The Role of Social Media in Democracy

Jayendra Behera

Research Scholar, P.G. Dept. of Political Science, Berhampur University, Bhanja Bihar, Ganjam, Odisha

ARTICLE DETAILS	ABSTRACT
	India is the largest democratic country of the world. Since independence, democracy has been functioning successfully in India. Social media has changed India's democratic landscape, offering chances for participation and mobilization. However, it also brings challenges such as misinformation and division. This paper looks at social media's complex role in Indian democracy, focusing on its ability to improve civic engagement and the risks it poses to informed decision-making.

Introduction

Right now, across the globe, few terms pop up more than Social Media. As we move through this era, connections between individuals happen almost instantly thanks to one shared space. When politics enters the picture, something powerful emerges.These days, political messages zip across India via platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp and others social media platform. It isn't only about conversation - those networks helped shape public views during the 2019 and 2024 general elections. Whether it's a single politician or large organizations, most now lean on online spaces to connect with voters, circulate thoughts, sometimes nudge opinions too. Consider Prime Minister Narendra Modi's radio program, "Mann Ki Baat." Its impact stretches way past the actual broadcast because of intense resharing online. Many never tune into the live show yet still see, respond to, share his remarks by the millions.

History of Democracy

Democracy is a very familar political concept for the people. In the modern times it is accepted as a popular form of government. The term democracy is of Greek origin. It is derived from two Greek words

- 'Demos' and 'Kratos'. Demos' means people and 'Kratos' means power. Thus, democracy literally means people's power or power of the people. It is very often defined as a form of government in which the supreme power rests with the people.

The origin of the doctrine goes back to the times of the Greeks and Romans, even though term 'Democracy' was coined by Herodotus for the first time .In Greece, democracy was popularized by Greek Philosophers: Cleon, Pericles, Socrates etc. The system of democracy operated successfully in the Greek city-states. especially, Athens City States was the origin center of democracy. However democracy could not make much headway during the mediaeval period.In modern times, democracy was reborn through the Glorious revolution movement in England (1688) and gained universal appeal through.   Followed by American War of Independence (1776) and French Revolution (1789). In the 20th Century two World Wars were fought in the name of democracy. However, the concept of democracy became very popular in the post World War II period when all the newly independent states of Asia, Africa and Latin America adopted this Democratic system of government. In the 21st century liberalism and globalization has given a boost to the principles of democracy and popularized it throughout the world. now democracy is a magical word for the world. Many countries adopted this system of government.

India democratic history

From 1947, independence set the stage - governance by elected members welcomed each grown citizen into voting life. The year 1950 brought forth a framework of laws shaping India into a republic: equal rule, care for society, no official faith, run by people. Over time, turning points emerged - amendments numbered 73 and 74 pushed power toward local gatherings in towns and villages. Watchful institutions, most notably one named Election Commission, stood steady during vote counts and ballot moments across many generations. Growth came in fits, sometimes slow, never perfect, always moving inside systems made to honor what voters decided.

History of Social Media

The term "social media" has become very popular in the 21st century. Social media are online platforms where people connect, share information, and communicate with each other. It is also an interactive,computer-mediated technology that enables the creation and sharing of information, ideas, career interests, and other forms of expression through virtual communities and networks. The conceptual development of social media was influenced by the introduction of the telegraph in the United States in the 1840s. The first online tool for sharing data was the Advanced Research Projects Agency Network

(ARPANET), introduced in 1967. Since the 1960s, the concept of social media has evolved through the efforts of various companies and has become a popular tool worldwide.Geo Cities was one of the Internet's earliest social networking websites, launching in November 1994, Yohoo in 1994, followed by Classmates in December 1995 and Six Degrees in May 1997.Six Degrees is "widely considered to be the very first social networking site.Open Diary and Google launched in 1998; LiveJournal in April 1999; Wikipedia in 2001; Friendster in March 2003; the corporate and job-oriented site LinkedIn in May 5,2003; MySpace in August 2003; Orkut and Facebook in 2004;YouTube, Reddit, Bebo in 2005 ; the text-based service Twitter, in which posts called "tweets" and now it's known as ' X ' in 2006 ; WhatsApp in 2009; Instagram, Pinterest in 2010 ; Snapchat in 2011 ; Tiktok in 2016, TikTok was banned in India on June 29, 2020.Threads,A text-based conversation app launched by Meta in 2023.India has approximately 491 million to 500 million active social media users. The concept of social media has influenced every aspect of society and created a virtual village world.

The Promises of Social Media

1. 1.Social media facilitates public discourse and increases transparency. Platforms like Twitter and Facebook enable citizens to engage with politicians and policymakers directly.Nowadays folks discuss political matters more often thanks to platforms like Twitter. When messages go live on the web, they find their way to leaders quicker than letters ever did. Back-and-forth happens instantly, driven by people expecting replies right away. Change builds momentum not through rallies but via things passed around online. A single person speaking out could ripple outward, fast. Pressure didn't wait for permission - it built on its own. People started expecting answers, every day, not just when something blew up

2. Something shifts when chat threads leap off screens into city parks. Word hops from one phone to another, skipping steps. You could see a message appear on a wall, tucked beside a bus stop. Quiet hum turns into street noise without warning. Out of nowhere, pages appear - tying people on the same street who've never said hello. Through wires, links grow, stretching past towns into corners no one visits much. When glass glows inside houses, habits from before start losing ground. Change rolls in quietly, not with speeches but silence. A short message from a familiar face - that's what gets hands moving

3. Nowhere moves quicker than online posts - information shows up before breakfast or dinner news ever can. Messages race directly into hands, avoiding editors or schedulers completely. A single look at glowing glass tells someone exactly what unfolded minutes ago. Whole neighborhoods stay sharp

when rules change or arguments grow louder nearby. Facts wander freely, never asking permission from traditional checkers anymore.

The Challenge of Using Social Media Platforms

1. 1.False information spreads rapidly, influencing public opinion. Social media platforms struggle to curb fake news and misinformation, which can have serious consequences.Truth bends quick when mistakes spread. Sites made to pass things around struggle to block fakes - consequences land anyway. Once fake tales stick, effects come, wanted or not

2. Loops of the same thoughts narrow sight, eyes locking onto old beliefs. Without fresh voices, gaps widen while no one watches. Small mismatches, once quiet, now stretch into separate realities

3. Whispers of false adverts slip through busy screens. Beliefs bend sideways when outsiders nudge with hidden updates. Cracks in digital paths rattle faith in ballots. Targeted words reshape what eyes accept as real.

Conclusion

A shift in Indian political life shows up online - sudden access brings risks along. Each opening toward dialogue carries resistance behind it. When lawmakers, platform builders, or users browse their feeds, minds must meet slowly. Stability could grow if honesty spreads hand in hand.

Recommendations

1. Start showing folks ways to grasp tech more clearly by hosting local sessions where thinking skills grow stronger together. Step-by-step guidance arrives often, making it easier to notice lies on the web even when moving slow

2. Fact checking helps reduce false information

3. Platform Rules Make Social Media More Open

4. A single rulebook could decide what tech companies do across India's digital landscape. When rules match real-world consequences, changes tend to stick without force. Instead of choice, routines form around staying inside the law. Platforms start mirroring legal demands just by running business as usual. Expectations settle into practice once structure meets consequence. When rules exist, they often show a push for people to answer for their actions. It helps law teams work together when everyone knows what they must do before things start.

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