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Social Media and Electoral Dynamics: Insights from the 2025 Delhi Polls

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Introduction

Social media has been recognised as one of the most effective means of communication. It is believed that the fourth estate of democracy plays a vital Function in the current environment. Social media and other communication tools are expanding rapidly in the twenty-first century. Social networking is becoming more beneficial in all areas of society. Social media is seen in the political sphere as a valuable source of publicity. The phrase "social media" describes the vast array of web-based and mobile-related services that enable users to join online groups, contribute to user-generated content, and participate in online debates. Multiple online service types frequently linked to social media (or "web 2.0") include media-sharing websites, blogs, wikis, social networking sites, and status-update services. The election campaigns now have a new dimension because of new media technology. Various political parties have set up their blogs, websites, and profiles on Facebook and Twitter. They read and watch fresh media items regularly. Also, the materials are updated frequently. Social media refers to platforms like social networking sites and microblogs that facilitate sharing information, ideas, private messages, and other content, including videos. In contrast, social media concentrates on establishing an audience through social networking sites and related platforms, while social media is typically thought to involve individuals creating communities among themselves. People's reactions to information flow in various domains are being altered by social media, which is now a potent instrument for social expression. Users access social media via web apps or customised apps on mobile devices. User-generated or self-assured material can be shared, co-created, discussed, and altered by people, groups, and organisations via these interactive platforms. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, X (formerly Twitter), and others have led to increased public participation in politics. Boyd and Ellison (2007) define social media networking sites as internet-based applications which allow users to develop a social profile within a closed group or have a list of users who are known by others and can view their friend list and that of others within the system or group. This is just a model that new media follow. They include YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and blogs. Social media has recently significantly influenced political campaigns in India, which has changed the electoral scene significantly. Social networking sites' emergence as significant platforms for political discourse and the widespread usage of digital technologies have been the primary forces behind this shift. Social media's rapid nature and reach have made it possible for political parties and their leaders to communicate with the public more successfully. To influence public opinion, they have used targeted advertising and viral content. Despite increasing voter engagement and participation, social media campaigns have sparked concerns about the well-being of democracy and election integrity.Social networking has become a powerful tool for idea sharing. Users of social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter can share ratings, comments, and opinions. Official Twitter accounts are controlled by all political parties and their members worldwide, and they have millions of followers. They hope to connect with young individuals who might be supporters by using this platform. People in India are becoming more outspoken in their criticism or praise of any political move due to the rise in Twitter and Facebook users throughout the crisis. In Indian politics, social media has become an effective instrument that allows candidates and political parties to connect with and sway many voters. Social media's influence in politics has been especially notable, as candidates and political parties use it to engage with the electorate, disseminate their message, and acquire backing. With more than 900 million internet users in India, social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Twitter are an excellent way to connect with and sway many votes. New forms of communication media play a critical role in building and sustaining democracies, societies, and economies worldwide. Social media gives citizens the information necessary to make informed socio-economic and political choices. These new forms of media give voice to women, youths, and marginalised groups, along with their opinions. This new form of communication has more opportunities than the classical mass media. Much of that is derived from the new media, a very open and accessible medium. The new medium lays open an incalculable choice of information. The Internet has proven to be one of the most dynamic phenomena in modern times. Internet-based new forms of communication and information flow have played an essential role in advancing a democratic society. The evolution of social media in India is deeply intertwined with broader socioeconomic, technological, and political developments that have unfolded over the past few decades (Enli & Moe, 2017). While social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp rose to prominence in the early 21st century on a worldwide scale, their influence on Indian politics and society became more noticeable as the country underwent a digital revolution, democracy, and liberalisation. The role of social media in Indian politics became particularly pronounced during electoral campaigns, where political parties and candidates leveraged digital technologies, data analytics, and targeted advertising to reach voters (Saaida, 2023). Candidates could interact with voters, get their opinions, and rally support for important policy issues and campaign themes using social media platforms as virtual campaign arenas. Political parties could reach tech-savvy young people, urban voters, and first-time voters by utilising social media influencers, viral campaigns, and multimedia content. This helped them increase their electoral base and win elections. In India, social media platforms have made grassroots activism, participatory governance, and citizen participation easier. Initiatives like online petitions, Facebook Live sessions, and Twitter town halls allow legislators to gather feedback, listen to public concerns, and improve the

openness of decision-making processes. Social media is used by grassroots activists, civil society organisations, and advocacy groups to plan campaigns, rally supporters, and promote changes to policies on gender equality, human rights, environmental preservation, and social fairness. Political campaigns primarily consist of the concepts that the candidate and the political party wish to convey to the public to win their support and agreement and advance into political power. Digital political campaigning is becoming a topical issue mainly due to the perceived adverse risks it generates (Jaursch, 2020). Social media platforms give politicians direct contact with the public, allowing them to control their messaging and shape political narratives. Political candidates can reach many prospective supporters, amplify the message of their campaign, and promptly respond to criticism or misinformation through social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. However, with over 900 million internet users, India ranked second globally in online market share after China (Tanushree,2023). The nation now boasts over 600 million new media users (Basuroy, 2023). Young people communicate on various new media platforms, including Instagram, Koo, Share Chat, Telegram, Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, and X (previously Twitter). Politicians employ a variety of social media platforms to interact with people and encourage them to cast their ballots. Consequently, the extensive usage of Web 2.0 technology has facilitated communication with various audiences, such as social activists, political parties, and individual leaders. In a multiparty system like India, the election campaign has been conducted in a very dynamic manner. Following the growth and diversification of media platforms, particularly the introduction and widespread use of social media platforms in both urban and rural regions of the nation, the form and style of campaigning have been expanding and changing. Election campaigns have been transformed by this shift from the traditional style to a digital one. This time, everyone's eyes will also be on new media. Undoubtedly, digital media played an influential role in the recent elections in India, as fifty per cent of the voters were frequent mobile and internet users (Mehta, 2019). If we look at the figures, the number of followers on the BJP's Delhi Facebook page is 3.4 million. At the same time, INC Delhi has 613k followers. The number of Aam Aadmi Party AAP Facebook page is 1.9 million. The number of X (formerly Twitter) followers of the BJP Delhi is 1.4 million, while the number of X (formerly Twitter) followers of the INC Delhi is 332k. Moreover, the number of X (formerly Twitter) followers of the Aam Aadmi Party is 422k. The number of BJP Delhi Instagram followers is 1.1 million. At the same time, INC Delhi's Instagram followers are 209k. Moreover, the Aam Aadmi Party's Instagram followers are 183k. Instagram and WhatsApp will instead play a critical role in spreading the message of political parties. Parties will also tap influencers across categories to reach the debutant electorate. Parties now leverage digital influencers and trends like memes and songs to influence youth voters subtly (Mittal, Apoorva,2023).

Electoral Dynamics in Delhi Assembly Elections (2025)

Delhi Assembly elections marked a significant shift towards digital campaigning, with major political parties—particularly the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP), and Indian National Congress (INC)—leveraging social media platforms to engage with voters effectively. Influenced by these digital interactions, the rise in voter turnout indicates a transformation in how campaigns are conducted, focusing on real-time communication and grassroots involvement. Social media has enabled politicians to access voters directly, reshaping political narratives and engagement strategies while introducing concerns about manipulation and micro-targeting. Ultimately, these elections illustrated how new media could alter the political landscape, driving voter participation and affecting electoral outcomes significantly, thus setting a precedent for future political tactics in India. Delhi Assembly elections are slated for 5 February 2025. The polls will be held in a single phase to elect 70 Members of the Legislative Assembly. The votes will be counted, and the outcomes will be declared on 8 February 2025. The 2025 Delhi Assembly elections were marked by a significant triangular battle between the incumbent Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), the resurgent Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP), and the Indian National Congress, each vying for dominance in the capital complex political landscape. Numerous social media sites have become much more prominent throughout this election. The BJP, INC, and AAP are among the major political parties increasingly using social media platforms to interact and connect with supporters. The BJP has a strong presence on several social media platforms, including its leader, Narendra Modi. Through fierce confrontations with their rivals, political leaders use various strategies to influence voters on social media. As a crucial instrument for political involvement and communication, social media has been strategically employed by the Indian National Congress (INC). Under the leadership of notable individuals such as Rahul Gandhi, the party has prioritised building relationships with its supporters and spreading its message on social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and X. Instead of lagging, Arvind Kejriwal and the Aam Aadmi Party deliberately maintain a strong social media presence to engage and connect with both its fans and a wider audience. The major political parties have used social media platforms more frequently and consistently over the past few years. During the elections, the main political parties—BJP, INC, and AAP—have skilfully used social media platforms to launch their campaigns. The parties are using these platforms to highlight their achievements and the deficiencies of their opponents. The 2025 Delhi Assembly elections demonstrated how Indian politics are dynamic and how incumbent administrations' performance, voter priorities, and successful campaigns can significantly change election results. This election changes the political landscape in Delhi and establishes the parameters for future political tactics in Indian cities. In the Assembly elections, Delhi's voter turnout was 60.42%. Based on data released publicly by the Election Commission of India (ECI). Out of the eleven districts, North East Delhi had the highest voter turnout (66.25%), while South East Delhi had the lowest (56.16%). Additional district-specific turnout numbers are as follows: New Delhi district (57.13%), East Delhi (62.37%), Shahdara (63.94%), Central Delhi (59.09%), North Delhi (59.55%), North West Delhi (60.07%), South Delhi (58.16%), South West Delhi (61.07%), and West Delhi (60.76%). /In the 2025 Delhi Assembly election, the Congress received 6.36% of the vote, the AAP 43.55%, and the BJP 45.76%. AAP has only won 22 seats this time, losing almost 40 seats for a 10% decline in vote percentage, compared to their 62 seats and 53.57% vote share in 2020. In contrast, the BJP, which held 38.51% of the vote in 2020, increased its vote share by more than 7% and won 40 seats. Another important factor in the AAP's downfall was Congress, which increased its vote share from 4.26% to 6.36%, significantly eroding the party's support. There are over 1.56 crore voters in Delhi who can cast their ballots at 13,766 polling places. There are 83.76 lakh male voters, 72.36 lakh female voters, and 1,261 third-gender voters.

Total vote	Male voters	Female voters
1.56 crore	83.76 lakh	72.36 lakh

The number of Electors marked as PwD, Third Gender and Senior Citizen (85+) in the NCT of Delhi is:

Name of UT	Total PwD Electors	Total Third Gender	Total Senior Citizens (85+)
NCT of Delhi	79,436	1,261	1,09,941

The data was directly taken from the *Election Commission of India*, dated March 2025.

Social Media's Impact on the Indian Elections

The digital era has changed political campaigns globally, and India is no different. With the emergence of social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp, political leaders' interactions with voters have changed. In a nation where more than 700 million people use the internet, social media has become a powerful medium for mass communication. The political environment in India is changing, with candidates and political parties incorporating social media digital campaigns as a crucial component of their election plans. The usage of social media by Indian politicians for election campaigns has significantly increased since the 2014 general elections. The election campaigns now have a new dimension due to new media technology. Numerous political parties have set up their blogs, websites, and profiles on Facebook and Twitter. They read and watch fresh media items regularly. Also, the contents are updated frequently. A few political figures answer questions from members of the public and their cadres. They are employing the election campaign tools with enthusiasm. Their ability to reach voters has greatly benefited from this paradigm shift. Leaders and political parties are enjoying the growth of online communication and travel. Social media has significantly impacted how elections are conducted globally, influencing how politicians engage with voters, how information is shared, and how campaigns are managed. One of its most obvious benefits is the rise in voter turnout made possible by platforms that provide politicians direct access to voters and facilitate interactive engagement. However, these techniques have also sparked concerns about possible manipulation and microtargeting. Social media has redefined political engagement, enabling leaders to communicate with citizens directly. Political messaging is no longer constrained by traditional media such as television or print; real-time updates, tweets, posts, and viral content are changing the political discourse. K. George (2019)

India's 2024 election will be a significant turning point as social media influences political narratives. The active participation of educated youth in this election is notable, as they increasingly seek information and opinions from social media influencers. The political scene has become diversified and contentious due to social media filling the void left by traditional media's abdication of its duty. Political narratives largely shape public perceptions of political events, personalities, and ideologies. Although there are many ways to create these stories, online interactions greatly influence the social media age. Participants in politics and social media platforms have become more and more popular for crafting and spreading messages from state authorities to grassroots movements. These tales' form significantly impacts public opinion and political discussions. Social media has become increasingly popular among India's younger generation in the current culture. For the younger generation, it enables them to interact, exchange information, communicate, and message one another at a distance. Despite geographical restrictions and disparities, social media unites people across the nation. The effects of globalisation, media convergence, and time and space compression have made the nation more interconnected. The "Younger Generation" refers to the young people in the country who are growing up with modern communication technology. Social media is currently used by 84% of Internet users in India. Approximately 110 million Indians use social media. One of the most notable features of social media's influence in Indian elections is how it affects voters differently in urban and rural areas. Social media sites like Facebook and Twitter have witnessed intense interaction in urban regions, particularly among the younger, tech-savvy population. Political campaigns have depended more on these platforms to communicate information, address controversies, and plan events. Urban voters frequently use these platforms with greater levels of education and digital literacy to interact with political content critically. Major political parties have used social media platforms more frequently and steadily over the past few years. Throughout the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the main political parties—the BJP, INC, and AAP have skilfully utilised social media platforms to carry out their campaign operations. The parties use these platforms to highlight their achievements and the weaknesses of their opponents. By aggressively engaging a diverse spectrum of social media celebrities, including comedians, bhajan singers, food vloggers, dancers, and influencers, regardless of their political affiliations, the BJP, in particular, is broadening its outreach strategy for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

In India, the increasing prevalence of social media celebrities vying for election campaigns is sparking political discourse. With a population exceeding 1.42 billion, India boasts the highest number of internet consumers globally, exceeding 800 million (Firstpost, 2024). Social media algorithms significantly amplify certain political narratives. High-engagement content—likes, shares, and comments—is given preference on social media sites like Facebook and YouTube. Because of this, politically charged and sensational information tends to be more visible than factual or well-reasoned reporting. This amplification effect can skew political narratives by elevating conspiracy theories, extreme opinions, or false information, often at the expense of more complex or impartial viewpoints. Social media has changed the political landscape and benefited governments, citizens, and politicians in several ways. From enabling real-time communication and mobilisation to providing crucial insights and feedback, social media has completely changed how we engage with politics and the government.

New Media to Influence the Young Voters

Forget about print and television ads. Forget about door-to-door campaigns, pad yantras, corner gatherings, banners, billboards, car rallies, and general assemblies. These are also traditional, making them uninteresting propaganda for young Indian voters. The conflict and the battle for votes in the 2014 general election occurred online through social media and on the streets, roads, and other locations. For the first time, political parties, candidates, and campaign managers attempted to attract young Indian voters by using social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. It is a smart way to connect with Indian youngsters via smartphone access. India is young because 66% of its population is under 35. In addition to using social media once or twice daily, they use their phones minute by minute. Young Indians' use of smartphones is increasing. The pleasure of using new media has grown along with the speed of 5G technology. Contaminated Younger people on social media have the same number of followers. In any event, more people in India own mobile phones than there are voters overall. The 2008 US presidential campaign of Barack Obama is regarded as the first time social media usage significantly influenced the outcome. In India, the era of political campaigning began in 2014. "The 2014 general election in India saw 118, the highest voter turnout in the country's history, with 554 million people exercising to elect the 16th Lok Sabha." Accusations of corruption and inaction against the Indian National Congress (INC)-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government failed to counter anti-incumbency sentiment. About 65% of India's population is under 35. Therefore, the country's youth were particularly eager for change. Social Media analytics, citizen volunteer groups, non-resident Indians, and offline campaigners joined forces to support their preferred political party (Mahapatra, S., 2019).

The "New Media" or "Social Media" elections were other names for the 2014 Lok Sabha election. All political parties, including the BJP, launched intensive social media efforts. Apart from the usual campaign for office, this was a novel form of propaganda disseminated via social media and political party websites. Social networking sites are becoming more widely used due to rising sales of various devices, including smartphones, PCs, laptops, and tablets and improved internet connectivity. " Politicians and ministries also established their Social Media teams, each with a Social Media manager to collect and post images from rallies or events (Murali, V.,2019)

BJP's Delhi Social Media Tactics: 2025 Assembly Election Insights

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), established in 1980, is the most significant political party in the world. It is currently the leading party in the Indian government's NDA. On many well-known Indian social media sites, the BJP is seen as an influential leader, and they adeptly leverage the potential of digital communication to win over voters and spread their message. The BJP's multifaceted strategy includes engaging well-known personalities from different fields, such as musicians, comedians, and vloggers, with social media followings.

In India, social media usage for political reasons has grown since 2012. The start of the 2014 Lok Sabha election has caused it to rise even further. Throughout the election process, political parties extensively used social media channels. On social media, the BJP was leading the way during the elections. The party outperformed all other political parties and exploited social media well. Digital media is becoming more routinised for campaigning and political communication in India. It is stated that social media played a vital role in the massive victory of the BJP in the 2014 election. (Rao, 2020). The BJP also benefited from the innovative and successful use of social media in the 2019 Lok Sabha election. Seeing social media's ability to draw in voters, leaders of other political parties also created social media accounts.

Various political parties have since kept up their websites and social media profiles to stay in touch with voters. Different political parties have different groups on Facebook and WhatsApp. They establish and sustain these groups to influence public opinion and attract voters' attention. Additionally, fraudulent and polarising content is being disseminated via social media. WhatsApp tried to prevent the disinformation campaign, but during the 2019 election, the platform was extensively abused. As a result, different political parties were influencing public opinion using WhatsApp groups. The widespread application of the 2019 Lok Sabha election was known as the "WhatsApp Elections," which showed how WhatsApp might sway political messages and how the platform disseminated disinformation during elections. Twitter, a microblogging site, has played an essential role in the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been using Twitter since 2009 when he was the chief minister of Gujarat (Chaturvedi, 2020). Despite that, the BJP was still ahead of all the other parties at the national level (Rao, 2019). Narendra Modi is a dominant force on Twitter. He even used Twitter to engage with celebrities, like taking selfies and performing community action (Pal, Chandra, and Vydiswaran 2016).

Narendra Modi's personal Facebook profile had 16 million likes when he was appointed prime minister of India, the second-highest number of any political figure worldwide. According to an NDTV (2014) estimate, 227 million posts, comments, and conversations have been made by 29 million Indians after the 2014 elections were announced till they were over. This amounts to two-thirds of all active Facebook users, and over 13 million citizens have referenced Modi in their Facebook posts. The BJP IT cells were active on social media during the 2014, 2019, and 2024 Lok Sabha elections. BJP IT cells ran automated internet marketing efforts during the 2014 election, where anyone who tweeted a specific hashtag would receive a customised message from Modi. On Facebook and Twitter, the BJP also ran a Yuva SMS quiz in which participants had to reply via SMS. Social media has been used by the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) as a vital electioneering tactic for many years. The party's digital strategy for the 2025 Delhi Assembly Elections concentrated on data-driven targeting, widespread outreach, and narrative management to influence public opinion and increase electoral accomplishments.

BJP throughout the election on YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram

The political campaigns in Delhi have changed dramatically in the last ten years. Digital channels have replaced more conventional approaches like door-to-door canvassing and rallies. Increased smartphone use, internet penetration, and public involvement with social media platforms have all contributed to this development. Acknowledging these patterns, political parties have adjusted their tactics to capitalise on the potential of digital media. Young people communicate on various new media platforms, including Instagram, Koo, Share Chat, Telegram, Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, and X (previously Twitter). Politicians use social media platforms to interact with people and encourage them to cast their ballots. Consequently, the extensive usage of Web 2.0 technology has facilitated communication with various audiences, such as social activists, political parties, and individual leaders. In

order to predict election outcomes, however, many organisations are currently utilising data from social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus, and others. During elections, people are supposed to use these social media platforms to voice their thoughts about their political representatives. Concurrently, in-depth structural network and qualitative content analysis will yield results comparable to traditional election polling. Instead, WhatsApp and Instagram will promote political parties' messages. To target first-time voters, parties will also use influencers from various fields. These days, parties use digital influencers. Using songs and memes to sway young people quietly. During the 2024 Lok Sabha election, the BJP used Facebook to stream live public rallies featuring Amit Shah and Narendra Modi. In his speeches, PM Modi criticised the Delhi government and the AAP leadership, referring to the CM's home renovations with phrases like "AAP-da" (disaster) and "sheesh mahal" (glass palace), but he did not specifically name Kejriwal. He also let the local authorities handle it rather than explicitly bringing up contentious agendas. Over 5 million WhatsApp groups are devoted to exchanging election-related information (Madhukalya, 2024). The BJP's IT unit, renowned for its efficiency within the party, oversees these groups. Due to their growing importance, the party has shifted its attention to YouTube and Instagram. Currently, two of the BJP's main priorities are YouTube, which serves a wide age range from 18 to 80 years old and is best known for having a younger user base than other platforms. The BJP has also shown that it is the first political party in India to run ads worth more than 100 crore rupees on search engines like YouTube and Google Titan. As of March 2025, BJP Delhi had 3.4 million Facebook followers. Facebook is the platform that the party uses to interact with voters nationwide. The party exposes the BJP's flaws and strongly criticises the party on its Facebook page. Delhi's BJP has 1.4 million followers on X. For the BJP to interact with its supporters, disseminate political news, and issue remarks, X provides an excellent platform. The BJP Delhi has 13.7k YouTube subscribers as of March 2025. The BJP uses YouTube to share political videos, speeches, rallies, and other messages. The party is highlighting its achievements and the projects it has started. The BJP employed the hashtags #BJP4Development and #ModiHaiToMumkinhai. The Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) used several hashtags on Twitter to spread their campaign messaging in the 2025 Delhi Assembly elections. Among these, #JanshaktiSarvopar and #ViksitBharat stood out due to their emphasis on the strength of the people and an advanced India.

The BJP's IT unit, renowned for its efficiency within the party, oversees these groups. Due to their growing importance, the party has shifted its attention to YouTube and Instagram. Instagram, which is best recognised for having a younger user base in comparison to other platforms, and YouTube, which caters to a broad age range ranging from 18 to 80 years old, are currently two of the most important foci for the BJP (Paliwal, 2024). The information technology cell of the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) prioritises the rate at which they can disseminate information, in addition to the quantity and quality of the material. Although the BJP boasts a leading digital drive that has over 109.7 per cent reach (Paliwal, 2024)

This table displays the BJP's Delhi followers and subscribers across multiple social media networks.

Party	Platform	Followers / Subscribers
BJP	Facebook	3.4 million
BJP	Twitter	1.4 million
BJP	Instagram	1.1 million

The data was directly taken from the official social media handles of the BJP Delhi, dated March 2025.

Congress: Unlocking Its Digital Potential and Campaign Strategy

Democracy is incomplete without political parties because these are the principal agents that aggregate public opinions and represent those opinions in the political decision-making process through representatives (Min & Golden, 2014). Political parties field candidates in elections and provide the electorate with political options. Since our system is federal, both national and state elections are held. In the Indian political system, the states have been given a significant role, which makes state-level elections crucial. Political parties are aware of the growing impact that new media has on young people. For this reason, it was initially employed to engage new voters during the elections. It was employed as part of a specific plan to win over all New Media consumers. Political parties now use Facebook and WhatsApp, and election campaigns use Twitter, web ads, blogs, emails, and other new media platforms.

India's oldest political party is the Indian National Congress. The Congress party's electoral symbol is "the hand." Mallika Arjun Kharge is the party's current president. On December 28, 1885, the INC was founded at Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College in Bombay. Structure. Vyomesh Chandra Banerjee and A.O. Hume were elected the first presidents. Congress is portrayed as a party that protects Indian democracy and its secular ideals while also representing the interests of religious minorities, unlike the INC's online political messaging. The Congress Party has had trouble connecting with the hopes and worries of the younger generation. Young people increasingly seek dynamic and transformative leadership and ideas, and they find it challenging to connect with them. It has been difficult for the Congress Party to convince voters of its accomplishments and policies. It has frequently been seen as lacking a strong communication strategy and has had difficulty refuting the narrative of its political rivals. The Congress Party has experienced problems with its grassroots presence and organisational strength. It has had difficulty efficiently mobilising workers, especially at the local level, and revitalising its party structure. For Congress, Rahul Gandhi, and the party's social media presence, the Bharat Jodo Yatra marked a turning point. During the Bharat Jodo Yatra, which began in September 2022, Rahul Gandhi walked more than 4,000 kilometres from Kanyakumari to Kashmir to comprehend the problems of ordinary people. Additionally, 137 non-political organisations joined the Congress during Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra. Tribal rights organisations from various states and women's rights organisations were among them. Many people with creative content skills joined in as well," Kidwai says, adding that Yogendra Yadav and Jairam Ramesh put much effort into creating that connection. "The Bharat Jodo Yatra was crucial to our social media campaigns and messaging success. Using social media to spread our message, we directly connected with the public during the event," Says Shrinate. India Today's examination of data from YouTube, Instagram, and X. demonstrates a significant increase in followers and general engagement for the Congress handles during the 4.5-month-long Bharat Jodo Yatra. In contrast, the youth wing of the

Congress distributed guarantee cards to about 10,000 households in every assembly segment, detailing promises made by Rahul Gandhi during the Bharat Jodo Yatra (Mukherjee, 2024).

The Congress is now continuously dictating the social media narrative, and the BJP is responding. Through its reels and posts, the Congress interacted with voters everywhere. Despite its almost negligible presence in some regions of the nation, the Congress had an advantage thanks to the smartphones in every hand and its social media campaign. Along with changing its social media approach, Congress began discussing people's problems while adding a dash of humour. Additionally, the Congress pushed to overtake the BJP on WhatsApp and became active on Instagram and X. The Congress put in much effort right before the important Delhi Assembly election to build momentum. The Indian National Congress attacks the central and state governments on topics including waste disposal, unemployment, inflation, and pollution during their month-long Dillī Nyāya Yātrā in November (also known as the Delhi Justice March). All seventy assembly constituencies were to be covered by the yatra in four stages. The yatra's first phase, which covered 15 assembly constituencies, began in Rajghat on November 8, 2024, and ended in Shalimar Bagh on November 13. Beginning in Gokulpuri in North East Delhi on November 16 and lasting till November 20, the second part of the yatra covered 16 assembly constituencies. As the primary challenges afflicting Delhi in the second phase, party president Yadav emphasised sanitation and the difficulties encountered by daily wage earners and hawkers. On November 22, the third phase began at Palam village's Valmiki Mandir. The party charged that the AAP state government had neglected to address fundamental issues over the past ten years, including the provision of contaminated water, rising electricity costs, and the protracted wait for ration cards and pensions for recipients. The march came to an end on December 7, 2024. Congress placed a great emphasis on justice for all of these groups, with particular attention to Yuva (youth), Nari (women), Kisan (farmers), Shramik (workers), and Hissedari (equality). Both sides successfully used social media to connect, collaborate with influential people, and develop stories that appealed to young people.

INC Delhi on Facebook, X, and Instagram

During the 2025 Delhi Assembly election campaign, the Indian National Congress (INC) encountered many difficulties, especially when using social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. In contrast to their rivals, particularly the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP), the INC's efforts on digital platforms had less impact despite the growing significance of digital engagement in contemporary political campaigns. The INC's presence on YouTube was relatively quiet. The INC's channel lacked regular content updates, but other parties used the platform for live rallies, policy debates, and voter interaction. Reduced viewing and little subscriber growth were the outcomes of this discrepancy. Although Twitter is a real-time forum for political discussion, the INC's participation statistics were disappointing. The low number of likes, retweets, and comments on their tweets suggests they did not connect with the Twitter audience. The INC's hashtags rarely trended, indicating little viral traction. On the other hand, the BJP and AAP successfully shaped narratives and rallied supporters via Twitter. As of March 2025, INC Delhi has 613k Facebook followers. The party uses Facebook to engage with voters around the nation. The party exposes the BJP's flaws and rebukes the party on its Facebook page. The group uses Facebook to disseminate information about its achievements and previous efforts. INC Delhi has 332k followers on X. X, an excellent medium for the Indian National Congress (INC) to exchange political news, interact with its supporters, and issue announcements. They typically utilise X to promote their rallies and campaigns, share news articles, and express their opinions on various political topics.

Congress leaders increasingly use X as a forum to discuss other significant problems, respond to public concerns, and communicate their national vision. The INC can effectively communicate with the public using X. INC Delhi uses hashtags on Twitter: #VoteForCongress, #AaRahiHaiCongress, #CongressHaiZaroori, and #DelhiWithCongress. As of March 2025, INC Delhi had 209k Instagram followers. Instagram is a powerful visual channel that the Indian National Congress (INC) uses to promote campaigns and engage audiences. Engage, share information, build relationships, and work with influencers. Through the strategic use of Instagram, the political party uses a variety of elements, such as community-driven articles, educational posts, interactive elements, inclusive historical accounts, campaign materials, and behind-the-scenes moments, to educate a diverse audience, build unity among supporters, and shape public opinion on important issues.

Party	Platform	Followers / Subscribers
Congress	Facebook	613k
Congress	Twitter	332k
Congress	Instagram	209k

The data was directly taken from the official social media handles of the Delhi Congress, dated March 2025.

AAP's Social Media Strategy for the 2025 Delhi Assembly Election

Election campaigning in India has recently witnessed a newer campaigning methodology. Rather than banking upon television and print media, political parties in India started to use social media, crowd fundraising, digital rallies and compelling storytelling, which was the campaign strategy in Western democracies (Rajagopal & Rajagopal, 2001). Social media facilitates any registered user's initiating interaction with other users on any issues of interest. Social media also enables registered users to have internet connectivity and the know-how of social media platform usage to participate in two-way or multi-way communication (Guess et al., 2019). Social media is frequently referred to as new media since it enables more focused distribution and instantaneous information dissemination in real-time. Finding a successful applicant requires developing a brand image. Nowadays, it seems evident that social media is being used to develop a brand.

The 2025 Delhi Assembly Elections have been one of the most anticipated political contests in recent years. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) uses a variety of social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and X, to communicate with voters, share policy and events, and rally supporters by answering their messages and comments. News snippets, rally photos, Arvind Kejriwal's video greetings, support, and live sessions from road shows throughout Delhi were all part of the Twitter spread. The party used hashtags around #Jhaaduwale for volunteers and #AAPway for the party's pledges. On the other hand, Facebook used a somewhat different strategy that adhered to the communication strategy described above, with more live video content and vernacular updates.AAP Delhi has 422k X followers as of April 2025. The X platform is used by the party to campaign in 2025. The AAP has 9.42 lakh subscribers on YouTube, which it uses for campaigning and broadcast rallies. The party uses its 1.9 million Facebook followers to reach a broad audience, especially during election seasons when targeted messaging and content are highly effective in raising awareness and urging supporters to support its ideas and vote for its candidates. Social media becomes a forum for accountability and transparency since the AAP shares information about its governance and invites public comments, demonstrating how the party supports civic activity and uses technology to promote democratic engagement. Party Chief and former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, whose Twitter handle has 27.5 million followers, is at the centre of their digital campaign. The AAP's primary approach is to disseminate information quickly while also working to dispel myths and rumours about the party and its leaders. The party uses and exhibits a skilful grasp of the lingo the younger generation prefers. As a key component of their digital campaign strategy, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) introduced the hashtag #PhirLayengeKejriwal ("We will Bring Kejriwal Again"). This hashtag was a component of a more extensive campaign to emphasise the party's accomplishments and future pledges while also rallying support for its leader, Arvind Kejriwal. "Phir Layenge Kejriwal," a song that positions Arvind Kejriwal as "Delhi ka Beta" ("Son of Delhi"). The purpose of the anthem was to refute criticism from the opposition and uphold Kejriwal's reputation as a devoted leader committed to Delhi's advancement.

This table displays AAP Delhi's followers and subscribers throughout multiple social media platforms.

Party	Platform	Followers / subscribers
AAP	Facebook	1.9 million
AAP	X	442 k
AAP	Instagram	183k

The data was directly taken from the official social media handles of the AAP Delhi, dated March 2025

Challenges of Misinformation During Elections.

Misinformation has a new face during election season. This time, with a cleverness that is difficult to identify and control, it spoke, grinned, and courted the Indian voter. Although hate speech and disinformation efforts were not new during the 2019 elections, the technology that supports this environment has rapidly changed. The Indian government is revising current laws to better address the rise of deepfakes on the internet, while social media corporations are finding it challenging to control propaganda and fake news. Deepfakes were a problem in 2019, but the 2023 generative AI boom has made it much simpler, more efficient, and less expensive to create. Once, the growth of WhatsApp forwards and IT bot-run accounts led to physical violence; today, the new text-to-image generators make it simpler for criminals to target marginalised individuals with propaganda and disinformation campaigns. The average Indian voter in 2024 is most vulnerable to election disinformation, rights organisations warn, louder than ever. People's ability to distinguish between artificial intelligence and reality is lacking, making them susceptible to deceit and disenfranchised. Misinformation frequently takes advantage of identity-based divisions in India's sociopolitical environment, which is marked by regional, caste, and religious diversity. False narratives intended to exacerbate intercommunal conflicts or defame political rivals have the power to divide voters and heighten social breakdown. Political campaigns commonly use misinformation to damage the reputations of opposing candidates or parties, turning political rivalry into mudslinging instead of substantive discussion about governance. The World Economic Forum's 2024 Global Risk Report identified India with the highest risk of misinformation and disinformation. An additional survey by the digital rights group Social and Media Matters found that 65.2% of respondents will be voting for the first time. Almost 80% of India's first-time voters are inundated with false information on well-known social media sites. In India, where a significant section of the population gets their news via social media and messaging apps like WhatsApp, false information has a more significant impact. Voter turnout can be manipulated by disseminating untrue reports regarding polling station procedures, discouraging participation through disappointment, or changing support by encouraging apprehension, rage, or mistrust of political opponents. This impact is exacerbated by social media echo chambers, where users are repeatedly exposed to the same false information, gradually giving it more credibility. Election integrity and democratic norms are undermined by the quick dissemination of false information made possible by the online infrastructure's accessibility, the intrinsic features of digital media, and India's sizable user population. In addition to skewing voter perceptions, misinformation comprehension of important topics destroys confidence in reliable information sources and creates echo chambers. While independent fact-checking platforms like AltNews and Boom, along with the government-run PIB Fact Check, strive to combat misinformation, the legal complexities surrounding the establishment of a Fact Check Unit by the Indian government underscore the ongoing challenges in addressing this pervasive issue effectively (Lakshane, 2024). About 80% of young Indian voters, according to a survey by the social and media rights organisation Social and Media Matters, are inundated with misleading information on the country's leading social media platforms. According to reports, the most popular platforms for spreading false information were Facebook (15.8%), Instagram (17.8%), and WhatsApp (29.8%).

Conclusion

Social media has dramatically impacted political debate, changing how politicians, governments and individuals interact and engage. Most social media have had a significant impact on political discussion. Expressing unfavourable opinions. Social media has given a voice to previously under-represented groups, drawing attention to topics that matter to them and allowing them to amplify their perspectives. This has promoted diversity and inclusivity in the political debate and encouraged the expression of a broader range of perspectives. Social networks are digital environments that allow users to communicate and interact in social terms. Social networks use various internet services, electronic services, and tools. They exchange information through comments, messages, criticism, texts, discussions, graphics, audio, video, and animated content. 'Social media can be defined as digital multiway channels of communication among people and between people and information resources, and which are personalised, scalable, rapid and convenient' (Katz et al., 2013).

The emergence of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp has democratised access to information and public debate, especially in the political sphere. Politicians, activists, and the general public can circumvent traditional gatekeepers and directly engage in political discussions, challenging existing power structures and increasing public participation. However, this revolution has also brought many problems, including the spread of misinformation, the growth of echo chambers, and increased political polarisation. With their power to promote unmediated communication between politicians and citizens, social media platforms can restructure political power by giving political parties the freedom to articulate their ideology, often bypassing traditional news media. Election campaigning in India has recently witnessed a newer campaigning methodology. Rather than banking upon television and print media, political parties in India started to use social media, crowd fundraising, digital rallies and compelling storytelling, which was the campaign strategy in Western democracies (Rajagopal & Rajagopal, 2001). Social media facilitates any registered user's initiating interaction with other users on any issues of interest. Social media also enables registered users to have internet connectivity and the know-how of social media platform usage to participate in two-way or multi-way communication (Guess et al., 2019).In India, elections are important occasions that most people eagerly anticipate. They are a reflection of the nation's democratic spirit in addition to being political exercises. Social media's rise has fundamentally altered how ideas are developed and information disseminated. Public opinion regarding political events can now be found on sites like Facebook and Twitter. Social media is frequently called new media since it enables more focused distribution and instantaneous information dissemination in real-time. Establishing a winning brand image is crucial for candidates. Instead, political parties' messages will be widely disseminated via Instagram and WhatsApp. Parties will also use influencers from various fields to connect with first-time voters. Nowadays, parties use internet influencers. Using music and meme trends to sway young voters quietly.

This change to digital communication has far-reaching consequences in India. As of March 2024, India had 954.4 million internet subscribers, with rural internet subscribers accounting for 398.35 million and urban subscribers at 556.05 million. Millions of internet users make the digital realm a vital arena for political influence, especially during elections. Digital tactics that emphasise involvement are now complementing, if not replacing, traditional campaign tactics as politicians depend increasingly on social media to engage with voters. Social media's democratisation of information gives citizens more power and forces politicians to interact openly and honestly when resolving public complaints or highlighting their accomplishments. Ultimately, social media has improved the accessibility and immediacy of political communication. However, it has also brought about complications that call for a critical analysis of its effects on democratic processes. Political actors will be tasked with carefully navigating these digital waters, ensuring that social media's creative potential promotes civic engagement and informed debate rather than divisiveness and misinformation. Social media's development will undoubtedly continue to influence political interactions as future elections get near, mirroring broader societal shifts in how people interact with public debate and governance.

In contrast, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), the BJP, and the Indian National Congress (INC) employ unique digital methods, using Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and X to interact with constituents and spread their agendas. Despite their best efforts, problems like spreading false information and deepfake videos persist, underscoring the pressing need for stronger legislative frameworks to protect electoral integrity in the digital era. Political players must manage the intricacies of social media dynamics while maintaining democratic values and guaranteeing openness as the electoral landscape changes. The BJP and other major parties want to ensure election victory while addressing the problems caused by disinformation by making a determined effort to interact with influencers, adjust to the changing digital landscape, and preserve the integrity of the electoral process. In the end, the 2024 Indian Lok Sabha elections demonstrate how social media may revolutionise political debate and mobilise the populace in the biggest democracy in the world.

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