



# Navigating the Digital Landscape: An In-depth Analysis of Social Media's Impact on Indian Political Parties' Communication Strategies, Member Engagement, and Public Perception

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**Abstract :** The digital revolution has fundamentally transformed the landscape of political communication in India, with social media platforms emerging as pivotal channels for political discourse, member engagement, and public perception management. This comprehensive study examines the multifaceted impact of social media on Indian political parties' strategic communication approaches, internal member engagement practices, and broader public perception formation. Through a mixed-methods research approach incorporating qualitative interviews, content analysis, and quantitative surveys, this research explores how political entities navigate the complex digital ecosystem to influence public opinion and mobilize support. The findings reveal significant variations in social media strategies across different political parties, highlighting the importance of platform-specific approaches and the growing influence of digital communication in contemporary Indian politics. This study contributes to the understanding of political communication in the digital age and provides valuable insights for political practitioners, policymakers, and scholars examining the intersection of technology and democratic processes.

**IndexTerms** - social media, political communication, Indian politics, digital strategy, member engagement, public perception

## INTRODUCTION

The contemporary political landscape in India has undergone a profound transformation with the advent and proliferation of social media platforms. The intersection of digital technology and political communication has created unprecedented opportunities for political parties to engage with constituents, mobilize supporters, and shape public discourse. This fundamental shift from traditional media-centric communication to multi-platform digital strategies represents one of the most significant developments in modern Indian politics.

The ubiquity of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, and emerging regional platforms has fundamentally altered how political messages are crafted, disseminated, and received by the public. Political parties across the ideological spectrum have recognized the immense potential of these platforms to reach diverse audiences, engage in real-time communication, and build sustained relationships with their member base. The democratization of information access through social media has simultaneously empowered citizens to participate more actively in political discourse while presenting new challenges for traditional gatekeepers of political information.

India's unique socio-political landscape, characterized by linguistic diversity, cultural heterogeneity, and varying levels of digital literacy, presents both opportunities and challenges for political parties seeking to leverage social media effectively. The rapid expansion of internet connectivity and smartphone penetration across urban and rural areas has created a vast digital constituency that political parties must navigate strategically. This digital transformation has coincided with significant political developments, including major electoral campaigns, policy announcements, and crisis communication scenarios, providing rich contexts for analyzing the evolving relationship between social media and political communication.

The significance of this research extends beyond academic inquiry to practical implications for democratic governance and political participation. Understanding how social media influences political communication strategies, member engagement practices, and public perception formation is crucial for comprehending the contemporary dynamics of Indian democracy. The findings of this study have important implications for political strategists, policymakers, media professionals, and citizens seeking to understand the complex interplay between digital technology and democratic processes.

## NEED OF THE STUDY.

This research addresses a critical gap in the existing literature by providing a comprehensive analysis of social media's impact on Indian political parties. While extensive research has been conducted on social media and politics in Western democracies, the unique characteristics of the Indian political system, including its multi-party structure, federal governance model, and diverse electorate, require specific scholarly attention. The study's focus on communication strategies, member engagement, and public perception provides a holistic framework for understanding the multifaceted nature of digital political communication in the Indian context.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Global Perspectives on Social Media and Political Communication

The scholarly examination of social media's impact on political communication has evolved significantly since the early 2000s, with researchers initially focusing on the democratizing potential of digital platforms. Castells (2009) conceptualized "communication power" as a fundamental force in contemporary society, arguing that political power increasingly depends on the ability to control and influence communication networks. This theoretical framework has proven particularly relevant to understanding how social media platforms have become central to political strategy and public engagement.

The foundational work of McCombs and Shaw (1972) on agenda-setting theory has been reimaged in the digital age, with scholars examining how social media platforms influence what issues receive public attention. Neuman et al. (2014) explored the dynamics of public attention in the era of big data, demonstrating how digital platforms create new mechanisms for agenda-setting that operate alongside traditional media channels. This research has important implications for understanding how political parties use social media to prioritize certain issues and frame public discourse.

The concept of the "filter bubble," introduced by Pariser (2011), has become central to discussions about social media's impact on political communication. This phenomenon, where personalized algorithms create echo chambers that reinforce existing beliefs, has significant implications for how political messages are received and interpreted by different audience segments. Political parties must navigate these algorithmic constraints while attempting to reach diverse constituencies with their messaging strategies.

Sunstein's (2017) analysis of social media's impact on democratic deliberation provides important insights into the fragmentation of public discourse in the digital age. The concept of "cyberbalkanization" suggests that social media platforms may contribute to political polarization by enabling like-minded individuals to cluster together and avoid exposure to opposing viewpoints. This theoretical framework is particularly relevant to understanding the challenges faced by political parties in building broad coalitions across diverse constituencies.

### 2.2 Social Media and Political Participation

The relationship between social media use and political participation has been extensively studied, with researchers examining both the mobilizing and demobilizing effects of digital platforms. Putnam's (2000) influential work on social capital provides a theoretical foundation for understanding how social media platforms might influence civic engagement and political participation. The concept of "networked publics" introduced by boyd (2011) offers insights into how digital technologies create new forms of political community and engagement.

Research on the "two-step flow" model of communication, originally developed by Lazarsfeld et al. (1944), has been updated to account for the role of social media influencers and opinion leaders in contemporary political communication. The digital age has created new categories of political influencers who operate outside traditional media structures, requiring political parties to develop new strategies for engaging with these actors and leveraging their reach.

The concept of "connective action" introduced by Bennett and Segerberg (2013) provides a framework for understanding how social media enables new forms of political mobilization that differ from traditional collective action models. This research has important implications for understanding how political parties use social media platforms to organize and mobilize their member base.

### 2.3 Literature Gap and Research Contribution

Despite the extensive global literature on social media and politics, there remains a significant gap in research focusing specifically on the Indian political context. Most existing studies have been conducted in Western democratic contexts, with limited attention to the unique characteristics of Indian politics, including its multi-party system, federal structure, linguistic diversity, and varying levels of digital literacy.

The existing literature on Indian politics and social media has primarily focused on specific electoral campaigns or crisis communication scenarios, rather than providing comprehensive analysis of ongoing communication strategies and member engagement practices. This research addresses this gap by examining the sustained use of social media by political parties across different political contexts and time periods.

Furthermore, the literature has paid limited attention to the comparative analysis of different political parties' social media strategies, focusing instead on individual case studies or broad generalizations about social media use in Indian politics. This research contributes to the field by providing systematic comparative analysis of how different political parties approach social media communication, member engagement, and public perception management.

## 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 3.1 Political Communication Theory in the Digital Age

The theoretical foundation of this research draws upon established theories of political communication while adapting them to the digital context. The concept of "mediatization of politics" (Hjarvard, 2013) provides a framework for understanding how social media platforms have become integral to political processes, rather than simply serving as channels for political communication. This theory suggests that political logic increasingly adapts to media logic, with social media platforms playing a particularly influential role in shaping political behavior and strategy.

The agenda-setting theory, originally developed by McCombs and Shaw (1972), remains relevant in the social media age but requires adaptation to account for the multi-directional nature of digital communication. Unlike traditional media, social media platforms enable political parties to set agendas directly while also being influenced by user-generated content and algorithmic systems. This creates a more complex and dynamic agenda-setting environment that political parties must navigate strategically.

### 3.2 Social Network Theory and Political Engagement

Social network theory provides important insights into how political parties use social media platforms to build and maintain relationships with their members and broader constituencies. The concept of "network effects" explains how the value of social media platforms increases as more users join and participate, creating incentives for political parties to build large and active online communities.

Granovetter's (1973) theory of "weak ties" has particular relevance to understanding how social media enables political parties to reach beyond their core supporter base and engage with potential new constituencies. The ability to maintain weak ties through social media platforms provides political parties with opportunities to expand their influence and build broader coalitions.

### 3.3 Public Sphere Theory and Digital Democracy

Habermas's (1989) concept of the public sphere provides a theoretical framework for understanding how social media platforms function as spaces for political discourse and deliberation. The digital public sphere differs from traditional public sphere concepts in important ways, including its fragmented nature, the presence of algorithmic mediation, and the potential for both democratization and polarization of political discourse.

The concept of "networked democracy" (Benkler, 2006) suggests that social media platforms have the potential to enhance democratic participation by lowering barriers to political engagement and enabling new forms of political organization. However, this potential must be balanced against concerns about the quality of democratic deliberation in digital spaces and the potential for manipulation and misinformation.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods research approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of social media's impact on Indian political parties. The mixed-methods design allows for triangulation of findings across different data sources and methodological approaches, enhancing the validity and reliability of the research outcomes.

The research design incorporates both cross-sectional and longitudinal elements, examining current social media practices while also tracing the evolution of digital communication strategies over time. This temporal dimension is crucial for understanding how political parties adapt their strategies in response to changing technological capabilities and political contexts.

### 4.2 Qualitative Research Methods

#### 4.2.1 In-depth Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders across the Indian political landscape, including political party leaders, social media strategists, communication directors, and digital campaign managers. The interview sample included representatives from major national parties as well as regional parties to ensure comprehensive coverage of different political contexts and strategic approaches.

The interview protocol was designed to explore several key themes: the evolution of social media strategy within political parties, decision-making processes for digital communication, challenges and opportunities in social media engagement, and assessments of effectiveness and impact. Interviews were conducted in person and via video conferencing, with sessions typically lasting 60-90 minutes.

#### 4.2.2 Content Analysis

A systematic content analysis was conducted on social media posts from major Indian political parties across multiple platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. The analysis covered a 12-month period and included both quantitative coding of post characteristics and qualitative analysis of messaging strategies and framing techniques.

The coding framework included categories such as post type (text, image, video), topic focus (policy, campaign, personal), engagement strategy (informational, mobilizing, persuasive), and target audience (general public, party members, specific demographics). Intercoder reliability was established through multiple rounds of coding and discussion among research team members.

#### 4.2.3 Case Studies

Detailed case studies were developed for selected political parties representing different ideological positions, organizational structures, and regional contexts. These case studies examined the integration of social media strategies with broader communication and organizational goals, providing in-depth insights into how different parties approach digital engagement.

### 4.3 Quantitative Research Methods

#### 4.3.1 Survey Research

A comprehensive survey was administered to a representative sample of Indian social media users to assess public perceptions of political parties' social media activities, engagement patterns with political content, and the influence of social media on political attitudes and behaviors. The survey employed a multi-stage sampling design to ensure representation across demographic and geographic categories.

The survey instrument included questions about social media usage patterns, exposure to political content, trust in different information sources, and perceived effectiveness of political parties' digital communication. Likert scales were used to measure attitudes and perceptions, while behavioral questions captured engagement patterns and information-seeking behaviors.

#### 4.3.2 Social Media Analytics

Quantitative data was collected on political parties' social media performance across multiple platforms, including metrics such as follower counts, engagement rates, content reach, and audience demographics. This data was analyzed to identify trends over time and differences between parties and platforms.

Advanced analytics tools were employed to track the virality of political content, identify influential users and content, and analyze the spread of information across social networks. Network analysis techniques were used to map the structure of political communication networks and identify key nodes of influence.

#### 4.4 Comparative Analysis Framework

The research employed a systematic comparative framework to analyze differences and similarities across political parties, social media platforms, and temporal periods. This comparative approach enables identification of best practices, common challenges, and factors that contribute to effective social media communication strategies.

#### 4.5 Ethical Considerations

The research adhered to strict ethical guidelines, including obtaining informed consent from all interview participants, protecting the privacy and confidentiality of research subjects, and ensuring that data collection methods complied with platform terms of service and relevant privacy regulations. All research activities were reviewed and approved by the institutional ethics committee.

### 5. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

#### 5.1 Communication Strategies on Social Media

The analysis of communication strategies reveals significant variation in how different Indian political parties approach social media platforms. Major national parties have developed sophisticated, multi-platform strategies that integrate social media with traditional campaign activities, while smaller regional parties often focus their efforts on specific platforms or audiences.

##### 5.1.1 Content Strategy and Messaging

Political parties employ diverse content strategies across social media platforms, with most parties adapting their messaging to suit the characteristics and audience expectations of each platform. Twitter is primarily used for real-time commentary and rapid response to political developments, while Facebook serves as a platform for longer-form content and community building. Instagram and YouTube are increasingly important for visual storytelling and reaching younger demographics.

The content analysis reveals that political parties use a combination of informational, persuasive, and mobilizing content, with the balance varying based on the political context and strategic objectives. During election periods, mobilizing content increases significantly, while between elections, parties focus more on informational content about policy positions and party activities.

Messaging strategies demonstrate sophisticated understanding of audience segmentation, with parties tailoring content for different demographic groups, geographic regions, and political contexts. The use of regional languages and culturally relevant content has become increasingly important as parties seek to connect with diverse constituencies across India's linguistic landscape.

##### 5.1.2 Visual Communication and Multimedia

The analysis reveals the growing importance of visual communication in political social media strategies. Political parties have invested heavily in graphic design capabilities and video production to create engaging visual content that stands out in crowded social media feeds. The use of infographics, memes, and short-form videos has become standard practice across major parties.

Live streaming has emerged as a particularly important tool for political communication, enabling parties to broadcast events, speeches, and interactive sessions directly to their social media audiences. This real-time communication capability has transformed how political parties engage with their constituencies and respond to developing political situations.

#### 5.2 Member Engagement Practices

Social media has fundamentally transformed how political parties engage with their members, creating new opportunities for participation and involvement while also presenting challenges for maintaining coherent messaging and organizational discipline.

##### 5.2.1 Digital Membership and Community Building

Political parties have developed sophisticated approaches to building and maintaining online communities of supporters and members. These digital communities often extend beyond formal party membership to include sympathizers, activists, and engaged citizens who participate in party-related discussions and activities.

The research reveals that successful digital community building requires consistent engagement, responsive communication, and the creation of opportunities for meaningful participation. Parties that have been most successful in building online communities have invested in dedicated social media teams and have developed clear protocols for engaging with community members.

##### 5.2.2 Mobilization and Activation

Social media platforms have become crucial tools for political mobilization, enabling parties to rapidly organize events, coordinate campaign activities, and mobilize supporters for both online and offline political actions. The ability to reach large numbers of supporters quickly and efficiently has transformed how political parties approach grassroots organizing.

The analysis shows that effective mobilization strategies combine social media outreach with traditional organizing methods, using digital platforms to supplement rather than replace face-to-face organizing. The most successful mobilization efforts leverage social media's networking effects to encourage peer-to-peer recruitment and engagement.

#### 5.3 Public Perception and Influence

The impact of social media on public perception of political parties is complex and multifaceted, involving both direct effects through exposure to party-generated content and indirect effects through social influence and peer networks.

##### 5.3.1 Perception Formation and Maintenance

The research reveals that social media has become a crucial factor in how the public forms and maintains perceptions of political parties. The immediate and unfiltered nature of social media communication allows parties to shape public perceptions directly, but it also creates risks when communication strategies are poorly executed or when parties fail to respond effectively to crises.

Public perception is influenced not only by official party communications but also by the broader ecosystem of political discourse on social media platforms. User-generated content, comments, and shares contribute to the overall perception of political parties, creating both opportunities and challenges for reputation management.

##### 5.3.2 Influence of Social Media Influencers

The role of social media influencers in shaping public perception of political parties has become increasingly important. These influencers, who may or may not be formally affiliated with political parties, have significant reach and influence over their followers' political attitudes and behaviors.

Political parties have developed various strategies for engaging with influencers, ranging from formal partnerships and sponsorships to more subtle forms of relationship building. The effectiveness of these strategies varies significantly based on the authenticity of the relationship and the alignment between the influencer's personal brand and the party's messaging.

#### **5.4 Platform-Specific Strategies**

The analysis reveals that successful political parties have developed platform-specific strategies that leverage the unique characteristics and audience expectations of each social media platform.

##### **5.4.1 Facebook: Community Building and Detailed Engagement**

Facebook serves as the primary platform for building and maintaining political communities, with parties using Facebook groups, pages, and events to create spaces for sustained engagement with supporters. The platform's algorithm favors content that generates high engagement, encouraging parties to create content that sparks discussion and interaction.

The longer-form content capabilities of Facebook allow parties to provide detailed explanations of policy positions and to engage in more nuanced political discussions. However, the platform's emphasis on engagement can also amplify controversial content and contribute to polarization.

##### **5.4.2 Twitter: Real-Time Communication and News Cycle Management**

Twitter's real-time nature makes it the preferred platform for rapid response to political developments and for participating in ongoing political conversations. Political parties use Twitter to provide immediate commentary on breaking news, to engage with journalists and political commentators, and to set the agenda for political discussions.

The character limit and fast-paced nature of Twitter require parties to develop concise, impactful messaging strategies. The platform's trending topics and hashtag features provide opportunities for parties to amplify their messages and participate in broader conversations.

##### **5.4.3 Instagram and YouTube: Visual Storytelling and Demographic Targeting**

Instagram and YouTube have become increasingly important for reaching younger demographics and for visual storytelling. These platforms allow parties to showcase their leaders' personalities, to provide behind-the-scenes glimpses of political life, and to create engaging visual content that communicates complex political messages.

The visual nature of these platforms requires parties to invest in high-quality content production and to develop sophisticated visual communication strategies. The success of content on these platforms depends heavily on production values and creative execution.

#### **5.5 Comparative Analysis Across Parties**

The comparative analysis reveals significant differences in how different political parties approach social media communication, reflecting variations in organizational capacity, strategic priorities, and target audiences.

##### **5.5.1 Resource Allocation and Professional Capacity**

Major national parties have invested heavily in professional social media teams and sophisticated digital infrastructure, while smaller parties often rely on volunteers and limited resources. This resource disparity creates significant advantages for well-funded parties in terms of content production quality, response speed, and strategic sophistication.

The analysis shows that resource constraints can be partially overcome through creative content strategies and authentic engagement, but that sustained success on social media requires significant investment in professional capacity and technological infrastructure.

##### **5.5.2 Strategic Priorities and Messaging Focus**

Different parties demonstrate varying strategic priorities in their social media communication, with some focusing primarily on electoral mobilization while others emphasize policy communication and issue advocacy. These strategic differences reflect broader organizational goals and political contexts.

The analysis reveals that parties with clear strategic priorities and consistent messaging tend to be more successful in building engaged online communities and achieving their communication objectives. Parties that attempt to address all issues and audiences simultaneously often struggle to develop coherent social media strategies.

## **6. DISCUSSION**

### **6.1 Implications for Political Communication Theory**

The findings of this research have important implications for understanding political communication in the digital age. The evidence suggests that social media has fundamentally altered the dynamics of political communication, creating new opportunities for direct communication between political actors and citizens while also introducing new challenges related to information quality, polarization, and algorithmic mediation.

The traditional gatekeeping role of mass media has been significantly diminished in the social media environment, with political parties now able to communicate directly with their audiences without intermediation. This direct communication capability has been particularly important for smaller parties and new political movements that previously faced barriers to accessing traditional media coverage.

However, the research also reveals that the apparent democratization of political communication through social media is constrained by algorithmic systems that determine content visibility and by the network effects that advantage actors with existing large followings. These constraints mean that success on social media platforms requires both strategic sophistication and significant resource investment.

### **6.2 Strategic Implications for Political Parties**

The research findings suggest several strategic implications for political parties seeking to leverage social media effectively. First, successful social media communication requires platform-specific strategies that account for the unique characteristics and audience expectations of each platform. Parties that attempt to use identical content across all platforms tend to be less successful than those that tailor their approach to each platform's strengths and limitations.

Second, authentic engagement and community building are more effective than purely promotional approaches to social media communication. Parties that invest in building genuine relationships with their online communities tend to achieve higher levels of engagement and more positive public perceptions than those that use social media primarily for one-way communication.

Third, the integration of social media strategies with broader communication and organizational goals is crucial for success. Social media should not be treated as a separate communication channel but rather as an integral component of overall political strategy that reinforces and amplifies other communication efforts.

### **6.3 Challenges and Limitations**

The research identifies several significant challenges that political parties face in leveraging social media effectively. The rapid pace of technological change means that strategies that are effective today may become obsolete quickly, requiring parties to continuously adapt and evolve their approaches.

The spread of misinformation and disinformation on social media platforms presents particular challenges for political parties, which must balance the desire for rapid response with the need for accuracy and credibility. The viral nature of social media content means that errors or poorly considered communications can have significant negative consequences.

The polarizing effects of social media present challenges for parties seeking to build broad coalitions and appeal to diverse constituencies. The algorithmic systems that govern content visibility on social media platforms often favor controversial or emotionally charged content, potentially encouraging polarization and conflict.

### **6.4 Broader Implications for Democratic Governance**

The findings of this research have broader implications for understanding the health and functioning of democratic governance in the digital age. The evidence suggests that social media has both democratizing and polarizing effects on political discourse, creating new opportunities for political participation while also contributing to the fragmentation of public discourse.

The role of social media in political communication has implications for issues such as political accountability, transparency, and the quality of democratic deliberation. The direct communication capabilities of social media can enhance transparency by allowing political actors to communicate directly with citizens, but they can also reduce accountability by enabling politicians to bypass traditional media scrutiny.

The research suggests that the impact of social media on democratic governance depends significantly on how political actors choose to use these platforms and on the regulatory and normative frameworks that govern their use. The development of appropriate governance frameworks for social media in the political context remains an ongoing challenge for democratic societies.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This comprehensive analysis of social media's impact on Indian political parties reveals a complex and evolving landscape where digital communication has become integral to political strategy and democratic participation. The research demonstrates that social media platforms have fundamentally transformed how political parties communicate with their constituencies, engage with their members, and shape public perception, while also introducing new challenges and opportunities for democratic governance.

### **7.1 Key Findings**

The research establishes several key findings that contribute to our understanding of digital political communication in the Indian context. First, political parties have developed sophisticated, multi-platform strategies that leverage the unique characteristics of different social media platforms to achieve specific communication objectives. These strategies demonstrate a nuanced understanding of audience segmentation, platform algorithms, and content optimization techniques.

Second, social media has become a crucial tool for member engagement and political mobilization, enabling parties to build and maintain online communities that extend beyond traditional party membership structures. The most successful parties have invested in dedicated social media teams and have developed systematic approaches to community building and engagement.

Third, the impact of social media on public perception is multifaceted and mediated by various factors including content quality, authenticity, and the broader ecosystem of political discourse on digital platforms. The research reveals that success in shaping public perception requires sustained engagement, consistent messaging, and strategic relationship building with influencers and opinion leaders.

### **7.2 Theoretical Contributions**

This research makes several important theoretical contributions to the field of political communication studies. The adaptation of traditional political communication theories to the digital context provides new insights into how agenda-setting, gatekeeping, and influence processes operate in the social media environment. The research demonstrates that while fundamental principles of political communication remain relevant, their application in the digital context requires significant theoretical refinement.

The comparative analysis across different political parties provides important insights into how organizational factors, resource constraints, and strategic priorities influence social media communication effectiveness. This analysis contributes to understanding the relationship between political organization and communication strategy in the digital age.

### **7.3 Practical Implications**

The findings have significant practical implications for political practitioners, policymakers, and democratic governance more broadly. For political parties, the research provides evidence-based guidance on effective social media strategies, highlighting the importance of platform-specific approaches, authentic engagement, and strategic integration with broader communication goals.

For policymakers, the research raises important questions about the regulation of political communication on social media platforms, the need for transparency in digital political advertising, and the challenges of ensuring the integrity of democratic discourse in the digital age. The findings suggest that effective governance of social media in the political context requires careful balance between enabling democratic participation and preventing manipulation and abuse.

### **7.4 Final Reflections**

This research has several limitations that should be acknowledged. The rapidly evolving nature of social media technology means that some findings may become outdated quickly. The research focuses primarily on major political parties and may not fully capture the experiences of smaller parties or new political movements.

Future research should examine the long-term effects of social media on political behavior and democratic governance, investigate the role of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and virtual reality in political communication, and explore the development of effective governance frameworks for digital political communication.

## 7.5 Final Reflections

The digital transformation of political communication in India represents a fundamental shift in how democracy operates in the contemporary world. While social media platforms provide unprecedented opportunities for political participation and engagement, they also present new challenges for maintaining the quality and integrity of democratic discourse.

The success of digital political communication ultimately depends on the choices made by political actors, technology companies, and citizens themselves. The development of responsible and effective approaches to social media use in the political context requires ongoing collaboration between these stakeholders and continued research into the evolving relationship between technology and democracy.

As India continues to navigate its digital transformation, the lessons learned from this research can inform efforts to harness the democratizing potential of social media while mitigating its risks. The future of Indian democracy will be significantly shaped by how successfully political actors and institutions adapt to the opportunities and challenges presented by the digital age.

### Acknowledgment

The preferred spelling of the word “acknowledgment” in American English is without an “e” after the “g”. Avoid the stilted expression, “One of us (R.B.G.) thanks...”

Instead, try “R.B.G. thanks”. Put applicable sponsor acknowledgments here; DONOT place them on the first page of your paper or as a footnote.

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