

# Politics in India via Social Media and Mass Media

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**ABSTRACT:** The article is based on how social media and mass media especially electronic media like TV news channels impact politics in India. The advantages and disadvantages of it are also discussed. How social media and mass media builds public opinion about politics and how it affects elections is also analysed. Furtherly the impact of social media in changing the attitude of politicians and bureaucrats towards common people is understood and finally the challenges that social media brings in political context and solutions to the same are also mentioned.

## **OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH:**

1. To analyse how Social media and Mass Media(TV) builds public opinion about politics and its effects on elections.
2. To Understand the impact of technology And Social media in changing the attitude of politicians and officers towards common People.
3. To find the challenges that social media brings political context and how to overcome the same.

**Keywords:** Public Opinion, Social Media, Mass Media

**INTRODUCTION:** Internet and social media has influenced the politics in India to a large level. Technology has always played a role in politics when we think of the influence that TV debates between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon had on the people of USA in the presidential race in America. But when it comes about India The Narenadra Modi Led NDA Campaign in 2014 Lok sabha elections India witnessed a large advertising of The party and its Agenda . The slogans "Apki bar modisarkar" and "Acche Din Ane wale hain" was famous and was on everyone's minds. These enhanced the democratic process as we can say because the average election turnout over all was around 66.40%, the highest ever in the history of Indian general elections. The participation of people in the electoral process had actively Increased. As the telecom revolution in India took place the reach of common people to internet and social media platforms also increased. Social media platforms like Twitter , WhatsApp were exposed to people in India and also politicians started actively using social media to keep people updated.

**ANALYSING HOW SOCIAL MEDIA AND MASS MEDIA (TV) BUILDS PUBLIC OPINION ABOUT POLITICS AND ITS EFFECTS ON ELECTIONS:** Public opinions are individual views, Beliefs and attitudes which they have through experiences ,knowledge on a particular issue by the various sections of the society. People are very keen ,aware and excited about what is happening around them especially about politics. The human nature is that people have tendency to be informed about what is happening. Earlier and even today Mass media played a important role in public opinion building through news but now social media platforms like twitter ,facebook, whatsapp etc have increased the pace of the reactions, opinions, counter opinions on news and other important political happenings in

india. Twitter is largely used by many citizens, politicians to express views. Political parties share their Agenda and keep people updated about different programs. Mass media plays a very important role in creating public opinions and acts as a bridge between government and common people. Public opinion helps in policy formations and developing different schemes for people. Sometimes the coverage given by media to different issues and controversies may limelight and speed up the issue to really help them to a good end and some may not have that much effect. Media including social media have a great impact on social movements and their success. For example – The Indian agriculture act 2020 famously known as Farm bills was opposed by farmers and the coverage given by media and the protests on social media helped build unity and public opinion of demand for striking down the bill. Which eventually had success as government cancelled the bill.

Media gives information and people sometimes without verifying the genuineness of the news they build up the opinions. We should understand that these platforms have negative as well as positive sides of public opinion building. The negative side is that The news and information that is coming from media houses is filtered and only those things are showed that they want to show rather than showing all the possibilities. Agenda setting by different media houses and social media sites is a biggest concern. As the information given by them is not confirmed as they say and there is no proper information presented by them so audience believes and it helps in agenda setting as there is benefit of doubt. These creates polarization in society.

Paid news to promote propaganda and fake news is a major concern for Politics in a democratic Country as that influences people a lot as they are vulnerable to build perceptions, make judgements on what they see without confirming the authenticity of the news. The question here is how sold is our country's mainstream media? Is it indulged in Character assassination against specific set of people? How it is setting up agenda of particular group or party? Having seen all these we could only estimate that probably all this news might have been sold out for money. Debates and Content shown by mass media plays a major role in elections and help political parties to gain votes by gaining sympathy in the name of religion, caste, even in the name of nationalism. The main concern according to me is that elections in india are driven mostly on public feelings and opinions that are driven by religion, caste and such feelings are targeted by political parties through different platforms of mass media and Social media to gain votes. For example :Rammandhir issue is always highlighted and different promises are made by Right wing parties like BJP, Shivsena to gain votes in elections and Media also Covers such issue on large scale and repeatatively to build up sentiments among people so that to impact the voting decisions of people. Telecasting such religious issues is fine but In an ideal Democracy it is expected that issues which are related to education, health, employment should be focused more rather than anything else.

**CASE STUDY – OPERATION 136 BY COBRA POST** :Cobra Post, an independent news portal has done the largest mainstream media news expose. Cobra Post expertises in investigative journalism, undercover operations and sting operations. They went to 36 news Channels, their journalists disguised themselves and as under cover agents went as members of a particular religious organization to 36 media news Channels. A journalist of cobra post team went there and offered crores of money to media houses for desired news in favour of a religion and a particular political party and against another oppositional party should be propogated. A shocking result was that all the 36 media houses were ready to propogate such news. Cobra post named these as operation 136 because india's rank slipped down by 3 spots to 136 in world freedom index in 2017. And the media is increasingly becoming sychpantic and sold out. Operation 136 investigated 36 different news channels and conducted sting

operations on them. They have published credible video proofs which shows how our media is ready to show different types of news in exchange of money

Social media platforms also play a important role in opinion building. Benefit of social media is that political parties and politicians can keep their voters updated about developmental programs and voters can also ask questions to their leaders and political parties about issues and promises given by them before elections.

Social media users post contents about political happenings all around which may help in one to one communication with people on social media on positive developmental issues but negative side is that Fake , Hate messages also are posted on social media which may result in creating chaos in the society. Social media posts with contents impact positively in politics if there is healthy conversation among users on political issues and there can also be constructive criticism. But Some content can have negative impact in politics if Misleading , communal hatred and posts with deceptive agenda are posted. Opinions are built by people reading and looking at such content on social media which have huge impact on elections .

Social media influencers is a new concept of today. They are individuals who are popular and actively post content which make positive impact on people and help in developing awareness in society . But sometimes such social media influencers are misused by political parties to build positive opinions about them in public by making them do false advertisements or make them post on social media . The problem here is that as people are influenced by the work these social media influencers do for example they may be entertainers but as they now are promoting such political parties people overlook other agendas of development and are influenced by just posts or campaigns done by these popular individuals. Thus social media influencers also play a role in opinion building.

**HOW TECHNOLOGY CHANGED ATTITUDE OF POLITICIANS AND CIVIL SERVANTS TOWARDS COMMON PEOPLE :** When we talk about technology and social media and its positive uses for common people there are so many things like people are getting connected on different issues and with politicians and political parties. But what significantly I want to mention here is how technology like using modern Android mobiles and through help of social media platforms like WhatsApp, Twitter, fb etc has changed the scenario of politics and a sudden shift in attitude of bureaucrats and politicians towards people

1. Using of mobiles and common usage of internet in India has helped developing the awareness among people about their rights ,duties. Especially in reference to people of rural Areas , they are being able to access the published government documents which shows information about different schemes of development and most importantly the beneficiaries list of different schemes and programs that is released by government so people are more aware of what is happening around. I personally visited a village interviewed some people and their reaction was that the mobiles and internet has made their lives easy when it comes to getting information about government schemes and the beneficiaries list as according to them few years back they were totally blank about these and they had to completely depend on local officials and politicians to know, get updates or get information about these and also there were cases where the benefits given by government didn't reach the particular person because of negligence or maybe corruption by local politicians and officials .So now because of mobiles and internet currently people are exposed to all the happenings of government and their released data ,they are almost aware of their rights and they confidently confront everyone related and thus

eliminates the chances of corruption and results in the change in behaviour and attitude of Politicians And Civil Servants Towards Common People.

2. Now a days it a trend that the content posted by social media users gets viral on social media platforms and internet . The question here is how such posts by certain people will affect the political sphere and how it has helped common people from injustice , to gain their rights from officers and politicians . The features like recording in mobile allows an individual to record videos or write a post on social media if any injustice or any other problem occurs because of any officer or politician as uploading such posts on social media will result in severe Critism from citizens and social media users and ultimately result in urgent action taken by Senior officials and Parties or Chief Ministers on that particular officers or politicians giving justice to the concerned person.

For example –

- 1) A IAS Officer of SurajpurDistof Chattisgarh was removed after a video of him slapping a man went viral in 2021.
- 2) A Bjp LeaderWas Suspended ByThe Party After a Debate On .

News Channel Went Viral Where Controversial Statement Was Made Against a Religion.

Thus it has resulted in careful behaviour by officers towards citizens as they have understood that the time has changed and they cannot dictate wrong things to common people .Such viral posts or incidents also impact on elections negatively . So political parties in power and opposition parties take care that such negative incidences should be avoided and should not go viral as they don't want to have negative impact on elections and action is taken on concerned person who has done wrong as they don't want to come in bad books of people. Thus Fear of getting exposed on Social Media if they do anything wrong has changed the behaviour of politicians and beurocrats towards common people.

**CHALLENGES THATSOCIAL MEDIA BRINGS:** As discussed earlier Fake news , paid news is a challenge to democracy. But another major challenge that Social media platforms like Twitter , Facebook,Whatsappbrings is that such platforms have become a medium for extremist Groupsfor spreading hatred which is based on religion and caste. Hate Tweets and messages are propogated which may even lead to Riots.And the speed with which such posts get viral and the way people take such news is very fast .Political partiesespecially which are based on caste and religion use these as a chance for their political gains which divides the society and creates Polarization in Society. Development is hampered as non- productive issues are discussed during such scenario.

### **SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH SOCIAL MEDIA IN POLITICAL CONTEXT .**

1. Bring out policy to control fake news.
2. Structureal reforms in social media platforms and making them accountable.
3. Checks on the use of personal data.
4. Maintaning level playing field -which means strict norms for use of social media for political purposes is need of the hour so that minority political campaigns also get the equal attention as the majority one.
5. Strict monitoring of election commision of india and its model code of conduct plays a major role to make sure that one party doesn't have undue advantage just because it is in poweror have better and bigger infrastructure than other parties.

6. Mass media ethics should be promoted to avoid unholy consensus between political parties and big mass media tech giants –quote by ravish kumar on media ethics
7. Awareness among citizens and voters- lastly if citizens will become aware and educated enough about analysing impact of social media on their analysing power of their leaders and learn what to avoid and what to consume from internet then it will be a win-win situation and there will be no need for any further reforms.

## References

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