebook, 42+ million use LinkedIn, and 23+ million use Twitter. The bulk of these people use these sites via their mobile phones.

In India, these services have made a significant difference. Overall, there has been an increase in digital literacy, increased connectivity, diffusion of content in local languages, major information sharing during crises, and more. The widespread use of social media platforms has drawbacks as well, including the spread of hate speech and misleading information, an uptick in spammers and phishers, people losing social skills, and more. Negative effects of social media services on society have been linked to newness of technology/mobile phones, low literacy rates, and cheaper mobile data costs.

Researchers in India have thoroughly examined how social media was used during the April/May 2019 elections there and have drawn many conclusions.

In addition to the widespread use of deceptive messages and suspected (fake/bot) accounts, which are now evident in nearly all elections, there were a number of unique features, such as a significant amount of satire video; female verified handles show higher engagement than male verified accounts; and an important trending hashtag has been #Main-BhiChowkidar (#IamtheWatchMan), which led to about 5,000 users adding Chowkidar (Watchman) to their name in the social media. Government and non-government bodies have launched numerous financing schemes to promote social media surveys.

The 16th general election for India took place in nine phases through April and May 2014. Undoubtedly, it was one of the most anticipated elections in recent memory. It was driven only by India's evolving politics. The most significant factor in determining which party obtained the most seats was social media.

India's youth are to blame for this. According to the research, fifty percent of the population is under the age of 25. Second, 65% is younger than the age bracket of 35%. Either this population attends college or works for numerous businesses. Entrepreneurs run businesses including IT

firms, BPOs, research facilities, and a variety of other industries. Their hectic routine has virtually cut off radio and television. This is particularly true when gathering or disseminating information. The younger generation is digital savvy and enjoys being up to date on current events. Using laptops, desktop computers, or the most popular network-connected mobile devices makes this connectivity possible.

A number of new and old terms took on a life of their own during the Narendra Modi era. As the country voted again after a five-year break, looking back at some of the classic phrases that have become part of the lexicon and are now used by everyone from schoolchildren to tea vendors to corporate leaders, literati, and the media.

Since the Modi government took office, every Indian has used these phrases, whether it be Bhakt, Demonetisation, Anti-National, or Surgical Strike.

**Intro to the research question** - Has social media acted as a boon or a bane to the Indian political system?

The thing about social media is that it is anonymous, so it can be much more vitriolic and extreme than normal media and yet it is there for everyone to see. It is kind of like electronic graffiti. The political process is accelerated and intense in a way that I don't believe it ever really has been before" -Tony Abbott

The emergence of social media gives voice to the disenfranchised and voiceless common people, who were previously marginalised by the traditional and typecast media. The youth are mostly responsible for the expansion of social media because they spend the majority of their time on it. Political parties are well aware of this fact and work to influence the younger generation.

Political parties can use social media to gather data on voter preferences and further manipulate voters, particularly swing voters, whose opinions can be swayed by disseminating false information. The use of social media by political parties and politicians for communication and campaigning to influence voters, allowed them to reach a broader audience and save time, money, and resources. In order for politicians to connect with their constituents, political campaigns go beyond buttons and banners.

Politicians are now able to communicate their message continuously through countless advertising and assess their effectiveness by seeing the direct reactions to their activities on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Since social media has such a large impact on politics, some users opt to employ growth services, such as Instagram or Facebook growth services, to increase the number of followers on their profiles.

Before, only people who read newspapers, watched news channels, or participated in talks at nukkads of a village or clubs were allowed to discuss politics. However, social networking has now encouraged the Indian youth to talk about political concerns. They take the time to analyse and talk about politics. They now express opinions on current political events and have an impact on administrative decision-making. The growth of social media in Indian politics is real, observable, and accelerating. Even while it might not result in significant changes right away, it is essential for raising political awareness in a developing nation like India.

### **Impact of negative campaigning or negative advertising on social media**

Since social media has a bigger audience, political parties and their supporters used it to campaign before elections. Facebook revealed that the BJP had spent the most money on political advertisements. According to Facebook's official statistics, BJP and its affiliates accounted for more than 50% of all ad spending, with the opposition party, the Congress, and its affiliates coming in third after regional parties.

It is important to remember, nevertheless, that tweets alone are insufficient to tally votes and forecast outcomes. Referring to the 2016 US Presidential Elections, where Donald Trump shocked everyone by defeating Hillary Clinton, it is easy to see how predictions of election outcomes frequently fail. Every tool for predicting the outcome of the popular vote had given Clinton a 70% to 99% chance of victory.

Consequently, result forecasting could be a simple method to determine a party's vote holdings and to develop plans to reach out to more people for political parties.

It's not necessarily the most reliable approach, though.

In addition to social media's advantages, social media campaigning and advertising have a lot of drawbacks. Social media news can occasionally be interpreted incorrectly, and misinterpretations of the news will lead voters astray. While there is active campaigning on social media, there is also a higher likelihood that fake news will circulate on these same channels, including Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and others.

According to reports, Facebook deleted and banned over 1,000 pages, organisations, and accounts after receiving notification from the government that they had violated Facebook's security regulations, including using false pages. individuals connected to the Indian National Congress (INC) IT Cell and the Indian IT company Silver Touch. After roughly 31 individuals were killed by lynch mobs in numerous regions, including Assam, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tripura, and West Bengal, over a rumour of child kidnapping that was propagated through WhatsApp, social media's frightening impact over the general population came to light abruptly.

There are also a lot of "trolls" and news articles published by different pages that disparage particular candidates or political parties. Therefore, social media is a good servant that can turn evil when managed by a terrible master, the question of regulating it needs to be discussed in many nations.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Research Methodology used: **Secondary Research**

Secondary research is the research method of collecting all the data and documents available from other sources. Some major companies or statistics written in some books or information gathered from some newspaper or thesis or individual research all these data are eligible to be secondary data. It is a convenient and powerful tool for researchers looking to ask broad questions on a large scale. It benefits researchers as all the data is already taken down so it can be time-consuming but the area where it takes time might be if those data are ideal for the researcher's goal or not. A large amount of information can be gathered with a small effort and summarising and relating it increases the effectiveness of research. Some pros and cons of secondary research are pointed out below.

### **Pros Of Secondary Research**

- A few years ago when you needed to collect some data then going to libraries or particular organisations was a must. And it was even impossible to gather such data by the public. The Internet has played a great role in accessing the data so easily in a single click.
- The large sum of money is saved where you don't need to pay the institution for the data or organise some workshops to know the people's opinion, you can easily use social media platforms which saves you the manpower and its cost.
- The data have already been documented by the organisation or the researchers which you can just collect directly and start analysis over it. This saves lots and lots of time for you where you can study the variables and ups and downs regarding the data.
- -Where primary research is most expensive because it requires both effort and time. Secondary research tips lots of important questions that are needed while conducting primary research.

### **Cons Of Secondary Research**

- -As we know the secondary research is derived from the conclusion of the primary

research, how hard we analyse it depends on the quality of the research conducted primarily.

- Secondary research data does not show exactly how or what the researcher was looking for. It is the collection of lots of data from lots of perspectives and people, some may be easy to ignore and some may be hard to validate and find its authenticity.
- Not being able to get complete information about the data he/she wants to collect will affect the researcher's study. As they are unable to know exactly how and when the procedure went wrong during execution.
- The most important thing one must consider while using secondary data is to note the date when the information was collected. They must be aware of how those products and companies are doing in the current situation.
- The mindset of the researcher will be something else, they have to work on the data collected or data found in the research process. Since they are not able to carry out primary research, they should be depending on someone else's data disregarding its quality.

### **Hypothesis implied**

Social media today has become an unofficial news platform. It is the best flexible method for sharing and understanding about the news related to politics.

### **Literature Review**

*"Role of Social Media in Indian Politics"*: This article talks about the emergence of social media and how it gives voice to the disenfranchised and voiceless common people, who were previously marginalised by the traditional and typecast media. The youth are mostly responsible for the expansion of social media because they spend the majority of their time on it. Political parties are well aware of this fact and work to influence the younger generation.

*"Punjab Election 2022: AAP promises free electricity up to 300 units; all old unpaid bills to be waived off."*: This article states that the largest opposition party in Punjab, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), has pledged that if it wins the upcoming elections and takes office, it will provide a continuous supply of power for 24 hours a day to all 300 units of the state at no cost. Arvind Kejriwal, the leader of the AAP and the chief minister of Delhi, made the announcements in Chandigarh claiming that by doing this, the financial strain on women will be lessened, making it simpler for them to manage their households.

*“Influence of social media and technology in the Indian elections”*: This article implies how social media has become a vital tool for communication, opening up new avenues for political mobilisation and enticing users to participate in political activities. Examples of such activities include tweeting about and supporting one's political parties, updating one's status on Facebook, and posting videos on YouTube.

*“Social Media's Impact on the 2020 Presidential Election: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly”*: This article is about the 2020 election's outcome which may be influenced by social media, which is recognised as a key channel for engaging young people this year and is experiencing significant and ongoing growth in engagement.

*“BJP launches 'desh ki badli soch' social media campaign to target Congress”*: This article talks about how the BJP started a social media campaign called "Desh ki badli soch" (the nation's thinking has changed), in which it contrasts Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Independence Day remarks with those of his Congress forerunners.

*“The Positive and Negative Effects of Social Media in India”*: The said article speaks on how online social media (OSM) platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube have seen tremendous growth in use in India. Overall digital literacy has improved, people are more connected, the broadcast of local language content has increased, the amount of information exchanged during emergencies is significant, and more as a result of these services.

*“Sentiment analysis on tweets for social events”*: The article aims to throw light on sentiment analysis, also called opinion mining, a type of text analysis that aims to aid decision making by extracting and analysing opinion-oriented text, identifying positive and negative opinions, and determining how positively or negatively an entity (i.e., people, organisation, event, location, product, topic, etc.) is regarded.

## **ANALYSIS OF THE DATA**

While the familiar election speeches, rallies, posters, and door-to-door campaigns are still happening, 2019 saw a new kind of campaign - the election being fought on the digital space. While digital media had been around for some time and so had digital advertisements but it is only of late the political parties have realised how important it is and how influential it can be.

In 2014, BJP under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, one of the first political parties to use social media into their propaganda apparatus, gave us a peek of a digital political campaign when they successfully employed it while the opposition parties were left in the dark. Numerous commentators have attributed BJP's significant victory in part to its highly effective media

campaign, which was largely conducted on digital media channels. Five years later, nearly all of the major political parties have realised the value of social media, jumped on board, and established their own IT departments.

What we might refer to as a digital election campaign in India started in 2014. "Both BJP and the Congress attempted it, but BJP was more effective at using the platforms to target people, and the effects were quite obvious," said Ashish Shah, founder and CEO of VertoZ, a programmatic advertising startup based in New York, USA.

"It is like direct marketing. The political parties can now reach directly to their voters and influence their voting habits through targeted ads. This makes their campaign more to the point and direct," he explained.

Micro targeting and programmatic advertising, which use user data to target particular groups, such as location, are becoming more and more common in India. "Geographic targeting is localised. It will address regional issues that the public can instantly relate to," added Shah.

Sentiment analysis, also known as opinion mining, is a crucial type of text analysis that aims to support decision-making by extracting and analysing text that is opinion-oriented, identifying positive and negative opinions, and measuring how favourably or unfavourably an entity (such as a person, group, event, location, product, or topic) is regarded. Tweets are becoming important sources of information about people's ideas as more users share their political and religious views on Twitter. For social studies or marketing, tweet data can be effectively used to infer people's opinions. This study suggests a Tweets Sentiment Analysis Model (TSAM) that may identify public interest in and sentiment toward a social event. Political parties use twitter or instagram as a medium to understand the perceptions and feelings of the masses, about a certain measure or campaign they are going to introduce. The public's reaction to these posts or ideas helps the political parties determine whether it is favourable for them to go ahead and introduce it.

## **CAMPAIGNS**

### **Congress**

#### #IndiaAgainstHate

The Congress party in an attempt to counter the atmosphere of violence, introduced an online campaign titled #IndiaAgainstHate. According to the party, the country's youth need jobs, the middle class need relief from inflation, farmers need a fair price for their harvest, and women need security and higher education.



Analysis: The party tried to connect with the demands of the youth, farmers and the women of the country over social media.

**Bharat Jodo Yatra:-**

Rahul Gandhi, the head of the Congress, and other party members are currently engaged in their "Bharat Jodo Yatra." The overarching goal of this 3,500-kilometre, five-month mass contact walk from Kanyakumari to Kashmir is to reunite India, which the Congress believes is divided along religious lines. But like many ambitious political efforts by opposition parties, this one also aspires to change public opinion, in this case before the national elections of 2024, for a chance at winning the presidency.

While elections are not won on Twitter, Facebook, or WhatsApp, Congress social media teams are already frantically posting pictures of Rahul Gandhi being accompanied by sizable crowds.

Analysis: The party on social media platforms is attempting to portray the Bharat Jodo Yatra as a huge success despite only being a week old. They post each and every milestone on social media in order to make an impact in the Lok Sabha elections next year.

## **Aam Aadmi Party**

### Bharatvaad

Aam Aadmi Party started this online campaign attacking its rival and the party in power by asking people to support the party which believes in Bharatvaad which stands for favouring the nation at any costs.

**Free Electricity :-**

The largest opposition party in Punjab, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), pledged that if it wins the elections, it will guarantee a continuous 24 hour power supply and offer free electricity up to 300 units across the state. Additionally, it stated that all previous electrical costs would be refunded. He claimed that by doing this, the financial strain on women will be lessened, making it simpler for them to manage their households.

Analysis - Even though this campaign is less than a decade, the party has successfully made its way outside its home state with the help of social media, be it important party announcements, important developments and even winning the elections which has not been achieved by the more experienced one.

## **Bharatiya Janata Party**

### Desh ki badli soch

The BJP started a social media campaign called "Desh ki badli soch" (the nation's thinking has changed), in which it contrasts Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Independence Day remarks with those of his Congress forerunners.

To portray its leader in a favourable light, the party posted numerous images on its Twitter account that included quotes from speeches given by Modi and his predecessors Manmohan Singh, Rajiv Gandhi, Indira Gandhi, and Jawaharlal Nehru.

According to one of these tweets, Nehru did not pay respect to the slain soldiers in his 1963 speech, which followed the 1962 war with China. It was mentioned that Modi remembered in his 2020 speech those who gave the ultimate sacrifice during the battle with Chinese forces in Ladakh.

Soch Imanadar, Kaam Damdaar, Fir Ek Baar BJP Sarkar:-

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) social media team launched its online efforts prior to the 2022 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections in an effort to boost its online visibility and guarantee the party's victory by using a dual approach to combat the opposition and promote the accomplishments of the Yogi Adityanath administration.

Analysis - BJP is always ahead of its game, focussing on quantity over quality by running multiple online campaigns over the years maintaining their social media presence. The party doesn't leave a chance to connect with its online audience.

### **Social Media Expenditure**

Indian political parties spend a hefty amount of funds on running online campaigns, advertisements and virtual rallies. This expenditure is divided strategically over different social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and others.

For instance ,the trend of online advertising of political parties, started back in 2014 during the Lok Sabha elections, where BJP was the highest spender over online media followed by Congress and other parties. 2014 was the first election where political parties understood the power of the digital medium. Since then they have seen how the youth have taken to digital media, which is now a major part of their strategy and spending.

Similarly, During the period of 2019 Lok Sabha elections, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) emerged as the sole biggest spender on political advertisements on Google, social media giant Facebook, and other sister platforms of the firms.The BJP paid for 60% of the total political ad buys on

Google, YouTube, and Google's partner properties thus far, totaling to approximately Rs 17 crore, a whopping 500% more than the biggest political party in opposition, the Indian National Congress, which spent approximately Rs 2.7 crore.

The ruling BJP and its opponent Congress have taken the lead in using social media to reach and engage their voters over the past few years for one important reason: There is never any downtime. In the 2022 elections, The Election Commission extended the ban on political rallies for a long period due to rising concerns of the coronavirus pandemic, thanks to the ban, It even boosted the amount spent on virtual rallies by the parties.

### **CRUX OF THE PAPER**

As Harish Bijoor, founder, Harish Bijoor Consults Inc, a brand consultancy firm, points out, “Social media is forever-on media, whereas traditional media is an intermittently-on medium. Keeping this in mind, there is a focus on social media. When it’s election time, the forever-on media is a necessity, it offers the ability to percolate news and views 24 X 7.”

The ruling Trinamool Congress party in West Bengal had recruited members for its online army ahead of the 2021 legislative assembly elections. The shift in emphasis from regular recruitments to online recruitments was a novel concept in West Bengal, a state where cadre-based, booth-level workers form the backbone of state politics.

The emergence of the Bharatiya Janata Party as the main Opposition in the formerly Left-dominated state was the primary reason for this shift. Even in 2020, reports surfaced of the party enlisting over 50,000 young recruits to work in its online army to counter the BJP's virtual clout.

The BJP was one of India's first national parties to recognise and capitalise on the power of new digital platforms. The BJP's "IT Cell" is fueled by an army of dedicated online warriors who work around the clock to ensure the party and its leaders look good online. In previous interviews, senior members of the IT Cell claimed that people with technical backgrounds were more vigorously recruited. The party's online presence is mostly "voluntary." The event was the first to take advantage of the social media boom.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated in 2017 that the 2019 elections "will be fought on mobile phones." The BJP reportedly used data from constituency profiles created by tech geeks using data analysis to identify key polling issues in the 2018 Tripura campaign.

Several parties had held digital rallies in accordance with the Election Commission's COVID-19 guidelines during the 2022 legislative assembly elections.

Political observers who use social media are familiar with “Pappupedia”, a sort of Wikipedia for

Rahul Gandhi that aggregates information to mock him. There's also "Fekuexpress", which mocks Modi. In response to Modi's campaign slogan, "Abki baar Modi sarkar," his opponents have gone viral with "Abki baar Mukesh sarkar," linking him to Mukesh Ambani. Kejriwal has also been subjected to spoofs and sting videos on YouTube, as well as jokes and memes on WhatsApp and Facebook.

When the top leaders are compared, the picture changes. As Rahul Gandhi of Congress is not on Facebook or Twitter, the direct battle is between Kejriwal and Modi.

A political party's social media strategy typically includes four major components: one for the party, another for key leaders, an anti-team (think trolls), and one that manages tactical issues and puts out fires. Congress has mostly delegated the task to third parties, such as the online marketing firm OMLogic and the public relations firm Perfect Relations. "Congress' strategy is not as dependent on social media as is the case for BJP and AAP," says Priyanka Chaturvedi, a spokesperson for the Congress party.

#### BJP: Building War Rooms In Constituencies

The Bharatiya Janata Party has a well-established network and has been able to effectively communicate its message. When it comes to social media, it takes a 360° approach. It has established war rooms in each constituency. Yogi Adityanath, who ran in the elections from Gorakhpur, has ensured that his constituency has a war room.

Sameer Srivastava, Mahanagar Co-ordinator of BJP Social Media, told India Today, "Our war rooms work 24 hours, we work in shifts. We have made groups where we add people. In one go, we have the means to reach 5,000-5,00,000 people."

After the Election Commission banned rallies and roadshows, all parties changed gears and went digital. The BJP even today, is going above and beyond to reach every voter, and establishing a war room at the constituency level, by upping the ante.

Anandi Priya Pathak , regional coordinator of BJP IT department, Gorakhpur region, said, "The room you are seeing here has been set up for Gorakhpur constituency. We have established these war rooms to reach out to the maximum number of people. We are all working 24\*7 hours. Our aim through WhatsApp is to add 500 people daily."

Social media warriors monitor every development across all platforms.

The battle is so intense that leaders have set up their own social media rooms.

#### Congress' Strategy For Social Media Campaigning

While the BJP has expanded their war room to the constituency level, Congress upped their game on WhatsApp.

Abhay Pandey, 32, is the chairman of Congress' Social Media Committee. He was working tirelessly to reach out to voters via WhatsApp. The Congress has about 6,000 WhatsApp groups set up. The party hopes to reach three crore people via 75,000 WhatsApp groups.

The strategy of Congress was to weave a web of voters and connect them via WhatsApp. Party plans and campaigns are communicated to voters via Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. The party was sending WhatsApp messages in which voters could join or send the messages to others.

When the receiver opens the message, he or she could start a chain by forwarding it.

Recognizing the need to compete with the BJP's machinery, party leaders had begun with virtual rallies.

The party had professionals as well as 1,500 volunteers on its social media team, and it had about 250-300 war rooms ready for the elections back then.

#### Samajwadi Party: Reaching 1 Lakh People Every Day Through Social Media

While the national parties, Congress and the BJP, were busy spreading their wings, the Samajwadi Party attempted to woo voters through music. Volunteers from the party were pitching in to counter the claims of the ruling party.

Explaining the process of coming up with funny videos and songs, Anurag Bhadurai, spokesperson of the Samajwadi Party told India Today, "The music that you see being played by us is being done by volunteers. We use the words spoken by the people of the state. Our aim is to keep our messages short and simple and we need to reach as many people as possible. We know our competition is with BJP, which already has a very strong social media presence."

The party had been assembling a team at the constituency level. Each constituency had two social media administrators who monitored all platforms and oversaw the digital campaign.

There were over 100 verified Twitter and Facebook accounts ready for the elections back then. There were 700-800 WhatsApp groups on each phone used for social media campaigning.

Every day, social media warriors hope to reach 1 lakh people through various platforms. Every constituency had 390 WhatsApp groups, each with 256 members.

## **COMPARISON**

In 2020, there was one of the most eagerly awaited and divisive elections in US history. It is believed that as people turned more frequently to online communication during the COVID-19 epidemic, increasing the importance and influence of social media, which has 233 million members in the US and is already an important communications medium, resulted in both positive and negative outcomes. In the Forbes article "Social Media Could Determine The Outcome Of The 2020 Election", social media is acknowledged as a crucial medium for connecting with young people and reports a strong and continued development in contact during this election cycle.

In fact, early voting, voter registration, and civic participation have all benefited greatly from social media, according to experts. Numerous states reported fresh voter registration numbers that broke records. It was nearly impossible to avoid seeing "get out the vote" (GOTV) messages and commercials on social media, which served as an umbrella term for initiatives designed to motivate a campaign's supporters to cast ballots.

Even though greater social media use seemed to have been a major factor in raising civic participation, there was a drawback: false and misleading information. In the weeks leading up to election day, there had been an unusual increase in instances of video manipulation, where video clips were edited to make candidates appear to be making mistakes they hadn't made, slurring words, or coming off as less competent. There had also been some deep fakes, a technique that used artificial intelligence to fabricate images and videos most often used for malicious purposes, where videos are computer generated to show false footage.

"While [social media] platforms prohibit this, they often get posted, viewed, and shared millions of times," Golbeck said on the rise of these malicious efforts. "One of the main manipulation techniques used to add legitimacy to candidates and positions is to use bots or super active accounts to make things look popular - fact-checkers are critical for helping understand who and what can be trusted."

## **CONCLUSION**

Political parties are becoming more tech savvy and realising that social media is the only way to connect with the youth, despite the fact that politicians still use posters, cutouts, fliers, graffiti, and personal rallies to reach and win over voters during elections. This is because social media is altering people's perceptions of urban India. To benefit from the world's and India's rapidly expanding internet and social media penetration, everyone must now be creative. Political party interactions with voters are changing as a result of digital media, which is bridging the gap like never before.

Digital media offers the perfect platform for political parties to reach audiences around the world since more people are using social media, more people are using the internet as a result of more people using smartphones, and conventional media are getting saturated. By utilising digital and social media, communication efforts can reach a wider audience and can be tailored and customised to appeal to the target population that marketers and campaigns are trying to reach. The main venue for conveying political news today is social media. It is the most convenient and adaptable means to strengthen social ties with people all over the world, and it is particularly difficult to ascertain what impact these affiliate associations had on the world.

In conclusion to the research, social media has worked in the favour of the political parties and hence will be a very vital part for the years to come. The ruling party has clearly benefited from it since their messages and objective was made much more clear to the masses and appealed to them. There is a scope of dialogue now, wherein the general public can also cite their opinions, concerns and expectations they have from their government.

While this has been a positive impact on the elections, there are also cons for the same. There are people who also misuse social media platforms by spreading hate and demeaning messages or opinions about certain situations, which could have rather been handled tastefully and in a cordial manner. All in all, social media has been more of a boon than a bane for the elections and ruling party.

#### Scope for Future Studies

Even the most uninterested citizens can now more easily access political information thanks to digital media, but many experts predict that public online spaces will significantly improve by 2035 if reformers, major technology companies, governments, and activists address the issues brought on by toxic discourse, misinformation, and disinformation. Others anticipate ongoing issues as people's vulnerabilities are exploited, their fury is stoked, and they are driven apart by the use of digital tools and forums. In light of this, I think ongoing research is necessary to examine any future shifts in public opinion that social media may bring about.

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