

# Social Connection, Media and Its Impact on Indian Politics

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## **Abstract:**

In this 21st century social media play a crucial role in Indian politics; political leaders and parties use social media for various political activities and spreading political awareness. Social media is the important source of public opinion formation. It has also raised the direct participation of people in the political process in India and in turn led to the success of democracy. The present paper focuses on the different social media platforms, their uses by the people and its impact on the Indian politics.

**Keywords:** Social Media, Politics, Globalization.

## **Introduction**

Social Connection simply can be understood as a kind of connection between / among social beings; who are none other but humans. Being member of society humans are guided by certain norms, interest, values, principles or standards of behavior which often make them follow their basic instinct, i.e., the inherent human nature of developing human relations / interactions. Rather, it is a psychological need of human beings to feel being connected. Social connections actually consist of people's relations around like friends, family, relatives, colleagues and neighbours. People develop an urge for being and feeling connected with their fellow mates and so as they do. They develop both physical person-to-person interconnection and the virtual too. People can involve themselves in religious, educational institutions, clubs and community services or any volunteer services. All this will act as a means of preserving social connectedness. But at present the virtual world has also impressively been dominating the field of social connections by bringing into action various apps or platforms such as, X (previously known as Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and like this for developing a strong human social networking. Social media is being used by academics for

teaching. Social media plays a pivotal role in community discussion (Siyal & Brohi, 2023, p.65). Such platforms often become the basis of positive and negative forces though.

In this era of globalisation social media is the fundamental tool for awareness. Social media platforms are very popular in spreading of political, social, educational awareness more specifically among youths. This in turn increases participation of people in the democratic process as well. According to Internet in India Report 2024, the number of active internet users reaches 886 million, in the rural areas the number is 488 million.

There are many examples which shows that social media enhances political awareness. The anti-corruption movement of Anna Hazare is the classic example of this. Through these, users get access to news updates, multiple view points, educational contents etc. (Loader & Mercea, 2011). Social media is important mechanism for decentralisation. People of low strata too raise their opinion to the highest stage through this medium of communication.

### **Role of Social Media Platforms:**

There are several social media platforms through which people participate in discussions. These platforms are important for dissemination of information too.

**Facebook:** Facebook is most used social media platform through which people participate in discussions; it is an important source of information and widely accepted medium of communication.

**Instagram:** Another important platform, Instagram is a visual-centric platform. It is mostly used by the youths; political parties use this platform for political campaigns, promoting political ideology. Memes and stories on such platform influence the youths (Jain, 2025, pp. 170-171).

**X (Previously known as Twitter):** Now a days 'X' handle is the most popular medium of dissemination of information; political leaders, ministers, officials frequently uses this platform for public awareness. Even, people use this platform to place their grievances/opinion to the concerned personnel. It is a real-time platform for communication. Through this handle users form like-minded communities, which influences public opinion. (T. Robertson, 2023).

**WhatsApp:** WhatsApp is the most commonly used platform for communication; it is user friendly. It is commonly and widely used for disseminating information. However, its easy access also raises concern for spreading misinformation.

**YouTube:** YouTube is an important platform for sharing political speeches, interviews, opinions, campaigns etc. This platform now a days are accepted by people more even in comparison to traditional media outlets.

**Other Platforms:** There are other platforms like Telegram, Snapchat which are also used for communications.

### **Social Media and Political Awareness:**

Every individual has different ideas about political system, political institutions, government policies etc. Political awareness means the level of ideas of people about all such political issues like the role of political parties, pressure groups, rights of people, electoral processes, governance that directly or indirectly affects the society. Till the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century newspapers, radio, television etc. play a crucial role in spreading political awareness. But from the first decade of 21<sup>st</sup> century social media platforms gradually replacing that place of traditional medium of communication. The most important feature of the social media platform is that, it provides two-way communication and easy accessibility. In turn, it ensures more participation and strong democratic political environment. (Gil de Zuniga et al., 2012, p. 320).

Political awareness includes knowledge about:

- Government policies
- Electoral system
- Political ideologies
- National and local issues
- Rights and duties as citizens

Social media emerges as a powerful tool for influencing public opinion. Platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, X and YouTube play a crucial role for discussion, spreading information and civic engagement across the globe, particularly among youth. Digital expansion and affordability of internet has revolutionised the use of social media in India. Though digital shift increases political awareness and political participation, but also raises serious question about quality, depth and impact of information provided (Paripoornam, R., Gopal, k., Khanna, M., 2024. pp.8641-8642)

During election, political parties use social media for political campaigning to reach the youths. The 2024 General Election shows that all political parties used social media for political campaigning. Even, every political party in the post-election period too uses these platforms to disseminate information regarding their political opinion and other activities.

It is also undeniable that that since this platforms are easily accessible, so these are also used for propagating negative information. Such as,

1. Social media are often used for misinformation. As these platforms are mostly used by youths naturally misinformation also propagates negative idea about political parties and their activities among the youth (Marwick, A., & Lewis, R., 2017. pp.44-45)
2. It is also an undeniable fact that a large number of youth uses social media for their entertainment. The uses likes, shares, or comments and do not have any deep understanding about any particular issue. Hence, it is an illusion to say that social media increases political awareness all the time to all the people. For some people it is useful but for many people it is only a medium for entertainment.
3. Political leaders, public figures often face personal comments without any verification in the social media. Many of such information are used only for personal attacks.

### **Social Media and Indian Politics**

In the present day the use of internet has developed the role of social media in influencing the political landscape. Studies show that social media play a crucial role in spreading political information and in turn political awareness in India in the recent time. There is a huge transformation of internet and its impact on the politics in the last decade. Starting from the early use of Bulletin Board Systems (BBS) to the frequent use of internet through mobile and use of new tools shape the political communication. Social media platforms provide important channels through which different political organizations and citizens share their views on various political issues and report on different events in real time (Calderaro,2018 pp. 781-783).

India was ruled by different rulers from time to time. In the post British era Indian National Congress was in government for a long time. Since the 90s decade there is a coalition era in Indian politics. The rise of regional political parties has developed cooperative federalism in Indian political scenario. Here, social media played a crucial role in disseminating political ideas of different political parties. The influence of globalisation has affected the political scenario of India too. Indian politics has undergone a tremendous transformation with the influence of social media. These platforms connect large number of people within a short span of time. The disseminating of political ideas is easier than the traditional way. Political leaders use X, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and others for spreading their views and activities in real time. These platforms are also

useful to get feedback of different political activities. There are several incidents in India where social media formed public opinion on a particular incident within a short time.

**Table 1: Social Media Users in India**

Platforms	Percentage of Users
WhatsApp	84.6%
Instagram	79.8%
Facebook	70.7%
Telegram	56.8%
Snapchat	52.3%
Facebook Messenger	39.8%
LinkedIn	36%
Twitter	30.9%

(Grabon, 2025)

Table 1 shows that WhatsApp is the most popular social media platform in India. Out of the total internet users 84.6% uses WhatsApp followed by Instagram (79.8%), Facebook (70.7%), Telegram (56.8%), Snapchat (52.3%), Facebook Messenger (39.8%), LinkedIn (36%) and X (30.9%).

**Table2: Age Group of Social Media Users**

Age Group	Male	Female
18-24 Years	22.6%	10.3%
25-34 Years	25.4%	10.7%
35-44 Years	11.6%	4.4%
45-54 Years	4.7%	2%
55-64 Years	2.1%	1%
More than 65 Years	1.4%	0.6%

(Grabon, 2025)

Table 2 shows that the youth below 35 years uses social media platform more than that of aged people. Even the males are using more than that of females. 22.6 % of Males belonging age group of 18-24, uses social media whereas 10.3 % of the females of same age group uses social media. It is also important to note that among the different age group, males belonging 25-34 years age group uses more social media than other groups. It is easily understandable that social media has a great influence in shaping the political opinion of youths.

**Media Impact on Indian Politics:** (Vashishtha & Agarwal, 2023, pp.a9-a10)

- The media plays a crucial role in agenda settings of the political parties. Political parties get information through social media to prioritise their political agenda. People share their opinion in social media platforms. Political leaders promptly use these opinion in their political campaigns.
- Now a days social media plays another important role in eradication of corruption. Mobile phones are mostly used by the people. In the remote villages or other places whenever people face any problem or find any corruption, they make the video and share on the social media platforms. It catches the attention of public as well as the concerned authorities.
- As already discussed social media is the most important source of formation of public opinion in India. Youths uses social media regularly. Any incident of any place along with opinions spreads rapidly through internet, so in turn it forms public opinion.
- Social media platforms play an important role in mobilising mass protests. It helps citizens to coordinate, communicate and share information.

- Another important role played by social media in Indian politics is that it makes political leaders and even administrative staff accountable to the public directly. People can place their grievances, sometime with evidence on the platform; automatically, political leaders are directly held accountable to public.
- Social media provides more democratic environment through public participation in the political affairs.

Narasimha Murthy (2014) had made one study, according to which around 84% of the total internet users in India regularly access, political contents in the social media platforms. In the 2014, 2019 and 2024 General elections, social media play a crucial role in the formation of public opinion. All most all the political leaders in India uses their own 'X' handle, Instagram, YouTube Channels, Facebook to disseminate their opinions, political activities, social functions and other works every day to form the public opinion. The political parties also have their own channels and platforms to disseminate the ideology, party activities to form public opinion and also to provide information.

### **Conclusion:**

Thus, the political landscape of India has been revolutionised with the social media. It has made politics more participatory, responsive and dynamic. Democratic process has been redefined with the social media. Though there are challenges of misinformation, personal attack, cybercrimes but the positive impacts are more visible. Democratic process in India has reached to the most developed stage through public participation on social media in this digital age.

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