SOCIAL MEDIA AND POLITICAL MOBILIZATION IN INDIA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ANTI- CORRUPTION MOVEMENT AND ELECTORAL MOBILIZATION OF BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY (BJP)

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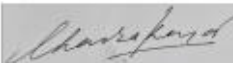
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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled " **Social Media and Political Mobilization in India: A Comparative Study of Anti- Corruption Movement and Electoral Mobilization of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)** " submitted by me for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

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CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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ABBREVIATIONS

US……………………………………………………………………United States

BHIM……………………………………………………….Bharat Interface for Money

NDA……………………………………………………….National Democratic Alliance

SMS…………………………………………………………Short Message Service

EU……………………………………………………………….European Union

GDP…………………………………………………………   Gross Domestic Product

EC……………………………………………………………   Election Commission of India

UGC…………………………………………………………User-Generated Content

RSS……………………………………………………Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh

VHP……………………………………………………...Vishva Hindu Parishad

NES………………………………………………………..National Election Study

NRI………………………………………………………..Non –Resident Indian

CAG……………………………………………………. Citizens for Accountable Governance

EVM………………………………………………………   Electronic Voting Machine

PM……………………………………………………………………Prime Minister

IAMAI……………………………………............Internet and Mobile Association of India

AAP……………………………………………………………….Aam Aadmi Party

IAC……………………………………………………………..India Against Corruption

AH…………………………………………………………………………Anna Hazare

UPA……………………………………………………… United Progressive Alliance

URL……………………………………………………….Uniform Resource Locator

HTTP…………………………………………………………Hypertext Transfer Protocol

HTML…………………………………………….Hypertext Markup Language

TV………………………………………………………………Television

UK……………………………………………………………United Kingdom

DBS…………………………………………………Direct Broadcast Satellite

IKF…………………………………………………IRIS Knowledge Foundation

DTH……………………………………………………..Direct to Home Service

SNS………………………………………………Social Networking Services

Introduction

As the title suggests, the thesis has aspired to conduct a political study of the growing phenomenon of digital activism in India, particularly, practices like opinion making, propaganda and mobilization. On the one hand it attempts to generate a working understanding of the software technologies and the web base which they bring into play, such a study of digital activism involves looking at the significant campaigns that have taken place in India. This has been supplemented with a study of selective examples of the textual discourse, including that of key social media platforms, along with the circulation of images, videos in this regard. Having mapped and outlined the field, the given study has tried to frame the findings in terms of three broad thematic questions. First, what are the points of friction and complementarity between online and offline political activism? Do they work in a mutually exclusive manner or do they combine in new ways to transform the nature of public-political activism in India? Lastly, what are the implications of such activism for the ver y concept of democracy? Do they deepen the process of democratization or give rise to newer forms of hierarchy? The larger idea is then to provide a map of the field and build an argument about the nature of resulting changes in political practice, particularly, with regard to the future prospects of democracy in India in particular. As a working hypothesis it is suggested that digital activism offers new possibilities of limited political campaigns, clustered around a single issue, encouraging public deliberations.

Background

Technologies of communication are always seen as essential to modern social mobilizations. As argued by Habermas in his seminal work *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere,* that how the ideas of modernity entered the public sphere through the print media during the 18th & 19th century, thus facilitating in democratic social mobilizations. The high point of such mobilizations concluding into the American and French revolutions. During the 20th twentieth century, activists have embraced new communications media, whether it is newspaper, radio,

television or films/documentaries, in order to circulate information, take stands and make statements, raise awareness, and denounce authoritarian regimes. Some well-known incidents from the past that made use of such techniques were that of the protesting students at the Tiananmen Square in China against their communist regime, using computer bulletin boards for airing their grievances. Likewise, the peasants from Chiapas in Mexico disseminated stories of their struggles through guerrilla radio, Internet databases and other forms of media.[1]

Lately, social media networks have become a competent organizational form in this regard. According to Manuel Castells, the new technological environment has given rise to three features: flexibility, scalability, and survivability. Thus, 'informationalism' has become the "technological paradigm that represents the material basis of early twenty-first century societies, which substitutes industrialism as the dominant technological paradigm."[2] The birth of this 'network society'[3] became possible due to three processes independent of each other: "the crisis and restructuring of industrialism and its two associated modes of production, capitalism and statism"; "the freedom oriented, cultural social movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s"; and "the revolution in information and communication technologies."[4] According to him these varied set of capabilities, led to the discharge of network society that only became possible because of this new technological paradigm, the same way the industrial society would not have extended without the use of electricity. Similar to this narrative about technological change leading socio-political transformations, gets historicized differently by Dorothy Kidd who understands these developments as a natural byproduct of coming together of a specific set of social actors, wherein "the US military research, academic & corporate scientists, and grassroots social movements" got together, "using public resources with a good measure of

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[1] Martha McCaughey and Michael Ayers, Introduction to *Cyberactivism: Online Activism in Theory and Practice*, eds. M. McCaughey and Michael Ayers (New York: Routledge, 2003), 4.

[2] Manuel Castells, *The Network Society: A Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd.), 8.

[3] For Manuel Castells, Network Society is the social structure of the Information Age, being made up of networks of production, power and experience. Its prevailing logic, while constantly challenged by social conflicts, nevertheless informs social action and institutions throughout what is an increasingly interdependent world.

[4] Castells, *The Network Society*, 13-15.

creativity and collaboration that led to the creation of this globally networked communications system."[5]

Though, the idea that the Internet can become a serious mobilizational and political tool, important to study and theorize occurred a little later to social science. This came to be signposted with the emergence of the term and phenomena of 'Blog' in the twenty-first century. With the increasing of blogging and its linked offshoots led to the birth of another term: "Web 2.0". This term received important meaning and use for understanding important developments taking place over the Internet and its varied political dimensions. Tim O'Reilly was the first one to coin this term Web 2.0 in 2003, defining seven key themes or principles that redefine the Internet for 21st century, over and above the old Web 1.0 version that had become obsolete in the wake of the 'Dot-com bubble'[6] burst in the year 2001. For O'Reilly the dot-com collapse marked a critical juncture for the Internet based companies, and entrepreneurs who had been able to survive the crash and therefore had to radically rethink their strategies going ahead. At another level, among the important contributions of Web 2.0 has been that it has transformed passive users of the Internet into active creators. The fact that the users can not only view but also express their own opinion and in some cases, co-create the content is the pre-condition of all political activity on the Internet. This has affected a recalibration of the idea of the writer, publisher and audience at a very fundamental level. But all of the given points, as mentioned and illustrated by O' Reilly, have been wrapped in a language that is understandable either by the tech enthusiasts or business ventures involved in the digital economy.

'Blogosphere'[7] on the other hand has turned ordinary citizens into vigilant justice seekers who seem active in an exaggerated manner. The politically important actors, that might be in the habit of controlling the conventional media, have seemingly come under regular surveillance of citizen reporters, journalist, vigilant citizens, etc. who keep a constant eye on these big players' acts. Likewise, the politically 'relevant' narratives that might have gotten ignored in the offline world of print media in earlier times, no longer get ignored like before, with photo streams of

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[5] Dorothy Kidd, "Indymedia.Org: A New Communications Commons," in *Cyberactivism: Online Activism in Theory and Practice*, eds. M. McCaughey and Michael Ayers (New York: Routledge, 2003), 55.

[6] Between the period of 1995 and 2000 when many investors (mostly in US) started investing money into Internet-based startups in the hopes that these new companies would soon return huge profits. But this led to mostly speculative trade that ultimately led to huge losses for the investors.

[7] Collective word used for 'blogs', wherein blogs are the regularly updated website or web pages, which are typically run by an individual or small group, that is written in an informal or conversational style.

marches and demonstrations getting posted on the Social Networking Services (SNS)[8] that have been born due to the interactive dimension bought in with Web 2.0 technologies. Thus, SNS like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, have come to acquire an important place in our lives both at an everyday level and more particularly, for the purpose of this research, for socio-political activism as a phenomenon that this thesis has tried to deal with in depth. It is significant to remember for a student of Internet based activism and related phenomenon, that most activism found online takes the form of posting news, information, hyperlinks and threads to discussions and opinions by ordinary citizens to celebrities. This entire process will be further discussed, debated and understood in some depth when the role of circulating or 'trending'[9] comments, images, videos, and related topics that have been intended or simply gone 'viral'[10] will be discussed in some detail in the sections to follow.

Activism over the Internet in India

"With over 460 million Internet users, India is currently the second largest online market, ranked only behind China. And it is predicted that by 2021, there shall be about 635.8 million Internet users in India."[11] This shows a noteworthy increase when compared to the story a while back, as in 2011 rate of Internet penetration in India stood around a meager 10 percent.[12] With regard to this scenario, recalling O'Reily one can argue that there is a huge potential for tapping in web-as-platform service to come up with newer and bolder initiatives. The trends of which have also been visible in a range of policy initiatives undertaken by the present Union government of India led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which is serving two consecutive terms since 2014. In fact the theme of web as platform for political use came into its own during the 2014 general election campaign in India, with the development of a campaigning

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[8] Social Networking Services are online platforms people use to build social networks or social relationship with other people who might share similar personal or career interests, activities, backgrounds or real-life connections. These SNS are distributed across various computer networks.

[9] Topics, including celebrities, individuals, news, etc. that are currently popular or widely discussed online, especially on social media websites

[10] The tendency of an image, video, or piece of information to be circulated rapidly and widely from one Internet user to another in a relatively short span of time.

[11] Statista, "Internet Usage in India: Statistics and Facts," 11 September 2018, accessed on May 6, 2019, https://www.statista.com/topics/2157/internet-usage-in-india/.

[12] *Ibid*.

model that relied upon a variety of online venues loosely linked through automatic technologies, like blogs, SNS sites such as Facebook, Twitter and video sharing platforms such as YouTube. The reason is the tech savvy nature of the Prime Minister of India seen through his programmes like Digital India, Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM) app, Digi Locker, amongst related others that has brought internet technology into focus very clearly in the previous tenure of the present NDA regime as well as the current one.

Because of this increase in the Internet penetration in India has led to a rising number of phenomenon's like activist bloggers, citizen journalists, amateur reporters and other related phenomenon likewise. All of these concepts are of similar nature and are very much integral to the nature of this study as had been stated in the above few passages. As the active nature of Web 2.0 technologies does entail the growth of such phenomenon at a far wider scale than it was thought before. Mainly referring for the definitional reasons Yochai Benkler's take on citizen journalism is interesting to be mentioned here, where in his opinion "a monopolistic industrial model of journalism is giving way to a pluralistic networked model based on profit and non-profit, individual and organised journalistic practices."[13] This has become a common refrain of many industry experts, academics, media managers, etc. that the web related technologies are gradually drawing curtains on the era of media magnates and corporate controlled structures of journalism. This theme does become important in the background of intended purposes of this research, since it is these citizen journalists or activist informers that have been rapidly found to be amongst the first few to visit a given site of action from recording it, telecasting it live or even using it as a proof in the court of law, etc. A far inclusive discussion upon this theme has been taken up in some detail in the chapters to follow with theoretical, textual and empirical cases to back up or to contest these kinds of supposed claims that need to be followed in the chapters to follow.

For the introductory purpose, a slight look at some of the documented cases from India of citizen journalists and online activists will be taken into consideration in order to substantiate the theoretical arguments that have been made so far in the passages above. If we discuss about citizen journalists specifically in the Indian context, then a well-known case from the year 2015 comes to one's mind. Wherein a citizen journalist going by the name of Jagendra Singh,

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[13] James Curran, "Reinterpreting the Internet," in *Misunderstanding the Internet*, eds. James Curran, Natalie Fenton and Des Freedman (London: Routledge Publication, 2012), 18.

who used to publish a Facebook page titled *Shahjahanpur Samachar*, had to pay with his life for exposing a corrupt Uttar Pradesh politician.[14] Likewise the smart use of interactivity aspect of Web 2.0 technologies was brought to the fore by a citizen journalist/activist who was able to resuscitate an almost dead issue that had been swept under the carpet years ago by making it a talk of the town overnight in August 2015, thanks to a YouTube video. The video titled *Kodaikanal Won't*, was a groovy rap video released by an NGO by the name of *Jhatkaa.org*, that went on to highlight the popular outcry against the mercury contamination in Kodaikanal (city in Tamil Nadu) by Hindustan Unilever, a giant Multi National Corporation (MNC), through its thermometer factory. The video took on the MNC and demanded that the company's CEO Paul Polman "make amends now". It was part of a campaign launched by the workers of the now-closed factory and urged viewers to sign an online petition, leading to a revival of the movement giving a new impetus to their demands.[15] It is very interesting to point out that India in particular and world in general has come to witness numerous dynamic online campaigns like the one mentioned above but conducted at a far greater scale, that have bridged multiple sites (both online as well as offline) and have engaged the use of techniques like live streaming of protest demonstrations. However, demonstrations like these might have lasted from a few hours to few days to maybe a few weeks; the chronology of these events in the temporal registers of the online world has led to the rapid increase in becoming a widely observed phenomenon across. Thus whether it is the student led agitations from prominent educational institutions like Hyderabad Central University to Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi or the coming together of anti-corruption crusaders at the Ramlila grounds of Delhi.

While keeping in mind these varied examples, some are related to technological conditions leading to a freer expression of oneself using the lanes of Internet, the given thesis will not just deal with diverse sets of campaigns conducted over the Internet in India. But it has endeavoured to be a comprehensive study of digital activism in India which includes a detailed discussion of the relevant acts, significant cases and important instances where Internet has played a very prominent role from mobilizing masses for action to bringing in institutional changes, in addition to going through different regulatory mechanisms and court rulings that have been

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[14]   Arunabh   Saikia,   June   15,   2015,   *Newslaundry*,   accessed   on   July   22,   2018, http://www.newslaundry.com/2015/06/15/burnt-for-reporting-the-story-of-shahjahanpur-and-its-slain-journalist/

[15] Parsathy J. Nath, August 5, 2015, *The Hindu*, accessed on July 22, 2018, http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/the-hills-are-alive/article7500668.ece

delivered within stated boundaries of this study. While this research has been carried out from the perspective of a social science researcher, hence it has tried to remain as true to the disciplinary boundaries of a political science research as it probably could. But as most of the material that this researcher had to deal with while going about his work was found in different other disciplines like cultural studies, information technology studies, mass communication and journalism studies, and related other disciplines. Because of this it has provided a richer and more holistic view of things to the researcher about the given area of study, which in turn I have tried to inculcate to the best of my capabilities within the mandate of my research.

The inherent and recurrent nature of individuals to do communication with other individuals produces multiple channels of communication which can be oral or written and virtual. The multifaceted language and algorithms of social networking sites have made it more accessible and comprehensible to the ordinary being.

Political opinion makers encourage and inspire their followers and subjects by communicating with them through these new channels which therefore provides an influential relation between them and the public. Presently to choose a social media network to have a conversation is primary component of political communication.

With the advancement in technology it is now easier and cheaper to communicate. However due to the technological revolution the reach of the information can be done very rapidly throughout the globe through social networking sites. In contemporary time events and issues are rapidly reaching the world through social networking sites. Social media brings together international stories such as protests in the Middle East and natural disasters in Japan and breaking news in cities across America, to national issue like Lokpal or Damini or any political issues.

All the chapters in this study are placed and significantly shaped by the ubiquitous presence of television sets in Indian households, shops and other places. It is difficult to define the influence of a singular mode of mass communication in my discussions because the decade of 2000s, where all the incidents are situated temporally, are not only symbolic of the rise of the televisual image as the dominant form but it was also a time when Internet access, although limited, began to penetrate urban and peri-urban areas.

Arjun Appadurai and Carol Breckenridge says that "India seems to join the general script of the world only after 1989 a world of high speed capitalism" (Arjun Appadurai, 1995).While referring to India's moment of liberalization and economic reforms in 1991 that allowed for the entry of multinational brands and media corporations to enter the country's market, posing a veritable challenge to the State run channel *Doordarshan* or DD.

The story of the shift from the monopoly of DD to the explosion of private channels on television is also indicative of the shift towards decreased State regulation over cultural consumption. However, as mentioned earlier, this period was marked not only by the official entry of global media but also the blossoming of low cost pirate technologies such as the VCR, CDs, spaces such as Palika Bazaar and Nehru Place in Delhi. With regard to the entry and proliferation of low cost pirate technologies, Ravi Sundaram writes that they constitute the underbelly of the visible bourgeois sphere. He explains, ―...

"media changed the flesh of infrastructure in urban India after the 1980s, by significantly expanding its material universe...Low cost technologies of mechanical and digital reproduction blurred the distinction between producers and consumers of media, adding to the diffusion of both media infrastructures (video stores, photocopy and design shops, bazaars, cable networks, piracy) and media forms (images, video, phone, SMS text, sounds). Continuous immersion into a world of low-cost media forms is still the norm for many. What is significant is the emergence of new forms of publicity. Images now crowds streets, walls, chants, car horns) expand and occupy roads and neighborhood space" (Sundaram, 2010).

Arvind Rajagopal explains, while the period of late 1980s till 1990s is historicized in economic terms and framed within the larger discourse of development. The real stories of change as experienced in daily lives of few or many Indians calls for invoking genealogies of neighborhoods, radio sets, audio cassettes and television shows that might give us a glimpse into the project of self-making and transformed collective subjectivities that emerge in the backdrop of the larger narratives of economic reforms, expansion of communications infrastructure (Rajagopal, 1999).

Through the 2000s especially, as I explore in the second and third chapters of the thesis, easy access to personal computing devices such as the mobile phone as well as the production of a constantly indexed self through surveillance cameras and online social networks are all reconfigured modes of exteriorization that constitute the mediated subject whose actions and experiences in turn recursively configure the new political practices.

The year 2014 was an exciting time where India was going to elections. The 2014 elections were spectacular for several reasons. It is for the first time that over 40 percent of the total voting population was below the age of 35, making it an election about young people's concerns. Also, the sudden success of a new party like Aam Aadmi Party in Delhi served as a wakeup call to established parties like the BJP and Congress about establishing local connect and focusing on areas beyond the urban. Both these factors led all parties but especially the BJP to campaign zealously using old and new media technologies to cover the expanse of the entire country and to bewilder, entertain and charm the young, urban and rural alike using holograms, LED screens, interactivity etc.

The third chapter tries to understand the mediatization of Indian politics through the media/political event of the 2014 national elections where Narendra Modi, the leader of right-wing conservative party BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) emerged victorious. Mr Modi who was the chief minister of Gujarat, a state in Western India has always been seen as pro-technology in his governance style. Not surprisingly, his prime ministerial campaign also witnessed many unprecedented technological spectacles to reach out to people across India 's language, region and caste divides. This chapter traces some of his popular campaigns such as *Chai pe Charcha* and hologram rallies but also looks at the crisis of authenticity brought about by the media mobilization. During the elections and after his victory, intellectuals, journalists and citizens opposed to his victory decried it as the demise of genuine public will, while those in favor hailed it as the true reflection of national sentiment.

This thesis, then, is about tracing some continuations between "new and old audio and visual media technologies to list new possibilities as well as altered ways in which they allow for a convergence of previously disparate forms and effects as well as a remediation of older mediated texts". Internet should be seen as a site of discourse beyond the traditional empirical and instrumentalist perception of Internet.

As argued by Biju P.R that "technology is shaped by the socio-cultural context in which it is deployed. Like for example, India Against Corruption, Nirbhaya Campaign, Twitter activism, indeed an era of digital activism, online politics or cyber protest that captivate the imagination of the nation. It seems that Internet has become the marketplace of ideas. It has transitioned from a platform for connection to a life support system, which an ever increasing number of people take with them everywhere they go" (P.R, 2017).

The citizen experience of Internet is diverse. Internet has crept into almost every aspect of Indian life, thus finding it increasing space in political deliberation too, just like what radio and television achieved in democratic government. It is home to activists who challenge mainstream narratives. Politicians migrated to social networking sites. State apparatus increasingly resort to citizen deliveries by the governments.

Clay Shirky has also explained in his works the importance of technology as becoming one of the crucial facilitators. In Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing without Organizations" he investigates how groups are formed and operate in a networked society, exploring how new technology creates fresh modes of group formation. Internet helps us to form groups effortlessly. He further argues that cognitive surplus was the outcome of the Internet which was once made dormant by the television. The power of many is more important than those few who had traditionally occupied power. Internet facilitates new togetherness because of the collaborative and sharing opportunities it provided to the people that were denied to them before. It is important to have a profound and realistic approach to social media which could look at itself and its political significance in the context of cultural relativity, local situation and Indian particularities.

In this time of digital activism, people who are underprivileged are increasingly coming to terms with the fact that they have a platform to protest. There were inspirational stories from the Philippines that four-day SMS had thrown Joseph Estrada from power. There was news from Arab countries that people's movements were in full swing that shook the foundations of many undemocratic governments. Social media was their platform. Occupy Wall Street, India Against Corruption, Nirbhaya and UK uncut are examples of social media- embedded enagaged public. In doing so, many ordinary people, who were not part of mainstram narrative, became part of collection action.

Social networking sites on the one hand make possible and supports traditional offline collective action with regard to organization, mobilization and transnationalities and on the other hand it creates new ways to do collective action. The growing penetration of broadband and cell phones has configured a new audience and thus a new activist ecology has been forming. New media and digital forms of organizing protests have necessitated redefining the conventional way of conceptualizing collective action. The conventional methods of looking at civic activism seemed as if they were insufficient to understand the online forms of collective action.

Internet- enabled practices have power to kill time and distance obstacles and facilitate association and sharing of knowledge between geographically scattered activist groups in India. It facilitates a loosely related national alliance of people, and their collaboration is not through the similarity of issues they face but the knowledge they hold. Social media platforms give easy access to sharing of information and knowledge which reduces barriers for people who wish to publish and circumvent conventional gatekeepers in media and publishing and which helps in creating and maintaining virtual communities generated by individuals or institutions with common interests.

Hence this present research would try to examine the implications of social media and how it alters the political landscape in India. It attempts to comprehend the nature of digital communication through social networking sites and how does it alter the political process in India. The consumer is now also a news creator, and is not only a receptacle. Social networking sites create interaction while not considering geographical barriers which provides a prominent increase in efficiency of political information and generates a new calculus in the political sphere.

Additionally, and what is perhaps the foremost revolutionary development is that the Internet provides the opportunities to consumers of the news to themselves become producers of news. These elements bring in interactivity to media technology and allow citizens to deliberate with politicians or to other groups of citizens from considerable distances. Social media provides platforms to politicians so that they can   escape conventional news creators to establish a direct line of communication with the citizens which is unfiltered and unhindered by the norms and structural constraints of conventional print and broadcast journalism.

As argued by Riley "The Internet persuades decentralization of power. In digital world, individuals now have choices as to which authorities and information sources they are willing to accept. This creates greater democratization of knowledge, empowerment of the individual and the prospect for more well-informed interactions between the citizens and organizations, which includes the government. Social media forms new spaces for unmediated public deliberation in which citizens can engage with one another, with other communities and with the elites that were once less exposed to direct engagement" (Huggins, 2001).

In the research I have examined that social networking sites have different, intrinsic elements which are perceived as affordances and network functionalities. These properties decrease the cost of civic and political participation in a very considerable amount. The resources that are necessary for political participation are generally expressed in form of time, money, and civic

skills, like communication and organizational capacities. Due to the expansion of digital activism and the cost of information retrieval, political participation is likely to become less costly. This resulted in transformation in patterns of mobilization both in terms of who participates and how they are going to participate.

This research will formulate a detailed explanation of how the nature and scope of political communication is changing and shifting the Indian political system. The growth of social media does not only signify that now there is improvement in communication technologies, but it has introduced quite a introductory swing in how people communicate, not just between themselves but with political actors and institutions. The question it focuses on is how are political actors using social media to shape citizens perceptions? It will also examine the 2014 national election campaign of BJP which led to the victory of Bhartiya Janta Party and through that it will understand how politicians are influencing and controlling the flow of information through social media.

Changes in Political Mobilization

Traditionally social networks are seen as significant recruitment channels for mobilization. Social media promotes the enormous sharing of experiences between loosely coupled individuals and bring about political change. However, this single case of Anti-Corruption movement is confined to reclaim the level to which this protest event was considerably different from other protests that have taken place over the past few years. The answer to this question will be build upon some significant implications like the idea of connective action which are instrumentally organised around social media which allow us to understand the noticeable dissimilarities involving collective action and connective action cases.

"The manner in which social movements and activist groups have employed the internet to strengthen and enlarge their political action repertoires and organize protest. Social networking sites have transformed political process and longest recognized instrument of social movement organization, communication, and mobilization in substantial ways. Because of the decrease in communication costs there is rapid and easier distribution of movement information, which has facilitated individuals to be in touch with more people, communities, and various causes. It has made possible the growth of 'weak ties', which provides capabilities to extend and better manage their social networks and connect with distant groups" (Theocharis, 2014, p. 202).

The internet has shifted the balance of participation costs to almost zero which has created a new model of flash mobilization in which action done collectively is so reasonably priced that small time and investments in contents leads persons to contribute swiftly. This is the reason why an excess of majorly online but deliberately offline involvement creates greater number of collective mobilizations that used to be occurred previously.

The changes in organizational dynamics have encouraged wide number of debates related to the impact of internet on protest movement organization and coordination. Traditionally collective action became successful through formal and hierarchical institutional leadership mechanisms. The internet supposedly alters this dynamic by challenging the rationality of collective action for two constant explanations. Andrew Chadwick and Philip in their book *'Routledge Handbook of Internet Politics'* argues that the "structure of conventional organizations has altered from strictly hierarchical institutional forms to a more flexible, horizontal, or hybrid types" (Chadwick, 2012). With the changing time more and more organizations prefers to stay in the backdrop providing opportunity to social technology platforms and making action outlines that is inclusive of the public, personalized and is distributed across multiple social media platforms.

Secondly, these processes are expediated through individual's ease or collective content production, its decentralized nature, and the personalized action frame sharing through social media portals. Microblogging sites like for example twitter creates simpler or easy access to collective information regardless of their periodic and ephemeral which involves a much larger percentage of ideologically compassionate individuals to participate.

As media constitutes the main mode of communication and interaction with the possibility of reaching society at large and structuring the mind of public is mostly done through processes that take place in the media. As argued by Neena Talwar Kanungo in her work on Indian elections that "the advent of the social media and its recent pervasiveness in every sphere of life, including politics. Internet has become an essential medium in election campaigns across the world. As a result, the Internet, and social media platforms like Facebook (FB), Twitter, blogs and YouTube, have been added to the existing conventional media platforms. This new medium has created and expanded the new spaces through which we interact, play and even politicize ourselves" (Kanungo, 2015).

The Internet provides opportunities to transform the practices of politics a lot more powerfully than any of the traditional mediums could ever have imagined. Social media provides the capacities to initiate a direct line of communication between the citizens and politicians. With the

arrival of this new technology, many scholars proclaimed that it will make governance more transparent and efficient which will capacitate to make our democracy a much better democracy. Through social media mediums citizens come together and share virtual forums which reinstate a better and a more thoughtful form of deliberative democracy. This form of virtually created direct representation can provide a basis for a more dialogical and deliberative democracy.

The "emergence of the Internet and social networking sites has influenced the democratic politics all around the world. Social networking sites have inherent democratic characteristics, and the digital communication which happens is direct, transparent, participative, and collaborative and is reachable to everyone without regard to boundaries. Although during electoral campaign two-way communication between political parties/candidates and the electorates using the Internet is not very common. Use of email, survey/ polls, web chats, bulletin/web boards by political parties, which are believed to be valuable tools of two-way communication, are rarely deployed" (Kanungo 2015).

However, many scholars have credited digital communication networks for creating a new democratic society, but there are certain limits attach to it. The surveillance and control of the state over digital media technology has created structural inequalities which generates inequalities in digital participation. And in many circumstances, it has been employed even more for negative campaigning which disregards democratic culture. However, the flexible and increase in competitive behavior and experimentation with social networking sites can itself be understood as moving towards democratic opportunities.

Contrary to the hierarchical platforms of engagement that classify what is to be done and how one can channel their energies into the campaign, digital environments fashion prospects for citizens to take part in relatively unstructured ways. Participation in digital platforms has a more autonomy and generates collective action in forms which are not certified or coerced by a centralized authority. They are becoming more informed about the critical role of the new multimedia system and its regulatory institutions in the culture and politics of society.

Social media gives way to a quickly traceable public sphere or rekindles public interest in the public sphere imagination. An uncensored public sphere is the immediate outcome of political Internet. It is easily accessible to people who were previously unable to access it. It provides easy access for politicians. It helps them easily understand what citizens think. They quickly come to know what is happening in the public sphere during an election campaign or any other important occasions; thus, they are strategizing on electioneering.

Hypothesis

As a working hypothesis it is suggested here that social networking sites offers new possibilities for transforming the political process in India.

Research Questions

The thesis has engaged with the following research questions in some detail:

1. What are the sufficient and necessary technological conditions, in terms of software as well as hardware that made the phenomena of digital activism become possible, across the world in general and predominantly in India of late?

2. What kind of a role has social media played in creating new patterns of political mobilization in India?

3. What are the binaries between street politics and virtual politics?

4. What are the fundamental changes introduced in the protest dynamics due to the use of social networking sites?

5. Has the domain of social media been adequately recognized and employed by Bhartiya Janta Party in India particularly in the context of 2014 national election?

6. How the resort to social media in 2014 election reflects an understanding of the potential of new technologies to impact upon democratic politics?

Methodology

The methodological choice of the two case studies discussed in this thesis tried to keep in mind the theoretical distinction as well as continuity between 'old social mobilizations,' 'new social mobilizations,' and 'newest social mobilizations'.[16] In fact, the choice of Anti-Corruption Movement was largely because the way it used new technologies with the aim of ushering in social transformation. It employed latest technologies so as to alter the way in which people communicate, organize and execute their actions in real time, in the process redefining their practices and choices as well. Anti- corruption movement was thus able to combine the classic demands of building an egalitarian order of the old left kind seen largely in class-based movements. While at the same time showing flexibility in accommodating diverse voices based on gender, race, identity, amongst others as was symbolic of the New Social Movements of the late twentieth century. And then of course the use of Web 2.0 technology in all its variations by Anti-corruption movement made it a strong case to be studied for this research.

As a researcher it has been interesting to notice that Internet based activities esp. SNS (Social Networking Services) related activities have substantially expanded in India in the recent past, with multiple interest groups as well as individuals banking on this tool quite often to voice their views, opinions, grievances, etc. from reasons as diverse as someone dealing with a personal issue or a matter that might have socio-political ramifications. But why and in what context have people used this particular digital tool in comparison to others and for what purposes? This has been amongst the core questions that this thesis has aimed to explore. However, SNS related activism is a moderately recent area of academic research, thereby proving difficult for the researcher to find a fool proof, established and tested methodology for the research.

This researcher had to thus rely on a cyber ethnographic approach for content collection and evaluation of data, as it came across as one of the more suitable methods in gathering and analyzing data specific to Web 2.0 culture.

It also needs to be reminded to the readers that within digital media studies, the cyber ethnographic approach has largely been used to study the cultures and communities created through computer mediated social interaction.[17] It has been accustomed to taking into account the emotional as well as informational flows of the Internet and in the process linking it to peoples day to day lives and experiences. Thus cyber ethnography as a research methodology does signify

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[16] Veronica Barassi, *Activism on the Web: Everyday Struggles Against Digital Capitalism* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 20.

[17] Roser Beneito-Montagut, "Ethnography Goes Online: Towards a user-centred methodology to research interpersonal communication on the Internet," *Qualitative Research* 11, no. 6 (December 2011): 716-735.

an attempt to have a relook at the conventional idea of 'the field' as used by ethnographers in social science research, by trying to extend it beyond its archaic boundaries. In cyberspace the field of observation has boundaries that are both virtual and free from location in place or geography. As more and more individuals spend time in the digital world, leaving digital tracks behind in the form of pictures, posts, blogs, emails and other related data, researchers have a window of opportunity to study human behavior in cyberspace. Thus we find cyber ethnographers engaging in activities like observing blogs, websites, and chat rooms. In the process analyzing how individuals get to form social networks, groups and communities in the online world that in turn have connections with the offline world as well.[18]

In contrast to the case of communities in the real world that are located geographically and therefore conventionally associated with anthropological ethnographic studies, virtual communities existing online can be researched upon without at times having an express knowledge about the background of the members been researched upon. In this given research, I had to lurk into many SNS pages like that of Facebook, Twitter, etc. camouflaging as a member, so I could keep a track of digital footprints getting left behind. Since I joined most of these groups or pages, after the events had already happened or the communities had started discussing issues of immediate concerns to them, other than what they were originally created for or had discussed extensively the given movements vehemently at some point of time. So, I did not have to declare the purpose of my joining to the entire group, nor was there any necessity felt for active participation in their discussions. By observing, taking note of and analyzing the multiple activities on a given Facebook wall, Twitter feed or YouTube channel without informing anyone of my role as a researcher, I was acting as an outsider to the interactions on these groups. While at the same time as an insider to the intent and implications of their interactions, since I was keenly observing their social media activities consistently. I was also in sync with the socio-political context of some of these discussions by virtue of my engagement with their causes in different other forums.

The participant observation method was also employed, while studying a multiplicity of groups who were able to generate, comment upon and at times participated in a series of events. These circumstances involved cases where a certain website, Twitter handle, Facebook group or YouTube channel was found to be successful enough in influencing people into action or was central to distribution of considerable content among the participants of various mobilizations. In

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[18] Browne, Liz, "Cyber-ethnography: the emerging research approach for 21st century research investigation," 2011.

order to analyze all these situations or phases, as part of one continuous process, a multi-method approach was found to be more useful than a fixed one. Wherein one does not depend on a fixed method of analysis in order to generate a complete picture of one's field of study, like while analyzing the posts on social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook. Both the platforms played a major role in providing first-hand information to various sets of actors ranging from activists on the ground to online agenda builders to masses in general who simply wanted to remain abreast of the developments with any of the given movements discussed in this thesis.

A Keyword analysis and Rule based approach was also deployed to analyze most of these tweets, posts, videos, memes, and other related online content. While collecting and analyzing these various sets of data, multiple categories based on the researchers discretion were invented, based on the nature of information that these posts allegedly were referring to. Thus from indicating Situational Awareness of the participants to requests for assistance while operating from the site of action, or from announcements of support online to a given cause right down to requests for information update about these movements and other related categories of analysis did help the researcher in collating, scrutinizing, classifying and further analyzing these different sets of complex data sets. An identification of some of the most prominent and influential users that came across as most followed in the online media platforms was also compiled, by scrutinizing the sources of the online posts.

As has already been stated earlier, the Internet especially in India (and overall too) remains a fertile ground for diverse and humongous amount of communication. Much of that communication is of immediate, emotional nature that showcases proximity in time when they get expressed via social media platforms- such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter- getting accessed through mobile devices, thus justifying the label of being 'instant messaging' [19] applications. But as these communication acts get registered, the data to be analyzed may not readily be available due to commercial reasons or privacy concerns. But when this communication data did become available to this researcher, continuing here with the mixed method approach, then a combination of both quantitative as well as qualitative methods was deployed to study the unique nature of online data. As this data did largely consist of human communication, which cannot simply be reduced solely to quantitative features (hence the use of qualitative methods).

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[19] Instant messaging technology is a type of online chat that offers real-time text transmission over the Internet.

Overview of Thesis

This thesis has been divided into a total of four chapters, along with an introduction and conclusion. The continuing introduction of this thesis largely maps out the key arguments, concepts, trends and topics that will unfold in the subsequent chapters. It also provides a description of the methodology involved to investigate the questions that this work has aimed at investigating. Here is a brief description of the content that gets covered in the chapters to follow.

Chapter 1: It discusses in detail the emergence of technological conditions, like the web-as-platform and open software technologies as well as hardware access that have constituted the material basis of cyber activism across the globe. The chapter makes use of the seminal approach devised by Tim O' Reilly to study the transformation of Internet from its earlier era of static set of web pages to its Web 2.0 avatar. The interactive nature of Web 2.0 applications in turn transformed the nature of Internet, making it far useful to conduct politics over the medium. As illustrated through the re-working of the seven principles of Web 2.0 applications by Philip Howard and Andrew Chadwick.

These seven principles when detailed through concrete examples, present to us a picture of Internet politics that has slowly come to occupy a space of its own in the real-world affairs as well. For e.g. applications like Wikipedia, Google, YouTube, etc. have come to define the very existence of our civilization in such a significant manner, which renders even the survival of our species without them seemingly implausible. Simultaneously the chapter also looks into the criticism leveled by critical voices like David Harvey, Evgeny Morozov, James Curran, etc. who while mostly banking upon a political-economic approach try to place a counter view to some of the trenchant optimistic views surrounding the alleged revolutionary potential of the Internet. While a third strand of thought propounded through scholars like Veronica Barassi, Daniel Schiller, etc. who use anthropological and media studies approach to present a context specific nature of activities conducted over the Internet. In the final section, digital activism and its relation with freedom of speech have been probed. Taking the example of journalism and how that has slowly changed nature over the past decade or so. How one's right to know has got influenced with an increased commercialization of the space, has also been taken into account.

Social media has changed the way politics in done in India. Even in its early years, it has caught many people by surprise. Social media has made its impact in the manner in which the candidate's campaign for the elections, the members of parliament functions in their offices, and

advocacy organizations communicate with policymakers and supporters. Social media cannot be considered as simply next in a line of communications technologies but a technology which has transformed the way everyday activities were used to be done and the manner in which it has connected people can never be imagined before. The traditional medium of communications like radio, television, and cable television provided opportunities for politicians to reach new audiences but that structure of communication was limited to one way and the audience was limited to some extend but in case of social media the communication is not one- way and the audience is not limited to few.

This main purpose of this chapter is to examine the implication of social media and its ability to transform the political process in India. It tries to comprehend the nature of digital communication through social media and how that likely alters the political process in India. The user now is the creator of their own news and not simply the receiver of the published news. Social networking sites create interaction without regard to geography, and considerably increase the effectiveness of political information which builds a new direction to political space. It is now time to have a profound and realistic approach to social media which could look at itself and its potential significance in the context of cultural relativity, local situation and Indian particularities.

Chapter 2: titled "Mapping changes in Patterns of Political Mobilization in India: A study of Anti- Corruption Movement" marks an impressive transformation in the manner information and communication technologies were employed and the unparalleled coverage it received in the media. Social media became an integral part of the discourse and to the understanding of the movement itself, leading few people to argue that the upsurge was fueled, if not produced by the media.

The social media was employed phenomenally during the movement. Anna Hazare and his team with the help of software professionals connected with anti-corruption movement created a large number of social media programs that were hugely popular during the movement. Many Anna Hazare fan pages were created on Facebook which were linked to Anna Hazare Facebook page and huge amount of videos were also posted on YouTube. A huge social media campaign was launched across the country that attracted many reactions Anti-corruption movement was very different from earlier movements because both social and mainstream media did worked together to provide information and spreading the news of what was happening on the ground as well as acting as a medium of making people come to the street. It is imperative to comprehend the movement not only from the prism of technology and as being media-created because this view

of movement would be insufficient to its wider perspective. There was an entire social, economic and political environment which contributed to the emergence of the anticorruption movement.

However most of the work on social media and political mobilizations has been centered on the Middle East and North Africa and not much consideration has been provided to India. The chapter will comprehend the role played by social media in the mobilization and coordination of protesters during Anti-corruption movement. Not much research is done on impact of social media platforms and they manner in which they have transformed the way activists in India engage in collective action. Instead of focusing on if social media alone can bring about democracy or political revolution, the aim of this particular chapter is to investigate the variety of ways in which social media might change the dynamics of political activism in India.

Chapter 3: titled "New media and the political spectacle: A Case Study of BJP 2014 national election campaign". This chapter focuses on the creation of the ―Modi Wave or the media spectacle created around the prime ministerial candidate of BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) during the national assembly elections in 2014 to observe the role of media technologies in transforming the image of Narendra Modi and projecting him as the future leader of India by stimulating the national imagination and saturating the public sphere with the images of Modi and his model of development. Simultaneously, through this inquiry, the chapter highlights some experiments with technologies that enabled the "Modi Wave" to overcome distance, linguistic and cultural barriers in order to reach diverse communities spread across India.

When Narendra Modi, the chief minister of Gujarat, a state in Western India was declared the prime ministerial candidate of the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) in September 2013, many leaders including L.K Advani, a veteran leader in his own party did not approve of his nomination[20]. Even after the start of his prime ministerial campaigning, voices discouraging people to vote for him came from several directions including leaders of other states like Nitish Kumar, Mamata Banerjee and Naveen Pattanaik[21] but also from a number of intellectuals within civil society, the prime reason for opposing the candidature of Modi was his alleged complacency in massive

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[20] Rao, Apoorva, Daily News & Analysis, "LK Advani and Sushma Swaraj continue to give Narendra Modi headache. Advani possibly next Speaker of Lok Sabha", 15 May, 2014
(https://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-lk-advani-and-sushma-swaraj-continue-to-give-narendra-modi-a-headache-advani-possibly-next-speaker-of-lok-sabha-1988226)

[21] ET Bureau, The Economic Times, "Fears of stronger BJP in their backyard behind Jayalalithaa, Mamta and Mulayam's anger towards Modi?", 18 April, 2014
(https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/fears-of-stronger-bjp-in-their-backyard-behind-jayalalithaa-mamata-and-mulayams-anger-towards-modi/articleshow/33874682.cms).

communal riots that happened in Gujarat in 2002 leading to the death of over 1000 people, most of whom were Muslims[22].

On several occasions, he had been called a Fascist', mass murderer, merchant of death[23] and was seen as a deeply divisive political figure. Not only this, his party, the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) is perceived as a conservative right wing Hindu party and has affiliations to extremist Hindu organizations such as the RSS, VHP, Bajrang Dal etc. A third reason why leaders inside the BJP did not approve of Mr. Modi 's candidature was because he had relatively no experience or background in national politics and was in fact seen as a staunch advocate of Gujarati identity, marking him as a regional leader[24]. Thus, it was unclear how he would succeed in establishing himself as a national figure.

The creation of the "Modi Wave" which was a systematic series of media events and appearances was orchestrated precisely with a view to transforming the image of a leader in order to project him as a national leader[25] This task required highlighting him as a decisive leader as against the incumbent prime minister, Dr Manmohan Singh who had been criticized on several occasions for being a passive and meek leader[26]. It also required popularizing Mr Modi across Indian states where linguistic and regional leaders dominate the political scene. Lastly, the media campaign had to focus on sanitizing and obscuring his links with the communal riots by turning him into an icon of economic development through the highlighting of his urban development and technology initiatives executed in the state of Gujarat.

In the first part, the chapter follows two major initiatives within his campaign namely the use of 3D holograms to stage virtual rallies, *Chai Pe Charcha* – a video conferencing initiative. The two initiatives explore how new media technologies enabled the possibility of new interfaces between Mr. Modi and his audience to remotely reproduce the experience of contact and intimacy. Next, the chapter explores the exploiting of varied social networks for the first-time including platforms such as Facebook, twitter and video-viewing site YouTube but also mobile messenger application

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[22] BBC News, "Gujrat riot death toll revealed", 11 May, 2005
(http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4536199.stm)

[23] PTI, "Maut ka saudagar' is apt description of Narendra Modi: Congress", 21 March, 2014
(https://indianexpress.com/article/india/politics/maut-ka-saudagar-is-apt-description-of-narendra-modi-congress/)

[24] Shamni Pande, Bussiness Today, "Just the Right Image", 08 June, 2014
(https://www.businesstoday.in/magazine/case-study/case-study-strategy-tactics-behind-creation-of-brand-narendra-modi/story/206321.html)

[25] Ibid.

[26] The Statesman, "Disappointing Tenure", 19 May, 2014.

WhatsApp, that were all actively used by the BJP volunteers. This section also probes the role of humor and the reappropriation of language in reappropriating political messages to help them travel within existing networks of affective exchanges as well as repurpose visuality for the circulation of political messages.

Chapter 4: titled "A Comparative Study of Anti- Corruption Movement and 2014 National Election Campaign of BJP" There are many scholars who have study traditional media and the manner in which it impacts political and social mobilization in present time. However, this chapter will analyze the transformation social media has created after its emergence in the process of political mobilization. It will focus on "new information networks and the way they have changed the dynamics of citizen's participation and complemented the role of conventional media and face- to- face interaction, resulting in the emergence of 'hybrid' media system" (Neyazi, T. A, 2018). Political communication in present time takes place in a more complex space in which both traditional and newer media are utilized by a varied group of actors such as political parties and protest movements to engage with the public and influence their opinion and the political agenda.

The focus of the chapter is both mobilization for electoral politics and grassroots mobilization where citizens and groups from different class and caste backgrounds actively participate in mediated activities in the public arena. This chapter will examine developments such as movements against corruption led by Anna Hazare that propelled him and the country into the world news throughout 2011 as well as political mobilization in the 2014 national election campaign of BJP, and the interactions between traditional and social media and how they have changed the structures and dynamics of political mobilization in contemporary India. The concept of hybrid media system that looks at the interplay between traditional and new media, as well grassroots political mobilization consisting of diverse actors is discussed while examining the political and social developments.

To focus completely on either online media or traditional media is not the motive of this chapter but to explore the complexity and the binaries between the two as a result of a hybrid media environment, in which traditional media still occupies central place along with social media and face- to- face interactions. Even though the hybrid media environment of India is not similar to the media environments in developed countries as majority of population in India still suffers from digital divide.

Chapter I : Contextualizing Social Media and Political Mobilization

To understand history about the growth of internet as a new technology would reveal to us that its emergence in the latter half of the twentieth century, as David Harvey suggests in his *The Condition of Postmodernity,* was in some ways due to "the recession economy of the 1970s, which was coupled with the oil crisis… forcing a restructuring in the capitalist world to take place that lead to a transition from Fordism to the post-Fordist era. In the social space because of these uncertainties, a succession of experiments in the realms of industrial organization as well as in political and social life took place. Harvey explains an entirely new regime of accumulation, which rode upon a very different system of political and social regulation, terming it Flexible accumulation" (Harvey, 1991)[27]. It was "marked by a direct confrontation with the rigidities of Fordism, resting upon flexibility with respect to labour processes, labour markets, products, and patterns of consumption."[28] Its chief characteristics included "the emergence of new sectors of production, new ways of providing financial services, new markets, and, most importantly, seriously intensified pace of commercial, technological, and organizational innovation."[29] A significant outcome of this process was the "time-space compression' in the capitalist world- the time horizons of both private and public decision-making had diminish, while satellite communication and waning transport costs had made it even more possible to extend those decisions directly over an ever wider and variegated space." [30] Substantiating the above mentioned point through the analogy of 'war' Hardt & Negri too contend that it was not a mere coincidence that the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, between the erstwhile USSR and USA, got "signed midway between the delinking of the U.S. dollar from the gold standard in 1971 and the first oil crisis in 1973. These years not merely signified a monetary and economic crisis but even paved forward the path towards the

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[27] This refers to the shift that led to an intensification of the capitalist processes as well as opening up of new spaces to the penetration of capital.

[28] Harvey, *Condition of Post Modernity*, 147.

[29] *Ibid.*, 186.

[30] *Ibid.*, 147.

destruction of the welfare state and the shift of the hegemony of economic production from the factory to more social and immaterial sectors."[31]

Manuel Castells while taking on a more techno-deterministic stance believes that the global re-structuring of capitalism was significantly enabled through new information and communication technologies. Therefore, the birth of 'network society'[32] for him became possible primarily due to three autonomous processes: "Firstly, the crisis and restructuring of industrialism with its two associated modes of production, i.e. capitalism and statism, Secondly, the freedom oriented, cultural and social movements starting in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and finally, the revolution in information and communication technologies" (Cas tells, 1996). For Castells, without the abilities unleashed through this new technological paradigm, the actualization of network society would not have become possible[33], just like the industrial society would not have expanded without the use of electricity. Besides these socio-political theories that authors like Harvey, Castells and others have implied to, the web also seems to be facilitating a media economy, which is different from mass production economies of the industrial era, that relies upon flexibility in place of standardization, with abundant resources at its disposal replacing scarcities of the past, and on entrepreneurial start-ups rather than the industrial corporations which were the preferred model of doing business in the twentieth century. This new economic model as argued by many scholars has primarily transformed the institutional architecture of the media thereby making it more democratic and reachable.

Looking at the history and fact based analysis of internet's growth story would showcase us that it was resulted because of coming together of a particular set of social actors that included "US military research, academic & corporate scientists, and grassroots social movements, using public resources with a good measure of creativity and collaboration during the Cold War years that led to the creation of this globally networked communications system."[34] It started with the formation of Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) under the U.S. Department of Defense, whose nitty-gritties were worked around "a small number of Research and

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[31] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude-War and Democracy in Age Of Empire* (New York: Penguin Publishers, 2004), 39.

[32] An expression coined by Castells that is related to the socio-political, economic and cultural changes caused by the spread of networked, digital information and communications technologies.

[33] Castells, *The Network Society*, 15.

[34] Kidd, "Indymedia.Org: A New Communications Commons," 55.

Development units during the 1960s-70s near Stanford University in Palo Alto, California."[35] Initially the development phase of the Internet corresponds with that of the cold war or one can say it kind of was a byproduct of the US- Soviet rivalry. One development led to another and in 1969 ARPANET came into life, a computer network of various research agencies within the US government and other major research centers in the topmost research universities. The year 1972 witnessed the first ever email being sent. By 1974, two software professionals Bob Kahn and Vinton Cerf had designed the TCP/IP (Transmission Control Protocol/ Internet Protocol), which was the required architecture needed for Internet to take shape in the later years. Simultaneously various other technological advances were being made that were leading towards making networked computers reach a newer user base located outside the defense establishments and university complexes. In 1977 Ward Christiansen and Randy Seuss from Chicago, wrote a program titled XMODEM allowing for the transfer of files from Personal Computer (PC) to (PC). The XMODEM encouraged the production of many more PCs, which were slowly transitioning from their earlier usage as professional computational tool towards becoming an all-purpose consumer product.

The year 1977 was significant in the history of Internet. That year saw Apple getting incorporated as Apple Computer Inc.; "alongside Bill Gates and Paul Allen were signing up a partnership agreement to officially register Microsoft as a company; also the first Computer Land franchise opened as Computer Shack in Morristown, New Jersey and it was the same year that saw first issue of Personal Computer (later renamed PC Magazine) getting published. Another important milestone in Internet's history was the design of a PC operating system program called UNIX written by Bell Laboratories in the year 1974 for programmers that allowed its users to share and copy files amongst them. In 1978 a program for communicating files between different UNIX systems (UUCP) came out, leading to the formation of even denser computer networks."[36] These networks provided the required infrastructure, which formed the 'backbone' of the Internet to grow in the years to come. Also by 1978 email had developed its unavoidable and much hated by-product i.e. spam mail. For much of the 1980s the Internet was fairly popular in the circles of professionals within the computer industries, universities and government agencies. They used the internet largely for networking amongst themselves i.e., "to share information and research; to post notices to the burgeoning number of BBS (Bulletin Board Systems) and to swap gossip

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[35] *Ibid.*

[36] Robert Hassan, *Media, Politics and the Network Society* (Berkshire: Open University Press, 2004), 13-14.

and opinion about, for example, the specifications of the new Apple Macintosh (vintage 1984) and whether $2495 was too much to pay for it; or whether the new (vintage 1985) Windows 1.0's Graphical User Interface (GUI) was a shameless rip-off from Apple."[37]

By 1990 ARPANET had been decommissioned, as it had become an obsolete system. But the knowledge of its systems and software, protocols and procedures, were still in the public domain. This period also coincided with the "deregulation of the telecommunications industry in the US."[38] This development alongside the "growing 'grass-roots' movement that networking had developed, brought in a 'phase transition' in the history of internet. As by this time networking had reached a critical mass which was later going to develop as the Internet that we know of today. This phase transition saw the rise of many independent and commercial Internet Service Providers (ISPs)", which was the enabling factor behind workplace and home Personal Computer users to dial-up to connect with the Internet through their modem connections. It also made the Internet expand in non-regulated and amorphous ways, adding newer nodes in multiple configurations such that the needs of the ever-increasing user base could be met. In the early 1990s itself "Tim Berners-Lee, a software programmer from the Geneva-based European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), developed a software that enabled any user to send and retrieve information to and from any other computer connected to the Internet, through the applications called URL, HTTP and HTML. Later on Lee, along with his CERN colleague Robert Cailliau, developed a browser-editor that allowed text to be linked (through what they called hypertext) to further, cross-referenced, information on the Internet, calling the system as the World-Wide Web (WWW)."[39] This final act in a way had officially announced the birth of Internet revolution.

1. **Web 2.0 Incarnation of Internet**

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[37] *Ibid.*

[38] *Ibid*.

[39] *Ibid.*

Although, the idea that the Internet can become a serious mobilization and political tool, important enough to study and theorize occurred rather late to the academic community. This came to be signposted with the emergence of the term and phenomena of 'Blog'[40] in the twenty-first century. Because of the swift increase of blogging and its associated offshoots led to the invention of another term: Web 2.0. This word obtained an important meaning and use for perceiving significant developments taking place over the Internet and its diverse political dimensions. Tim O'Reilly had coined the term Web 2.0 in 2003, and further explained in a paper titled "*What Is Web 2.0: Design Patterns and Business Models for the Next Generation of Software*" published in 2005. In the paper he explained seven key themes or principles that redefine the internet for 21st century, moreover the old Web 1.0 version that had become outdated in the wake of the 'Dot-com bubble' burst in the year 2001. Because the dot-com collapsed O'Reilly argued that it led to some kind of turning point for the web, like a call to action for all those companies and entrepreneurs who had been able to survive the crash. However all these given points have been distorted in a language, which is comprehensible either by the tech enthusiasts or business ventures involved in the digital economy. The rationale of this present chapter will do a reformulation by Andrew Chadwick and Philip Howard that is built upon O'Reilly's seminal approach, but is accustomed towards an understanding of the politics conducted over and through the Internet.

These are: "(i) Internet as a platform for political discourse, (ii) the collective intelligence emerging from collective web use, (iii) the importance of data over particular software and hardware applications, (iv) perpetual experimentalism in the public domain, (v) the creation of small scale forms of political engagement through consumerism, (vi) the propagation of political content over multiple applications and (vii) rich user experience on political websites."[41] The above seven themes will be discussed in some detail in the sections to follow:

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[40] An online journal or informational website displaying information produced by an individual or a group of writers on a given subject, mostly written in an informal manner.

[41] Chadwick and Howard, "New Directions in Internet Politics Research," 4-5.

1.1.1 Internet as a platform for political discourse

The first theme understands the word that Web 2.0 is "no longer based on a network of hypertexts, instead it now enables a wide range of goals to be achieved through networked software services."[42] Google has came to be signified as the, "archetypal Web 2.0 web-as-platform service, whose value depends almost entirely on its ability to create wealth from the interface of its distributed advertising network, its search algorithms and huge database of crawled pages."[43] Theorists like Jeff Jarvis announced it to be the model company for all other enterprises operating in the digital era led information economy, as they believe it has changed, "the fundamental architecture of societies and industries the way steel girders and rails changed how cities and nations were built and how they operated."[44] There are two main elements of the above theme "easy scalability" and a "long tail". With easy scalability organizations are competent enough in adapting to unexpected growth surges and unexpected turn of events. While Chris Anderson developed idea of the long tail which specifically deals with online commerce and distribution, explaining how it has altered the economics of production and distribution. Like for example, former movie studios, publishers, record companies, etc. used to produce a set quantity of products because of limitation of physical spaces in the form of movie halls, book stalls, record stores that could potentially host all this content. But now with online hosting of majority of such content the distribution costs have significantly come down leading to a sales/products curve having a large "head" and a long "tail" of niches. The collapse of the Blockbuster retail chain of movie-lending services is a case in point here in the United States. While its equivalence in India could be the closing down of the long-running Shemaroo library on Napean Sea Road, in Mumbai in 2014, or the Teenage Library in Colaba, Mumbai that can in general be associated with the lack of enthusiasm associated with DVDs in India.[45]

Moreover, this feature of the Internet has led politicians like Howard Dean to launch his presidential campaign for winning the Democratic Party nomination to contest in 2004 US Presidential elections. His campaign is considered to be the first amongst the big political campaigns in the world to have made use of the internet as a political platform in helping to raise huge sums of money to run for the post as well as garnering a huge following amongst young

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[42] *Ibid.*

[43] *Ibid.*

[44] Jeff Jarvis, *What Would Google Do? Reverse-Engineering the Fastest Growing Company in the History of the World* (Harpar Collins, 2009), 274.

[45] Uday Bhatia, "The Dying DVD Rental," *Live Mint*, January 27, 2017.

internet enthusiasts who doubled up as volunteers asking for votes on his behalf in the real world. Dean campaigning model trusted multiple online venues to get the work done, which were loosely interconnected through automated linking technologies, most importantly blogs, alongside real time "face-to-face meetings, coordinated through the user-generated Meetup site."[46] This idea has seen a recent erupt with the growing prominence of online Social networking services like Facebook and Twitter as potential platforms to announce once candidature for any given election or taking up political battles online that have otherwise been negated in the mainstream media outlets. The United States Presidential campaign of Donald J Trump in 2016 was fought as much on the battlefields of the new age Internet in its Web 2.0 incarnation, as it was through the traditional domains of ground-level campaigning and person-to-person closed interactions.

India during the general elections in 2014 witnessed for the first time the unique aspect of Web 2.0 in all its glory. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), a right wing nationalist party, that was out of power for a full decade was able to make a comeback in the 2014 general elections in India with a thumping majority, thanks largely to their immaculate online campaigning. They were able to connect with millions of youngsters or first-time voters, who not only voted for them but many of them led their social media campaign as well. For e.g. Vikas Pandey, a software engineer who supervised SNS (Social Networking Services) led campaigns on behalf of BJP like "I Support Namo" on Twitter and Facebook, was advised by Narendra Modi (present Prime Minister of India) himself during their first meeting, to make better use of the social media platform for the party's political success.[47] Not only the use of social media played a fundamental part in getting BJP's electoral pitch to the masses but influenced them as well to vote. In fact this campaign itself was partly inspired by the Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) electoral strategy during the 2013 Delhi assembly elections where this newly born party was able to win the election riding upon the strength of non- partisan, self-motivated volunteers from the social media. A point to be noted over here is that class divisions within such campaigns seem palpably clear in the target audience that these volunteers aim at. "Our target was the middle and the upper middle class," Pandey said. As it was with this audience in mind, "our team of volunteers could bypass non-favourable or negative views expressed in the mainstream media against the BJP or Modiji to reach out to voters directly."[48]

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[46] Staff Reporter, "Meet Ups for Mobilization", accessed on December 21, 2016, http://www.sptimes.com/2003/12/21/Hernando/_Meet_ups__mobilize_D.shtml.

[47] Staff report, "Meet Vikas Pandey, the man who led BJP's social media campaign," *Firstpost*, May 20, 2014.

[48] *Ibid.*

1.1.2 Collective intelligence emerging from collective web use

The basic understanding under this theme entails the "idea that a distributed network of creators and contributors, majority of them being amateurs, while using simple tools[49], may end up producing information goods that are way better performance wise when compared with the ones being produced by the alleged authoritative, concentrated sources. Most important of such examples are the "free and open source software projects and user generated content sites."[50] As illustrated through works like Wikinomics- *How Mass Collaboration Changes Everything,* Don Tapscott and Anthony D. Williams seem to be in complete awe of seminal changes happening "in the nature of technology, demographics, and the global economy that have given rise to newer models of production that are based on community, collaboration, and self- organization"[51], which according to them are fast replacing profit seeking, money making hierarchical models of traditional corporate structures as the economy's primary engine of wealth creation. Terming them "Weapons of Mass Collaboration", the new low-cost collaborative infrastructures- from free Internet telephony to open source software to global outsourcing platforms- they believe has made sure that millions of individuals and small producers end up co-creating products, accessing markets, and spreading joy to customers at a scale and in ways that only big businesses or conglomerates could administer in the past. Thus right from contributing towards the "digital commons" they firmly hold the belief that in the future these new collaborations will apart from serving commercial interests, will also help people do public-spirited things like curing genetic diseases, predicting global climate change, right down to finding new planets and stars. Holding the belief firmly that in this new business model only those groups will be able to survive who consistently innovate through new collaborations or will perish at the altar of new technology that might well include individuals, societies and corporations belonging to industrial era and

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[49] Chadwick and Howard, "New Directions in Internet Politics Research," 5.

[50] *Ibid.*

[51] Don Tapscott and Anthony Williams, *Wikinomics: How Mass Collaboration Changes Everything* (New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2006), 20.

onwards. This new art and science of *Wikinomics*[52] the authors claim is based on four powerful new ideas: openness, peering, sharing, and acting globally.[53]

Thus, while previously organizations were close minded to concepts like sharing, networking, self-organization; as conventionally it was believed that organizations survive by a strict regime of copyrights, patenting, etc. On the question of "overseeing human resources, firms were urged to contact the best individuals, and to inspire, create, and hold them, since human capital forms the bedrock of competitiveness. Today organizations that make their limits permeable to external ideas and human resources outflank organizations that depend entirely on their internal assets and abilities."[54] Add to this the power of peering that entails a new form of organizing, where individuals are progressively self-organizing in order to "design goods and services, creation of knowledge, or just producing dynamic, shared experiences. An emerging number of cases suggest that peer-to-peer models of organizing economic activity are making inroads into areas that go well beyond creating software."[55] One of the first examples of this sort of peering was that of LINUX operating system. Similarly, organizations do need to secure their basic licensed innovation, to remain a step ahead of others competitively. Yet, organizations can't work together successfully if the greater part of their Intellectual Property (IP) resources remain covered up. But contribution towards commons (digital or any kind) is not just philanthropy; it's basically the most ideal approach to manufacture lively business ecosystems that make use of a shared culture of innovation and information to hasten development and advancement.

The aforementioned values have turned Wikipedia into one of the most sought-after user generated content sites. A simple web search on any celebrity, product, company, event, etc. invariably leads you to Wikipedia. This has also led to a minefield of consistent political battles where one witnesses unending "edit wars"[56], on behalf of supporters of various causes, movements, communities, ideologies and individuals; over a given page or multiple pages that are been hosted by Wikipedia. For e.g. in 2015 a huge controversy erupted over the mindless editing done to the Wikipedia page of Jawaharlal Nehru (first Prime Minister of India) where someone had mischievously posted misinformation about his lineage, birthplace and ancestry.

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[52] A term that the authors have invented to explain the changes brought in by peer to peer sharing, leading to a fundamental shift in the old methods of doing business and production of goods & services

[53] Tapscott and Williams, *Wikinomics*, 20-29.

[54] *Ibid.*

[55] *Ibid.*

[56] An edit war refers to contestations between editors who might disagree about the nature of content a page hosts, thereby repeatedly overriding each other's contributions.

The most shocking part in this entire episode was the fact that this edit could be traced back to an IP address registered with the National Informatics Centre, the government's Internet provider. In fact there are other records to suggest that Indian government employees are amongst the biggest editors of Wikipedia pages.[57] Not just Wikipedia but there has been a proliferation of blogs in the past decade or so that has made political elites beware of the smallest of actions which can now be reported by anyone with a broadband connection and a political will. Citizen-reporters as a phenomenon have radically altered the current media landscape where anyone with a camera in hand and legs on the ground can directly report from protest sites and demonstration venues, which otherwise due to a lack of media coverage were never able to generate as much buzz as they can now.

1.1.3 Importance of Data over particular Software and Hardware applications

The given principle of Web 2.0 deals with the growing importance of data in Internet politics. Be the individuals or corporations right down to state actors everyone seems to be involved in the mining, refining and protection of huge amounts of information in order to dominate the virtual world, which subsequently would guarantee domination in the real world as well. A large amount of this data is generated through the work of volunteers, but its real value comes from the fact of it being spread across multiple sites and getting exploited centrally. Looking through the prism of Internet politics, this principle brings forth issues like surveillance, privacy, and the commercial & political use of personal information by third parties without permission from the given users gain quintessential importance over here. The important fact to remember here is that the same channels of social networking websites which tend to promote freedom of thought and expression; may also lead to "automated gathering, sorting and targeting."[58] In fact in earlier times of Internet, political actors could be heard often cribbing about the lack of control one experiences while planning the strategy to target select group of supporters. The applications that Web 2.0 offers does ostensibly render these assignments significantly easier and manageable, as people themselves produce and disclose huge caches of data "about their tastes and inclinations

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[57] Mridula Chari, "Think the Nehru Wikipedia edit is bad? See what else government workers have been changing," *Scroll*, July 1, 2015.

[58] Chadwick and Howard, "New Directions in Internet Politics Research," 4-5.

within enclosed, proprietary technological frameworks."[59] In the domain of political battles, Social Networking Services (SNS) therefore tend to benefit their users substantially more over the open web. This also explains to us in some degree as to why governments world over has been looking to control the content over the Internet.

Seen in the light of aforementioned point, the Indian Supreme Court in its *Right to Privacy* judgment had "expressed concerns over inroads being made into an individual's right to privacy in the digital age and called for a data protection law which is proportionate to the purpose for which data is collected and stored"[60], exhorting "Informational privacy is a facet of the right to privacy. The dangers to privacy in an age of information can originate not only from the state but from non-state actors as well. We commend to the Union government the need to examine and put into place a robust regime for data protection…. Data mining with the object of ensuring that resources are properly deployed to legitimate beneficiaries is a valid ground for the state to insist on the collection of authentic data. But, the data which the state has collected has to be utilized for legitimate purposes of the state and ought not to be utilized unauthorizedly for extraneous purposes."[61] In courts opinion this will make sure that not only the legitimate concerns of the state have been duly safeguarded while, at the same time, protecting privacy concerns of Indian citizens. As the prevention, "investigation of crime and protection of the revenue constitute legitimate aims of the state. But any curtailment or deprivation of that right can only take place under a regime of law that must be fair, just and reasonable."[62]

A couple of weeks later the same court issued notices to Google and Twitter, two of the most popular Internet companies measured in terms of usage, and the Union government of India, to seek their legal opinions on a petition drawing the court's attention to the lack of control over data-sharing with cross-border corporate entities that would allegedly fall under the violation of a citizen's right to privacy, as already established in the previous judgment. They further inquired from WhatsApp and Facebook "to file sworn statements on whether they shared any data collected from users with third parties"[63], as the given petition alleged they did with WhatsApp's new privacy policy (post its acquisition by Facebook), which shall be violative of one's *Right to*

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[59] *Ibid.*

[60] Times News Network, "Right to Privacy," *The Times of India*, April 12, 2019.

[61]Justice K. S. Puttaswamy (Retd) vs Union of India, Writ Petition (Civil) No. 494 (2012).

[62] *Ibid.*

[63] Saurabh Singh, "SC issues notices to Govt, WhatsApp and Google, seeks legal view over data-sharing policy," *Entrackr*, September 7, 2017.

Privacy. To which WhatsApp replied that, "the only information shared by WhatsApp with holding company Facebook is the display picture, the device details, last access details, and phone numbers."[64] Which chiefly is used for commercial purposes but this data is completely encrypted and cannot be accessed by any third party, other than the sender and receiver.

1.1.4 Perpetual experimentalism in the public domain

Web 2.0 applications have gone through a great amount of public experimentalism. This gets well explained with the "perpetually beta"[65] status of many of the popular services. The beta phase of development of a software is usually brought in "when a developer opens up a product to all those who originally were not involved in its development. A closed beta is a limited release where only those who have been given access can test the software while an open beta or public beta is a free release that allows anyone to download and try it out."[66] While this might be partially due to the "requirement of building and testing scalable web applications on paltry resources, it also points towards a significant shift away from tightly regulated development environments towards those characterized by fluidity and greater collaboration between developers and users."[67] In fact this was the dominant spirit behind the earlier developmental phase of the Internet that seems to have lost its ethical significance in the later decades. As Castells puts it, the era we are living in is not epitomized through merely information or knowledge flow, as some other thinkers might like us to believe. But this *Network Society* is based upon a new technological paradigm that is 'informationalism', which has led to a new social structure emerging that comprises of electronic communication technologies. In his own words, "what makes this paradigm unique in relation to previous historical developments of information and communication technologies (such as printing, the telegraph, or the non-digital telephone) are, in essence, three major, distinctive features of the technologies at the heart of the system: firstly, their self-expanding processing and communicating capacity in terms of volume, complexity, and speed; secondly, their ability to recombine on the basis of digitization and

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[64] Samanwaya Rautray, "Supreme Court notice to government, Google, Twitter on cross-border data sharing and privacy," *The Economic Times*, September 7, 2017.

[65] It is the keeping of software or a system at the beta development stage for an extended or indefinite period of time. Developers opt for this technique, when they want to continue to release new features that might not be fully tested.

[66] Joel Lee, "What does "Beta Software" really mean?," *MakeUseOf*, October 3, 2013.

[67] Chadwick and Howard, "New Directions in Internet Politics Research," 4-5.

recurrent communication; and finally, their distributing flexibility through interactive, digitized networking."[68]

As far as Internet politics is concerned this given feature of Web 2.0 presents itself to activists across a range of political activities. For example, election campaigns these days are "characterized by excessive and continuous recalibration in response to instant online polls, fund-raising drives, comments lists on social media pages, and blog and forum posts. A suitable example of an impact of the permanent beta in politics was the British prime minister's e-petitions initiative, launched in November 2006."[69] Giving beta status to an e-government initiative in a first world democracy like Britain points towards the fact as to how deep the web 2.0 values of freedom and transparency have seeped deep within public cultures of many of the democracies. The rise and growing clout of the Citizens' Charters that first saw its roots in Britain but have now become a worldwide measure to ascertain the accountability of the powers-that-be points to the ascendancy of the Web 2.0 platform in terms of analyzing data and citizen responses in terms of real-time impacts. Closer home in India as well many government websites and digital initiatives are released in beta status firstly like the Vahan initiative of Ministry of Road Transport & Highways or the Digital Locker initiative.

1.1.5 Creation of small scale forms of political engagement through consumerism

The inherent nature of most of the data precludes it from being closed off to the liberal use by people in general, as that may be politically unfeasible as a certain business model might depend upon open access. Web 2.0 applications have the ability to mix together data of different varieties that were originally intended for pursuing a very different goal from the one it is ultimately put to use for. In real life politics, this given aspect of web 2.0 would lead to an increased power in the hands of common citizens. For example, "British activist volunteer group *mySociety* has launched a number of sites, such as *TheyWorkForYou.com* and *FixMyStreet.com* that combine publicly accessible government data with user-generated input. *Theyrule.net* allows users to expose the social ties among political and economic elites by mapping out the network structures

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[68] Castells, *The Network Society,* 9.

[69] Chadwick and Howard, "New Directions in Internet Politics Research," 5.

of the corporate boards of multinational firms."[70] As Clay Shirky would like to argue that with the rise of new technology; newer kinds of group-formations, aided through communications tools that are flexible enough to equate up to humans' social capabilities are taking place, resulting in better ways of coordinating action that takes benefit of this transformation. These communications tools are recognized through many a different name, all variations on a similar theme: "social software," "social media," "social computing," and so on.[71]

Working along similar lines the Government of India (GOI) with the aim of tapping into the vast human resource of an increasingly mobile Indian population, has been trying its utmost best "to leverage the ongoing communications revolution in the country. It is doing so by making its services available and easy to access for masses via responsive mobile apps. These apps not only help people stay connected to the government through getting the latest information, directives, policy resolutions, etc."[72] but more importantly they also let them take part in its initiatives. Some of the more famous apps like "*Khoya Paya app*, which is a citizen-centric portal that aims at addressing the issue of missing, lost, and vulnerable children in India. On it any Indian can register with the portal and provide information about a missing or sighted child. This given information provided by the citizen is then made available for public view after moderation"[73] in a short span of time, thereby speeding up the whole process. The dashboard of the app demonstrates a graph - "missing and sighting trend" - where a monthly break-up in numbers of the children who have been missing or spotted is highlighted. Apart from providing information, citizens can further search the given database of children through equating the attributes of a lost or sighted child. This also noticeably decreases the time for the important information in reaching the affected lot. Its biggest asset being the establishment of people-to-people contact, through which the app is able to better coordinate the search for missing children.

Apart from this, the now famous *Swachh Bharat App* launched by the UD (Urban Development) Ministry of the central government that addresses complaints dealing with civic issues. After downloading the app one can simply file a complaint through taking a picture of the garbage that has not been cleared for days or any other cleanliness related complaint in any given locality. Once a citizen has clicked and posted the picture, it automatically gets forwarded to the concerned

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[70] *Ibid.*, 5.

[71] Clay Shirky, *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing without Organizations* (New York: Penguin Books, 2008), 20.

[72] Sanchari Pal, "Digital India: Connect with a Tech Savvy Indian Government through these 12 cool apps," *The Better India*, September 2, 2016.

[73] *Ibid.*

municipal authority of the given region. All major Indian "urban local bodies have been linked to this app, which pinpoints to the exact location from where the complaint has been recorded using geo-location of the pictures. Once a complaint gets registered, the complainant is provided with regular updates on its status, including a picture uploaded by the sanitary inspector once the issue is resolved. Citizens also have the option to give feedback on the quality of resolution."[74]

The above mentioned social aspect of the new media can also be highlighted in order to challenge some of the widely held common sensical notions about the present *Net Generation*[75] of being dumber, lacking social skills, being perennially confused, who are shameless bullies with uncontrolled violent streak who cannot distinguish between real and virtual life. Author Don Tapscott talking highly of this present generation had argue that as the first global generation ever, the Net Generation is smarter and sooner with more toleration for variety than any of the previous generations. Alongside they share a strong moral core amidst themselves and who care powerfully about justice and the problems active in the society around them. They also tend to remain occupied with some civic activity at school, at work, or in their communities. "And it is with the rapid and increased use of digital media that this Net Generation will develop and superimpose its culture upon the rest of society."[76]

1.1.6 Propagation of political content over multiple applications

With the sudden rise in the market of affordable handsets alongside faster internet speeds and decreasing data usage costs we are increasingly witnessing a spurt in user-generated content through activities such as video and photo blogging. Nowadays even the commercial news organizations are increasingly relying upon amateur "witness reporters" or "citizen journalists", for gathering news. It not only helps them in gathering news through firsthand sources but also significantly brings down the cost of production and distribution of news items. The above-mentioned theme of collaboration and co-creation is highlighted in the writings of Henry Jenkins where he anticipates that the new media is going to operate with a different set of principles when

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[74] *Ibid.*

[75] Mostly those born in the last decade of 20th century (for the sake of study the author identifies the people belonging to the age group of 16-29 years) who have grown up using multiple digital platforms and are more conversant with digital media vis-à-vis any other platform or any of the previous generations.

[76] Don Tapscott, *Grown Up Digital: How the Net Generation is Changing Your World* (New York: Mcgraw Hill, 2009), 6.

compared to the old broadcast media especially in terms of "access, participation, reciprocity and peer to peer communication than the older model of one-to-many communication. He believes that digital democracy is going to be decentralized, unevenly dispersed, profoundly contradictory, and slow to emerge."[77] Such that these changes will look suitable to appear "first in cultural forms giving rise to a changed sense of community, a greater sense of participation, less dependence on official expertise and a greater trust in collaborative problem solving."[78] In fact such changes are hard to miss in present day work environments which are less hierarchical, less vertically inclined and more horizontal as well as participatory in nature.

Looking at the rise of Citizen Journalists and their trade one finds that they make efficient use of all the available social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and the larger Blogosphere. The huge content that gets generated through these SNS platforms along with the comments, pictures, message board postings and video uploads form the essential core of user-generated content. Increasingly we are witnessing the opening up of most traditional media websites allowing their in-house journalists to interact via comments and feedback using citizen journalism platforms. The British Broadcasting Corporation, CNN along with other media giants globally, whose spillover effects can be witnessed in India as well, have for some time now incorporated to different degrees the recognition of some variant of citizen journalism. In itself citizen journalists are not a homogenous whole as such but can be further subdivided into "accidental journalists, advocacy journalists and grass root journalists."[79] Wherein advocacy journalism is "one that adopts a viewpoint, journalism with an intentional and transparent bias although it must be distinguished from propagandist reporting".[80] Similarly accidental journalists are those who get accidentally trapped in the middle of an event and it is then only that they are able to make use of the SNS platforms to broadcast their material. Some of the famous citizen journalist websites at the global level are *Ground Report*, *Blottr, CNN iReport, Spot, us* amongst a host of others.

Within them *Ground Report* is used by citizen journalists frequently, where anyone can report on a happening across the globe, by submitting articles, videos, photos, etc. of any event that further get examined by the editorial desk of Ground Report prior to publishing. However, even here the

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[77] Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 208-209.

[78] *Ibid.*

[79] Kaveri Devi Mishra, and Sridhar Krishnaswami, "A New Genre Of Journalism: Citizen Journalism," *International Journal of English Language, Literature and Humanities - Volume III*, 4 (June 2015): 52-67.

[80] *Ibid.*

ones "with a 'verified' status can directly jump over the submission queue and get published directly. It is based in New York operating in a Wikipedia-style model that has volunteer editors and gets consistent feedback provided with the help of its community."[81] Showcasing to us the power of peer-to-peer exchange of information that can later be used for activism and mobilization purposes. A more mainstream example of citizen journalism over here would be *CNN iReport* that enables news reporting for its subscribers from multiple viewpoints thereby letting them share and discuss stories through their platform. Even though it is "a CNN platform, the stories are rarely edited, fact checked or even screened prior to them getting published. The uniqueness of *iReport* is that citizen journalists have a genuine platform for getting published into the mainstream media, further with CNN producers monitoring this content closely one also has a chance to make it onto CNN if a story is unique or worth being told."[82]

Closer home in India the concept gradually evolved through decades where its first signs can be seen in the Letters to the editor of famous dailies. Then there were citizen journalists reporting for many Community Radio stations as well for whom a crunch of resources and certain innovative practices on the part of broadcasters promoted this culture. Later on, mid-2000s onwards we could see a rise of independent outfits using online platforms for citizen journalism or through mainstream media- public collaborations. The one stands out name in this field has been News 18 (earlier CNN-IBN) that started with this idea way back in 2006. And which from 2007 onwards got a dedicated half-hour weekend show with repeat broadcasts. Within the show, reporters who through their firsthand coverage, usually drive through a given event and report the story via citizen outputs generate ideas for different stories. Sources on the show are identifiable unlike in other news reports. They also make extensive use of social media like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram in news gathering and editing. But the presentation of the report is rarely amateurish since the citizen journalists are trained and prepared beforehand. Also, in the scripting and video editing aspect, the citizen journalists have no role at all.[83] The given concept has been repeated by other major media outlets over the years like NDTV, Aaj

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[81] *Ibid.*

[82] *Ibid.*

[83] "The Role of Citizen Journalists in New India", CNN News 18, http://people.socsci.tau.ac.il/mu/thefutureofoldmedia/files/2017/05/Times-Of-News-The-Role-of-CNN-News18%E2%80%99s-%E2%80%98Citizen-Journalist%E2%80%99-Show-in-India%E2%80%99s-Evolving-Mediascape.pdf.

Tak, etc. apart from the above model of citizen journalism there have been various other instances where amateur accidental journalists in the recent past have reported directly from events such as Chennai and Mumbai floods, Uttarakhand floods, building or bridge collapses amongst many other happenings.

1.1.7 Rich user experience on political websites

Technically this entails the development of applications that can run codes inside a web browser in a way which facilitates interactivity as well as "rapid retrieval, alteration, and storage of data. Many of the well-known Web 2.0 applications combine such capabilities with back-end databases which store user generated content that can be modified by others."[84] In fact online videos have emerged as the most important example of Web 2.0 politics that offer rich user experience. The sudden rise in user-generated content in mid 2000s took many media commentators by surprise, as they had earlier thought that with more media convergence and an "abundance of bandwidth would lead to the Internet becoming a more television and large-screen like experience. There have been some developments in this area as well, with IPTV (Internet Protocol Television) applications such as PPLive, CoolStreaming, Sopcast, BBC's iPlayer amongst others streaming HD (High Definition) quality videos across adapted peer-to-peer networks."[85]

Even then the most important incident in online video history to date is the emergence of user-generated site YouTube. A certain section of pundits in its initial days had thought that it might slowly transform into a fully converged large-screen online broadcasting network, but till date it has been able to withstand that tilt mainly because of its large regular user base which is mostly attuned to its small-screen, DIY format. On the political front, YouTube has been able to prove many skeptics wrong who initially thought that it would become a monopoly in the hands of affluent candidates who will use it for launching televisual online campaigns with huge input costs and better production value. But in reality, the effectiveness of a good YouTube video does in no way depend upon professional media production techniques or the associated spin-doctors of the media industry. YouTube over a given period of time has emerged to become one of the most important applications for content distribution by political campaigns.

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[84] Chadwick and Howard, "New Directions in Internet Politics Research," 4-5.

[85] *Ibid.*

The term web 2.0 was coined in 1999 and described as the evolution of online communication and a tool that "will fragment into countless permutations with different looks, behaviours, uses, and hardware hosts" (DiNucci, 1999, p.32). The first decade of the new millennium has observed steady proliferation of interactive web applications. By employing multiple platforms and the opportunities to publish on broad public communication channels are now accessible to beginner's web users. The term web 2.0 acts as an umbrella that accommodates all web-based programs that are created around user-generated content. In general message boards, blogs, wikis, podcasts, and social networking are characterized as web 2.0 applications. Because social media is comparatively a newer development within the Internet infrastructure not much recognized research is done on the way it interacts and influence persuasive communications.

Over the last few decades social media has made possible some wide-ranging changes still there is not much agreement in social sciences about how these changes should be understood. This chapter attempts to theoretically analyze the role of social media technologies in transforming political mobilisation and the understanding of public and private spheres by revealing the staging of new mediated sensorium. To elaborate, the chapter revolves around how the act of mediation or the transmission of cultural messages changes with the emergence of new media objects and turn affects the apparatus of human senses, thereby changing the way we perceive, imagine and discursively construct our social realities.

Social media has changed the way politics is done in India. Even in its early years, it has caught many people by surprise. Social media has made its impact in the manner the candidate's campaign for the elections, the members of parliament operates in their offices, and advocacy organizations communicate with policymakers and supporters. Social media cannot be considered as simply next in a line of communications technologies but a technology which has transformed everyday activities and connected people in a manner never imagined. The traditional medium of communications like radio, television, and cable television provided opportunities for politicians to reach new audiences but that structure of communication was limited to one way and the audience was limited to some extend but in case of social media the communication is not one- way and the audience is not limited to few.

The purpose of this chapter is to study the implications of social media and its capacity to alter the political process in India. The aim of the chapter is to comprehend the nature of digital communication through social networks and how that likely alters the political process in India. The user now creates their own news and is not simply at the receiving end of the published news.

It is now time to have a profound and realistic approach to social media which could look at itself and its potential significance in the context of cultural relativity, local situation and Indian particularities.

1.2 Defining Social media and Political mobilization

The fundamental character of communication has been transformed due to the potential integration of text, images, and sounds in a common system, interactions taking place from multiple points, inside a structure which is selected along a global network, in circumstances of open and rational access. Communication resolutely shapes our culture as argued by Postman "we do not perceive reality as 'it' is, but the way our languages are. And our languages are our media. Our media are our metaphors. Our metaphors produce content of our culture. Our culture is mediated and enacted through communication, cultures themselves are historically produced system of beliefs and codes which fundamentally get transformed and will keep on transforming within the new technological paradigm" (Postman, 1985).

In less than two decades the new information technologies have spread throughout the globe with remarkable speed amid the mid-1970s and 1990s. Manuel Castells argues "that the current process of technological transformation has expanded exponentially because it has the ability to create an interface between technological fields through a common digital dialogue in which information is generated, stored, retrieved, processed, and transmitted at a same time" (Castells, 1996). The new media is not mass media in conventional sense because it is determined by segmented, differentiated viewers that are huge in numbers. While sending limited messages to a homogeneous mass audience becomes very selective. The audience gets targeted to choose their messages, so it deepens segmentation and improves the individual relationship between sender and receiver.

Internet has witnessed increasing rate of diffusion in comparison to any communication medium in history. In "United States, the radio took 30 years to reach 60 million people; TV reached this level of diffusion in 15 years, Internet on the other hand did it in just three years after the development of World Wide Web. He further argues that the rest of the world is lagging behind North America and the developed countries, but Internet access and use were catching up rapidly in the main metropolitan centres in all continents. This widely unequal arrival time of societies

into the internet constellation will lead lasting consequences on the future pattern of the world's communication and culture" (Castells, 1996).

The question which dominated the debate in 1990s was predominantly concerned with the social dimensions of Internet. Whether it favours the growth of communities which are newly formed, virtual communities, or does it promote personal isolation which is ruining individuals ties with society, and ultimately, with their 'real' world. As examined by Rheingold in his work "for the birth of a new form of community bringing people together on-line around shared values and interests" (Rheingold, 1996). There are social critics like Mark Slouka, who have "chastised the de-humanization of social relationships brought about by computers, as life on-line appears to be an easy way to escape real life" (Slouka, 1995).

Wellman on the other hand argues that in "advanced societies there is a emergence of what he termed as 'personal communities' which he understands individual's social network of informal, interpersonal ties which comprises of half a dozen of intimates to hundreds of weaker ties. The benefit of the social media is that it allows the forming of weak ties. These weak ties are valuable because they present information and open multiple opportunities at a cheaper cost" (Wellman, 1999).

The "advantage of internet is that it permits making of weak ties with strangers, in an egalitarian outline of interaction where social attributes are less prominent in framing, or even blocking, communication. Certainly, weak ties make possible connecting of people with diverse social features, as a result increasing sociability beyond the socially defined boundaries of self-recognition. Because of this, the internet has the capacity to add to the growth of social bonds in a society that are considered to be in the process of speedy individualization and civicdisengagement. The Internet favours the expansion and power of these hundreds of weak ties that create crucial social interaction of people settled in a technologically developed world" (Wellman, 1999).

Social media mainly in "Europe as in America or in Asia shows to be supporting in early stages a social and cultural pattern considered by the following characteristics. First, because of extensive social and cultural distinction there is a division between the users/viewers/readers/listeners. The messages are segmented not only by markets leading sender's strategies, but they are also quickly expanded by users of the media, depending on the interests, which takes benefit of the interactive opportunities. Secondly, it cultivates social stratification among the users. The option of multimedia is confined to those who have time and

access to money, and to countries and regions with adequate market potential, although cultural and educational difference will be fundamental in using interaction to the gain of each user" (Castells, 1996).

In social media space there are mostly two different populations, "the interacting and the interacted. This describes that those who are able to choose their multidirectional circuits of communication, and there are those who offer with a limited number of pre-packaged options. The unifying cultural power of mass television is now replaced by a socially stratified differentiation, leading to the coexistence of a customized mass media culture and an interactive electronic communication network of self-selected communes" (Castells, 1996).

Thirdly, the messages are communicated in the similar system. The system can be interactive and selective particularly it persuades an integration of all messages in a common cognitive model. The last and most significant characteristic of social media is that they are capable of capturing inside their domain most cultural terms, in all their forms. They appear virtually similar which ends the departure and difference between audiovisual media, printed media, popular culture and learned culture, entertainment and information, education and persuasion. "In the social media world all kinds of cultural expression from the worst to the best, from the elitist to the most popular, comes together in this digital universe that links up in a giant, non-historical hypertext, past, present, and future manifestations of the communicative mind"(Castells, 1996).

This builds a new symbolic setting which makes virtuality our reality. This "new communication structure is digitalized and is based in networked integration of multiple communication nodes that symbolizes comprehensiveness and completeness of all cultural expressions. A price has to be paid for becoming part of the system which includes adapting to its logic, its language, and its points of entry and encoding and decoding. In process of communication there is need for sharing meaning through the exchange of information. In a particular society, the main cause of the social production of meaning is the process of socialized communication. This regular change of communication technology in the digital age widens the reach of communication media to all spheres of social life in a network which is global and local, generic and customized in a similar point. This change of the communication setting openly impacts the forms of meaning construction, and thus the production of power relationship" (Castells, 1996).

Manuel Castells has explained this "fundamental change in the realm of communication as the rise of mass self-communication- the use of Internet and wireless networks as platforms of digital communication. It is called as mass communication because it processes messages from many to

many, with the potential to reach multiplicity of receivers, and to connect endless network that transmit digitized information around the world" (Castells, 1996). Mass self-communication gives the opportunity to the digital space for generating autonomy of the social actor, whether he is individual or collective as opposed to the social institutions.

There are major dissimilarities in the features of the organizations involved in the connective action cases when compared to collective action protest events. Bennett and Segerberg in their work "The Logic of connective action'[86] argues that in the case of self- organized networks, which are contrary to the conventional collective action, traditional organizations play a less significant role than social technologies. In collective action cases mobilization depends on brokering organizations that assist cooperation. Although organizations are seen in connective action in self-organized networks, but there are essential differences in the manner of their organizations. On the other hand, conventional collective action organizations are usually parties and trade unions. On the contrary, typical connective action organizations are accepted to be more newly created and, have an internet-based nature and no formal membership" (Bennett, 2012).

Although social media is able reduce some of the costs of these processes, but they cannot change the action dynamics fundamentally. But the manner in which 'logic of connective action' model works the social media somehow manages to change the dynamics of action. The networks which function through social media do not require a strong organizational control or the symbolic structure of a unified "we". Because of these inherent properties these networks are definitely prominent in those parts of world where organizations which are formally organized are losing their control on individuals and group attachments are being substituted by large-scale fluid social networks.

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[86] To explain it further The "Logic of Connective Action" explains the rise of a personalized, digitally networked politics in which diverse individuals address the common problems of our times, such as economic fairness and climate change. Through the case studies from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany shows a theoretical explanation of understanding how wider connective action is coordinated using inclusive discourses such as "We Are the 99%" that travel easily through social media. In many of these mobilisations, communication operates as an organizational process that may replace or supplement familiar forms of collective action based on organizational resource mobilization, leadership, and collective action framing. The Logic of Connective Action shows how power is organized in communication-based networks and what political outcomes may result.

1.2. 1 Political Mobilization in the Age of Social media

The term social media is used principally in reference to networking websites like Face book and Twitter which consist of a large part of internet that is fashioned as a platform which provides the users and group of users the opportunity to produce and exchange content in a more interactive and collaborative manner. In the last few years the "political role of social networking sites is considered to be a well-established area of research with reference to political communication and participation. Social media networks have played a significant part in the diffusion of popular protest across the Arab World and the defeat of authoritative powers in Tunisia and Egypt. This has re-established the discussion on the role social media in political mobilization, protest dissemination and the manner in which it influences the individual political engagement" (Breuer, 2015).

A political mobilization creates values and goals which are new in their forms through them the institutions of political process are altered. These new norms create values to rearrange political life. Political mobilizations "exercise counter power by organising themselves in the first place through a process of independent communication which is not controlled by any institutional power. The traditional construction of media is mostly dominated by governments and media corporations, however communicative autonomy in the network society is mainly established largely around digital networks and in spaces of wireless communication" (Castells, 2012).

Though political mobilizations require to create public space by forming free communities in the urban space. The reason is because institutional public space, which is legally chosen for discussion is occupied by the interests of the dominant elites and their networks. Political mobilizations need to form a new public space that is not confine within the realm of social media, but also make itself noticeable in the spheres of social life. They need to occupy urban space and symbolic buildings. Like for instance during Anti – corruption movement Jantar Mantar became a very strategic space for protest.

There are many scholars who seemed to be interested in finding out the contribution of social media in protest events. "Social media can help activists expand their engagement repertoires, move beyond previous physical and temporal confines, and organize and coordinate participation in protest actions more successfully. Clay Shirky has also mentioned that social media can be used as a critical tool for fostering participation, sharing information, social engagement and mobilization of loosely coordinated publics" (Shirky, 2011). On the other hand, social media can

be seen as undermining social movements and social change by creating weak ties which leads to disorder and lack of direction in protest politics. By only sharing tweets and Facebook likes a movement cannot stimulate, it needs deeper social bonding and sharing of common ideology to bring any social and political change.

Though it is significant to comprehend that social media technologies are not the only cause of mass protest but they do act as a facilitator and shape the 'enactments' of protests. The traditional forms of media are aware and active on social media platforms to connect with their audiences and understand their mood. Social media is supposed to perform a very critical role by creating large-scale mobilization processes and to be a part without establishing formal organizations. Similarly social media enables the citizens to cooperate more aggressively in mobilization processes. The citizens rely on these social networking sites to capture information about a demonstration or protest and spread it through the appearance of their participation or identity which is done in platforms which are not dominated by the traditional mobilizing mediators.

Historically, political mobilisations used to rely on the existence of specific communication patterns such rumors, sermons, pamphlets, and manifestos, spread from person to person, from news media, or the means of communication existed at that point of time. But in the present scenario, multimodal, internet networks of horizontal communication are the fastest and the most autonomous, interactive, reprogrammable, and self-expanding means of communication in history. The kinds of communication process that takes place between the individuals engaged in movement ascertain the organizational properties of the movement. The more interactive and self-configurable communicating process is, the less hierarchical will be the organization. This is the reason why the networked political mobilisations of the digital age represent a new class of movements.

There are many similarities in the contemporary movements taking place throughout the world. These networks have provided a platform for co coordinating and organizing the protest events and to broadcasting information and debate to the population at large. Television also performs a significant role but always depend on Internet and mobile phones to feed its images and information. Movements initially begin in cyberspace to urban space, by capturing the symbolic buildings as material support for both deliberation and protests. This space which is also referred to as hybrid space is constituted of digital social networks and of newly structured urban community was at the centre of the movement, both as an instrument for self-reflection and also as assertion of people's power.

Manuel Castells argues "that there are number of common characteristics in the contemporary movements. These movements are networked in multiple forms which means that they employ Internet and mobile communication networks which are essential but the networking form is multimodal" (Castells, 2012). These movements are generally formed in urban space by occupying and doing streets demonstrations but their continuous existence takes place in the free space given by the Internet. They don't require to have identifiable center, and still can coordinate operations through discussions between multiple nodes. This is the reason they don't even need a formal leadership that command and control them or an organization to dispense information or instructions. This structure which is decentered increases the chances of participation in the movement operates in open-ended networks with no defined territories.

Secondly, "these movements at first start on the Internet social networks but they soon become a movement once they occupy the urban space. The space of the movement is always created by the interaction between the space of flows on the Internet and wireless communication networks, and the spaces of places of the occupied sites of symbolic buildings targeted by protest actions. This hybrid of cyberspace and urban space comprises a third space which he Castells calls as space of autonomy. The space of autonomy is the new spatial form of networked social movement" (Castells, 2015). Third these movements are based locally and globally at a similar time. They emerge through their own contexts, for their own special reasons and build their own networks by creating public space and capturing urban space and connecting it to the digital networks.

As also observed by Riley that "The Internet has brought about a decentralization of power. Where individuals can now make their own choices in the wired world as to which authorities and information resources they are ready to believe. This directs to a better democratization of knowledge, empowerment of the individual and the possibility for more informed interactions between the citizens and organizations which includes government. Social media are creating new spaces for unmediated public deliberation in which citizens can interact with one another, with other communities and with elites that were once not much exposed to this kind of direct engagement" (Huggins, 2001).

Andrew Chadwick and Philip in their book *'Routledge Handbook of Internet Politics'* argues that the "structure of traditional organizations has changed from strictly hierarchical institutional to more flexible, horizontal, or hybrid types. Microblogging sites like Twitter make it easier to provide collective information despite its sporadic and ephemeral nature. It makes easy and quick

flow of short and direct messages calling for action which are considered as important for political activities. These tweets can spread effortlessly across multiple social networking sites and can draw the interest of earlier uninterested and organizationally unregarded people. These kinds of short messages may perform as a channel in someone's hasty decision to become concerned in particular political acts whether online or offline, providing support to a specific movement" (Chadwick, 2012). Twitter is prominent medium to communicate as it permits diverse and decentralized people to engage in horizontal conversational practices. It gives opportunity to activists during the protest movement to form their own thematic categories through hashtags (#) and to structure a conversation with particular themes or keywords like for example (#IAC and #greekrevolution).

Television has played a very prominent role in influencing the opinion of the public especially during elections and it continues to do so, but due to the increase in digital networking and the internet penetration, diverse kinds of new digital technologies and online social networking sites like Face book, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram etc. have challenged the monopoly of conventional new channels. Moreover, with the exponential growth in usage of social media in the last decade has transformed the way election campaigns are being held not just in India but all around the world with leaders, parties and candidates assertively using this increasingly developing medium to gain direct connect with voters and influence their opinions. Social media in present time is not just a space confined to connect with friends and family. Instead, it has metamorphosed into being an influential platform to conduct political activity and discourse which many a times leads towards intense and polarized conversations.

Digital technology has given the opportunity to reform political process far more intensely than the telephone or television could have ever imagined. Unlike them it offers the possibility of direct two-way interaction between the citizens and politicians. Although the "world of communication technologies like social networks is vast and it doesn't end so easily, it also has the capacity to make a 'small world'. This empowers people to communicate and engage with large number of people who are in distance and also gives the capability to coproduce content and share with them. That is how social and political networks are replacing hierarchical social and political institution. This new communication technology is letting citizens to share political information and commentary with other citizens breaking the monopoly of 'professional communicators' i.e. news organizations and journalists" (Bennett, 2012).

Enli & Eli Skogerbo while working on Norwegian politics have classified "three fundamental reasons of politicians for using social media in election campaigns i.e. marketing, mobilization and the opportunities for dialogue with voters. They state that marketing in social media is more personal than mainstream media. The thought behind employing social media is to continuously stay on the minds of the electorate. Social media is used by the politicians for marketing and to mobilise electorate for political actions while adding up a personal touch. It is believed to be an instrument that will enhance the effects of other campaign strategies and coordinate large scale collective actions. Thirdly, politicians measured the use of social media as an easier and booming mode to directly get involved in a communication with the voters, engage in dialogues with them, discuss issues and receive a feedback" (Skogerbo, 2013).

The conventional understanding of the mass party has also declined for about half a century due to the social and technological changes in developed societies. The "decline of parties as mass organizations and the increasing difficulty that parties encounter in mobilising the vote has often shifted citizens' attentions away from local election campaigns and towards the national political stage, a trend that has been hastened by the growth of the social media. At the same time, the major parties have shifted their emphasis during election campaigns from local candidates to national political leaders" (McAllister, 2007). The result is now less dependence on a party's policies which was given to them earlier and more prominence is given to the personalities of the leaders who will have to execute those policies if they win election. This kind of election strategy campaign was employed by Bharatiya Janata Party during 2014 national elections.

Maurice Vergeer, Liesbeth Hermans and Steven Sams in their study highlighted how "candidates running for the European Parliament (EP) in 2009 used Micro blogging to communicate and connect with citizens. They also found that though this new Micro blogging tool Twitter was new and a popular Web 2.0 application, there was very little research carried out on the use of Twitter by Politicians" (Vergeer, 2011). They studied diverse kinds of campaigning strategies and also analysed the beginning of this new and distinct strategy of campaigning adopted by the politicians lately. The results essentially marked that "most candidates in 2009 used Twitter unwillingly. The candidates, who did use Twitter, did so primarily for electoral campaigning and only cautiously for continuous campaigning. One thing which was also seen that how a candidate's presence on Twitter is a sign of the progressive nature of the party to which he belongs to. Hence, it was found that candidates from progressive parties were most active users of Twitter, conservatives are nearly absent in the online space" (Vergeer, 2011).

Richard Huggins and Barrie Axford in their book *"New Media and Politics"* argue that political parties have traditionally relied on mass media for political communication during election campaigns to draw support from the public. But the advent of new media was anticipated to transform political communication in democratic societies, changing the nature of participation of the audience while also changing the approach of political parties and governance (Richard Huggins, 2001). New media particularly is considered as helpful for attracting audience members who had previously not been using traditional news media sources to get their share of political information. "The internet is creating a more open, fluid political opportunity structure one which increasingly enables the Indian public".

Many political parties in the US, UK, Australia and some countries in Europe, Africa, and Asia now use social media platforms immensely during elections. Social media was deliberately employed in 2008 and 2012 US Presidential elections and in 2014 national elections in India. Social networking sites are believed to have the potential to generate revolution and producing horizontal forms of communication inside otherwise hierarchical political campaigns. The monopoly of elite groups over campaign events during the broadcast era of politics has laid the new values to social media platforms that characterize users symmetrically and reciprocally with equivalent capacities as senders and receivers of communication.

The development of social media presents new challenges and opportunities for political parties. Formal membership in organizations is not a perquisite for people to connect with a wider audience. At the same time, "social activist and citizens all over the world are utilising the new opportunity provided by communication networking to progress their projects, to protect their interests, and to claim their values. Along with this now people are more aware of the critical role played by new multimedia system and its regulatory institutions in the culture and politics of society. Therefore we are witnessing in many parts of the world, and specifically in the United States, social and political mobilizations with the objective to create a degree of citizen's dominance over the controllers of communication and establish their right to freedom in the space of communication" (Castells, 2012).

Clay Shirky in his work explains that technology has become a significant facilitator. He mainly understands how groups are fashioned and function in a networked society. He investigates the role of new technology in creating fresh modes of group formation. Internet helps us to form groups effortlessly. He in his later writings takes this argument further and says that "cognitive surplus was the outcome of the Internet, which was once made dormant by television" (Shirky,

2010). The power of many is more important than those few who had traditionally occupied power. Internet facilitates   new togetherness because of the collaborative and sharing opportunities it provided to the people that were denied to them before (Don Tapscott 2008).

Many scholars predicted that the introduction of social media would bring transparency in the way the government functions which will lead towards a better efficiency and then to better democracy. Social media brings together citizens in the virtual space and recreate a more legitimate and thoughtful kind of deliberative democracy. This direct representation based in digital networks could present a basis for a more substantive and deliberative democracy. These new digital networks of communication promises democratize representation by building a new direct relationship.

1.3 Demystifying the alleged revolutionary potential of the Internet

Due to the increasing changes in technology a newfound enthusiasm to understand and explain these developments to the larger world which also resulted in a series of discussions amongst a range of scholars. A group of them like Manuel Castells, Clay Shirky, Henry Jenkins, Don Tapscott amongst others have paid glowing tributes in honor of the tapped/ untapped potentials of new technologies arguing mostly that the new web offered to us unparalleled opportunities for user engagement, cooperation and creativity. Titles such as "*Wikinomics: How Mass Collaboration Changes Everything*; *Crowdsourcing: Why the Power of the Crowd is Driving the Future of Business*; *The Art of Community: Building the New Age of Participation*; *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing without Organizations*; and *Grown Up Digital: How the Net Generation is Changing Your World"* became the benchmark in decoding the potential of internet for society.

While such staunching acceptance of new technologies as the cure for all the problems of human civilization is going on at one hand, the other group of scholars have been observing these developments with deeply suspicious lenses. In terms of the critiques of the Internet and the boom of technological advancement in general, David Harvey is one author whose work cannot be ignored. His deep lament about the 'fetishes of [modern] technology' is a case in point when one has to look at the flip side of the usually perceived boons of the Internet age. As he rightly puts it, We cannot comprehend "the development of technology, social relations, our

mental conceptions of the world, and our distinctive modes of dealing with nature and sustaining material life exclusively by considering them all as dialectically intertwined, as 'Internal relations', each of the other. The learning more about technology must reveal these relations. This is how it should be, as what matters the most are the connections and relations between technologies, social relations, material practices, mental conceptions, and our relation to nature" (David Harvey,2003)."[87]

In what he terms as the 'technological dynamisms of capitalism', Harvey makes note of a vital aspect that characterizes the new age of information- the rising disparity between the wages that any labour earns that are diametrically inconsistent to the value added that the particular labour creates. This recurring nature of events, functions at the request of the world capitalist system under the age of neo-liberal policies, strengthening the position and power of the haves over the have-nots. Through his idea of fetishism, he examines the fact that productivity itself is seen as the source of profit and not as the outcome of the social relations between the classes (of labour and capital by extrapolation). This kind of situation he argues is fully evident in the growing technological advancements of the military worldwide. Not only is there a constant upward trajectory to find a military solution to all problems, but the fetishist aspect emerges when the push on superior military might during a confrontation between military powers themselves becomes evident. In this ongoing battle for encapsulating new and seemingly superior technologies, there will always be new producers happen to supply the same, there by maintaining the status quo in the long run.

Here, it becomes relevant to note the use of the term fetish itself. Harvey argues that this is indeed a reflection of larger trends of fetishism (see consumerism) that perceives the advancement of new technologies as working towards the betterment of everyone in the society. While it is indeed true that this is never a neutral playing ground, the over-emphasis on the benefits of technological advancement over and above its negative outcomes, if any in the first place itself, is what marks the stage as one of fetishism. Further, the usage of such a term shows that this is a temporary stage rather than a permanent phase. However, Harvey does not arrive at such a radical judgment, as he concerns himself to pointing out the rather more appalling moments of this fetishist culture rather than churning out any end-points of his analysis per se.

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[87] Harvey, "The Fetish of Technology: Causes and Consequences," *Macalaster International* 13 (Prometheus' Bequest: Technology and Change, 2003), 4.

One can further rescue Harvey from a negative reading of his theories, seen in terms of purely the shortcomings of his views, if one was to judge the theoretical starting points from which he emerges. For him, technology solely focuses on getting work done, no matter how incompatible the things and processes that lie underneath it all. This takes us back to the earlier points propounded by Andrew Chadwick and Philip Howard, and also the lack of a central node from which one can see the intricacies of the Internet phenomenon. As Harvey again argues, "Many technologies depend crucially upon hierarchically organized expertise and strong centralization of decision making, so that they are antagonistic to democratization as well as to individual autonomy".[88]

James Curran too takes off from where Harvey has left off, in terms of the ideas of a 'New Economy'. He states that, "The internet provides, we are told, a new, more efficient means of connecting suppliers, producers and consumers that is increasing productivity and growth. The Internet is a disruptive technology that is generating a Schumpeterian wave of innovation. It is contributing to the growth of a new information economy that will replace heavy industry as the main source of wealth in de-industrializing Western societies. Since the economic impact of the Internet is cumulative and incomplete, it is difficult at this stage to make an assured assessment."[89]

Based on this formulation, Curran arrives at five distinct conclusions that throw a spanner in the works of those who seek to espouse only a flawed beneficial overview of the Internet. Firstly, the Internet does not signify a complete breakaway with the past, but rather a reconfiguration of existing supplier and producer networks. It has led to a massive increase in the volume of global transactions, bringing producers and suppliers closer than ever before in an intertwined network. This aspect is a direct reflection of the 'time-space compression' that David Harvey also talks of. In this regard, the rise of global conglomerates like Google and Amazon shine as the prime examples. Secondly, the Internet has indeed proved to be a major boon for the stock market value of Internet companies, an aspect that was doubly true in the period stretching from 1995 to 2000. This was, as already noted earlier, in a time period that preceded the *Dot.Com bubble* burst in the early parts of the twenty first century. Therefore, the relevancy of the

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[88] *Ibid.*, 24.

[89] Curran, "Reinterpreting the Internet," 5.

continuation of the second conclusion is doubtful, though Curran himself is in acknowledgment of this fact.

The third conclusion that he draws is again a direct outcome of the second, wherein he states that the 'value of the internet economy was probably oversold'. The fourth conclusion states that the Internet has not in fact revolutionized shopping, a point that is deeply contentious in nature, given the fact that Curran himself invokes the model of Amazon which has grown into a trans-national behemoth primarily through revenues earned from online shopping. What he might be stating is the decline of the traditional shopping destinations in the third world economies, though he himself does in no way state this explicitly. Therefore, it might be safe to assume that this conclusion of Curran is fraught with a judgmental oversight and inadequacy. The fifth, and perhaps the most pressing of his conclusions, states that Internet has indeed created an uneven playing field between small and large enterprises. Such a conclusion can be seen as derivative of the points that he makes earlier.

In *To Save Everything Click Here,* Evgeny Morozov questions the techno-optimistic understanding of the internet especially the techies based in Silicon valley and other such ventures elsewhere who believe in offering straitjacketed solutions to some of the most pressing and complex issues effecting the human civilization. His endeavor is to make everyone realize the high costs hidden from the public view behind the glitzy dreams that the Silicon Valley mandarins sell to us, thereby radically questioning our infatuation with a set of technologies that are lumped together under the tag referred to as "the Internet." The twin ideologies of "solutionism"[90] and "Internet-centrism"[91] remain the focal point of his criticism throughout the book. "Solutionism" in his words, is the tendency to portray some of the more complex problems facing humans in singular and all-encompassing ways, whereby it later goes on to provide solutions to them through one-fit-all approaches, without taking into account the diversity of thought and practices actually existing on the ground. What is problematic in this state of affairs is not the proposed solution that is presented but the way "the problem" itself gets defined. Also, in the process of offering quick and cost effective solutions, the solutionists tend to undermine more ambitious,

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[90] Morozov borrows the unabashedly pejorative term from the world of architecture and planning where it has over a period of time come to refer to an unhealthy preoccupation with sexy, monumental, and narrow-minded solutions to problems that are extremely complex, fluid, and contentious.

[91] The belief that we are living through unique, revolutionary times, in which the previous truths no longer hold true for the present times, everything seems to be undergoing through profound changes and the need to "fix things" runs as high as ever. So much so that the putative values of "the Internet"—be it openness or participation— become the valued criterion for assessing almost all areas of human endeavor, regardless of their own goals and standards.

intellectually stimulating, but more challenging reform projects. Morozov further highlights the difference between the physical infrastructures that is known as "the Internet" and its little resemblance to the mythical "Internet"—the one responsible for major socio-political and economic changes across the globe.[92] Whereas "Internet-centrism" leads us to believe that internet possesses an inherent nature, working on its own logic and teleology; such that this nature of the internet must not be tinkered with, as it can take care of itself. But a trickier question over here to be asked is- what, who and exactly how are we going to describe the alleged "value/nature" of the Internet?

Add to this Schiller's critique of what he refers to as *Digital Capitalism* through that he demonstrated that "under the pressure of the neoliberal logic of Western governments (in particular the U.S. government) the Internet began a political economic transition in order to support an ever-growing range of intra-corporate and inter-corporate business processes. This transformation, has led to the establishment of a communication infrastructure network that is highly shaped by the neo-liberal logic."[93] Further, he argues "that the establishment and strengthening of digital capitalism has been tightly linked to the refashioning of the World Wide Web as a consumer medium."[94] It has been due to works like these amongst other similar sounding concepts like "cybercapitalism" by Mosco and Schiller, "virtual capitalism" by Dawson and Bellamy Foster, "technocapitalism" by Kellner and "informational capitalism" by Castells that over a sustained period of time have tried to demystify the initial shock and awe that accompanied the digital revolution.

But trotting a slightly different path are scholars like Veronica Barassi who try to highlight the problems emerging from contemporary communication research where political economic scholars tend to neglect how people (read activists) through their everyday encounters with technology experience and negotiate with technological structures. In her work titled *Activism on the Web: Everyday Struggles against Digital Capitalism,* she tends to depart "from the

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[92] Evgeny Morozov, *To Save Everything Click Here* (New York: Public Affairs, 2013), 1-78.

[93] Daniel Schiller, *Digital Capitalism: Networking the Global Market System* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 89-142.

[94] *Ibid.*

ethnographic contexts of political activism and goes on to explore how anti-capitalist activist cultures deal with their encounter with digital capitalism through their everyday web uses"[95] and this she does by using anthropological and media studies approach. She tends to delineate the media anthropological approach from that of politico-economic approach through three main reasons. Firstly, "it draws on the ethnography of media to understand how people negotiate with communication technologies."[96] Secondly, "it is defined by scholars' commitment to theorize and understand media as everyday practices and as social processes (not merely as text, technologies, or organizational structures). In the third place it challenges ethno-centric and techno-deterministic understandings of media's social impacts by looking at cultural variation."[97] Authors Heather Horst & Daniel Miller use almost a similar approach in their work titled *Digital Anthropology*. The larger idea behind such conceptual categories remains that cultures as well as humans negotiate with the structural limitations of networked technology in ways that get processed through the medium of cultural translation and adaptation. They operate on the principle that for someone to investigate how digital communication is leading to transformation of socio-political participation, then one must understand how various socio-political groups, who might be grounded in totally different socio-political cultures, themselves comprehend digital technologies based on their own context-specific political imaginations.

Keeping in mind the larger thematic question of providing a map of the field of social media politics and building an argument about the nature of resulting changes in its political practice, both globally as well as locally. The chapter tries to gauge into the peculiar set of social and technological conditions- from US military research to grass root social movements- that provided the initial thrust to the growth of Internet. But the real important phase in the rise of Internet from the point of digital politics began only with the advent of blogging, which marked the beginning of Web 2.0 phase of Internet. It is with this change the real advent of digital politics start, which also forms the basis of the given chapter and the ones to follow. A reformulation of Web 2.0 principles, originally propounded by Tim O' Reilly, by Andrew Chadwick and Philip Howard is used for an analysis of Internet politics over here. As it is through this given analytical lens provided by the authors that we are able to make some sense of the rapid technological advancements in the Internet age and its relation with the socio-political changes around us. Through the plethora of examples discussed under each of the seven heads, one begins to

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[95] Veronica Barassi, *Activism on the Web: Everyday Struggles Against Digital Capitalism* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 11.

[96] *Ibid.*

[97] *Ibid.*

understand as to how big an influence Internet is playing in politics and political processes these days.

This chapter has largely provided a map of the field of Internet politics. It seeks to put forth theories explaining the phenomenon of digital democracy, cyber activism and related processes that have sought to bring in change related to socio-political practices, both globally as well as locally. The chapter starts off by explaining how the peculiar set of social and technological conditions- from US military research to grassroots social movements- coalesced together in providing the initial thrust to the growth of Internet. A journey of nearly three to four decades of Internet's development is summed up in the initial few pages. It travels from the US Defense ARPA program, how Bob Kahn and Vinton Cerf designed TCP/IP to finally the invention of the Internet at CERN by the likes of Tim Berners Lee through applications like URL, HTTP and HTML. But the real game changer from the point of digital politics started only with the advent of blogging, marking the beginning of Web 2.0 phase of Internet. It is with this change that the real advent of digital politics starts, wherein the interactivity brought in through the given phenomenon unfurled vast potential for Internet related politics. But in place of using the original definition propounded by Tim O' Reilly, a reformulation of Web 2.0 principles, by the likes of Andrew Chadwick and Philip Howard has been used in the chapter for an analysis of Internet politics. They provide us with an analytical lens highlighted through seven themes, which leads us to make better sense of the rapid technological advancements in the Internet age and its relation with the socio-political changes around us. These can be summed up as follows: (i) "Internet as a platform for political discourse, (ii) the collective intelligence emerging from collective web use, (iii) the importance of data over particular software and hardware applications, (iv) perpetual experimentalism in the public domain, (v) the creation of small scale forms of political engagement through consumerism, (vi) the propagation of political content over multiple applications and (vii) rich user experience on political websites" (Howard, 2009).

With the gradual discussion of the multiple examples placed under each of the seven heads, we begin to understand the seminal influence of Internet in politics and political processes in contemporary times. With this basic understanding in place the chapter digs deeper into works of select authors who have written on the theme of digital politics and its interconnections with socio-political developments these days.

It thus focuses on the works of Don Tapscott, Clay Shirky, Henry Jenkins, amongst others. All of them can largely be clubbed under the head of techno-optimists, who keep the Internet on a high pedestal and bestow it with a certain agency of its own by largely over selling its alleged

benefits. Countering them are authors like Evgeny Morozov, Daniel Schiller, Matthew Hindman, et al, who use a range of arguments stretching from neo-liberal capital led attack on the Internet, paving the way for concepts like *technocapitalism, cybercapitalism*, virtual capitalism, etc., to the ill effects of twin ideologies of "solutionism" and "internet centrism".[98] In the process they explain why some of the oft-repeated benefits of the technology need not be bought without critical analysis. At the same time, authors like Veronica Barassi, Heather Horst, and Daniel Miller amongst others try to stay clear of the largely political economic approach used by the optimists and skeptics, preferring the anthropological and media studies approach. This approach helps them in providing a context and culture specific analysis of digital activism, while at the same time helping them to stay away from the determinism that tends to accompany political-economic approaches. Towards its latter half the chapter dabbles with understanding certain fundamental questions with respect to democratizing of the society through the use of Internet.

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[98] Both words invented and explained by Evgeny Morozov in *To Save Everything Click Here* (New York: Public Affairs, 2013), 1-78.

Chapter: II: Mapping Changes in Pattern of Political Mobilization in India. A Study of Anti- Corruption Movement

As the researchers on the use of technologies by activists and protest movements worldwide, as it seems, have usually tended to locate themselves at the intersection between the social context, the political purpose and the technological possibility that encompasses the area under consideration. Web blogs, Social Networking Services (SNS), podcasts, Voice over Internet Protocols (VOIP) and other related social streaming services that as of now function over the Internet do seemingly compliment such existing protocols, enabling additional practices to function over time. Social media also enables communication within a given sphere as in terms of person-to-person interactions, an aspect that is of critical relevance to both the activists themselves and in the context of the larger structure of the social movements themselves.

The "interconnections between actors within networks are a crucial aspect of social movements and activism because they influence and impact their ability to sustain and coordinate social action over time"[99], thus leading to any movement being termed as a success or a failure resting upon the organization and the ability to influence and coordinate these ties, which in turn proves to be a precursor to any point of analysis. While researching upon few other forms of protest that require offline activities to be monitored where the participants do have a need for trusted strong ties, in order to avoid infiltration by vested interests like the ones who don't share similar aims and ethos of these mobilizations. Off lately newer forms of networked resistance are slowly taking shape that are increasingly reliant upon the strength of weak ties, wherein hundreds or thousands of supporters may get mobilized but who may not voice their support or rejection of all or certain claims made by the organizers or initiators of the protest. This trend can be observed in many of the trans-nationalization mobilizations that are getting highly influenced by social media led social movements and/or protests. As such, transnational advocacy networks have been in existence even before Web 2.0 revolution, but networked technologies seemingly have provided newer opportunities for activists and social movements to organize themselves at a transnational level. Despite the existence of several constraints,

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[99] Robin Mansell, *The International Encyclopedia of Digital Communication and Society – Vol. I* (Wiley Blackwell, 2015), 1027-1034.

some authors have argued that the presence of digital cultures and social media certainly offer networked opportunities to potentially transform the civic cultures surrounding these movements as well.

There have been a few efforts to, "link research on the opportunities and constraints of networked technologies to the social movement literature, using the concepts of opportunity structures and the logic of contentious action to examine the interplay between strategies of agency and the structural constraints of networked technologies. With the concept of opportunity structures here is understood as those contextual factors that are beyond the control of a social movement, but which impact and influence the degree of resonance and ultimately, its success and sustainability." [100] Thus even in transnational mobilizations, platforms provided by social networking services today have imparted newer meaning and methods to online agenda builders or mobilizers, leading further in motivating citizen commitment in socio-political causes.

Take for example the use of SNS platforms in mobilizing activities for the Arab Spring in the recent past. This widespread use of technology was not an altogether new phenomenon for the people in the region as well, since SNS platforms have had a role to play in the politics of the region, where a few autocrats from the region had put restrictions over their unfettered use, during the last decade or so.[101] Further, apart from using social media for political purposes, the tools that lie underneath these processes have been used by the people in the region for purposes of general interaction and entertainment too. The media in these areas thus picks up the subtle nuances at play and consequently articulates them on the much wider platform of the national field, along with several intertwined issues that are related and relevant for social movements, paving the way for its direct influence on the society. SNS platforms have thus, "brought about more extensive types of social, economic as well as cultural variations that include among others, a movement from advancement to post-advancement, escalating the procedures of globalization, a substitution regime in the West during the industrial period of

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[100] Bart Cammaerts, "Social Media and Activism," in *The International Encyclopedia of Digital Communication and Society – Vol. I.* (Wiley Blackwell, 2015), 6.

[101] Ayesha Karamat and Ayesha Farooq, "Emerging Role of Social Media in Political Activism: Perception and Practices," *A Research Journal Of South Asian Studies* 31, no. 1 (2016): 381- 396.

development by a 'post-industrial' era of information, the de-centering of built up and incorporated geopolitical commands and the like."[102]

Individual transformations led by social media technology has also seemingly expanded the average awareness levels at multiple points, increasing communication among the policy makers and the policy receivers, thereby leading to rising levels of accountability as well. Here, "the agenda setting theory of media proposes as to how media motivation moves on to public motivation, which in turn influences the strategy agenda at play."[103] With new and frequent innovations on the part of traditional media as well, the general public can possibly be found to be enabled and possibly play a greater role in influencing the strategy plan that is in operation, though arguably their reach might be more limited in its scope. Social media in these cases is thus found possessing the ability to make the public participate in a wider gamut of issues, be it social, political, economic or even cultural by nature. Therefore, the SNS platforms especially in the case where autocratic regimes are in power, seems to inspire and aggregate people, of differing opinions to be a stakeholder in changing status quo around them, by turning the wider citizenry into critical assets for aggregating activities and the creation, association and the usage of social empowerment around the globe.

What stands out in the analysis of Anti-Corruption Movement is the use of the social media as a tool towards various ends, all geared towards the enriching of democracy at the national level through the medium of technology driven consumption of ideas, methods and practices. At the very outset, it must be noted that the ideas put forth by these movements are themselves not new. They talk of phenomenon such as inclusiveness and greater participation and knowledge of the rights that a person possesses by virtue of them being both a citizen of the country as well as a human being in general. The language used to propound and propagate their ideas is meticulously non-exclusive and their methods, though arguably leading to anarchist and autocratic tendencies at times, are predominantly egalitarian.

The given section on Anti- Corruption movement in India brings to light the changing contours of new age activism. Features like promotion of participatory democracy at both the organizational level of their mobilizations and its execution leads to constructing newer forms

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[102] *Ibid.*

[103] *Ibid.*

of political representation. Their methods, stretching from creation of new media to the use of the existing ones, do also highlight to us the crisis of the current political systems world over. Revealing their inadequacies in representing instances of individual to collective affirmation of subjectivity and in recognizing the universal rights of every individual, that almost always gets denied in complex contemporary societies.[104] In light of this, an important reminder needs mentioning here. The movements are not analyzed in terms of the success of their goals, as that itself is an extremely loaded and subjective term. What is of more critical importance is not to decipher the legacies of the movement, though that will form a part in the concluding sections, but to understand the ways in which the ideas that sprouted out were disseminated to a larger section of the masses through the recourse to technological means.

The participative nature of the movement was one of its greatest achievements, going beyond its mere temporal presence. The bringing together of multiple voices under a common head was seen as a great initiative of the protests. Cracks, however, started to become visible in the later stages, an aspect that finds mention in the succeeding sections.

"Political protests are always seen as a common event all around the world and are always considered as crucial in progressing the basis of democracies" (Stein, 2009). The "protest is mostly undertaken due to the lack of confidence in the present political system of their particular nations and its leaders. These protests bring together people to claim specific changes with well-known political goals in mind" (Michael Bratton, 1997). In the past few decades, "different kinds of violent or non-violent protests were organized either through a word of mouth, pamphlets, hoardings, local newspapers, telephone lines or party lines" (Nancy Scola, 2013)[105]. However in present scenario "social-networking sites which are a group of Internet-based platforms, have created a different discourse and endorsed enormous speed. It has facilitated digital network users who have common interests to communicate, network and engage. It has changed the way people used to connect with other networks and carry out political protest and to create their own online networks to communicate at a large scale" (Ayres, 1999). As the "internet population is growing

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[104] Farro, Antimo Luigi, "A New Era for Collective Movements: The Subjectivization of Collective Action," in *Reimagining Social Movements From Collectives to Individuals*, eds. Henri Lustiger-Thaler and Antimo Luigi Farro (England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, Surrey), 31-32.

[105] Scola, N. 2013. How Did They Organize a March on Washington Before Twitter? – Next City.

[Online] Available at: https://nextcity.org/daily/entry/how-did-they-organize-a-march-on-washington-before-twitter.

quickly social-networking sites are getting to become well-liked platforms for these kinds of activities. Facebook alone accounts for one-tenth of the world's population across the world" (Facebook Key Facts, 2013)[106]. Other platforms like Twitter and YouTube also popular mediums and connect massive number of users.

This chapter will provide a over view of how and why internet based users employ social media platforms for political movements and what are the strategic digital and social media practices used to motivate users to take part on ground. To emphasise this particular point this chapter will try to comprehend important digital and social media activities of the 'India against Corruption' movement (IAC) in 2011 and if the use of social media platforms was beneficial to build communication and mobilize citizens to participate on ground and protest. Are the activities on the social media were considered as instrumental to the achievement of the overall movement specially when there is low internet penetration in comparison to its overall population. In the conclusion the chapter will highlight the new political developments as an outcome of this movement.

The social media was employed phenomenally during the movement. Team Anna with the help of a devoted group of experts connected with IAC were capable of creating a number of social media programmes that became immensely popular. There were around 150 Facebook pages related to Anna during the movement and numerous online signature campaigns. Many fan pages were also created in the name of Anna Hazare as well as supporters use to post several videos on YouTube. A huge social media campaign was launched across the country that attracted many responses.

Anti-corruption movement was quite diverse from the other movements because both social and mainstream media performed together to inform and spread the news of the protest events and the things happening on the ground. Social media acted as a channel of bringing people on the street. It is imperative to recognize the movement not only from the prism of technology and as being created by media, since this idea of the movement would be inadequate to its wider

outlook. There was a complete social, economic and political context that has led to the growth of the movement.

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[106] Facebook Key Facts, 2013. Facebook Newsroom.
[Online] Available at: https://newsroom.fb.com/Key- Facts company-info/

There are scholars who have argued that "new media technologies facilitate and carry the creation of new forms of political organizations, which are thematically oriented, loosely coupled and can rapidly assembles which permits unidentified affiliation" (Rane, 2012). However, "it is vital to comprehend that while social media platforms have inbuilt strengths they also have weaknesses that's why their efficacy in any given social context depends on how efficiently they are positioned and allotted by ordinary users. The point is that the success or failure of the any movement basically builds on contextual factors and extensive geopolitical contexts" (Rane, 2012).

Although much of the work on social media and political mobilizations has been based in the Middle East and North Africa not much attention has been given to India. The chapter will examine the role played by social media in the mobilization and organization of protesters during Anti-corruption movement. There is not much research done on social media technologies and the manner in which they have altered the ways in which protestors in India engage in collective action. Social media have created platforms which have positively enhanced individual self-expression and interest-group mobilization. Without just focusing on whether social media alone can bring about democracy or political revolution, the objective of this particular chapter is to examine the various directions in which social media is capable in transforming the dynamics of political activism in India.

A fundamental issue while discussing about the role of internet and social media in anti-corruption movement is the impact of rapid information dissemination to public awareness on corruption. The "large number of social media users also represents the large number of audience who may share views, experiences, and opinions related to corruption. Therefore, social media may serve as a low cost means for disseminating information to a larger audience to trigger a public reaction against corrupt acts" (Jha, Sarangi, 2017). The distribution of information on corruption over social media platforms will enhance citizen's knowledge on the real figures of corruption in the country. While understanding the factual damages from corrupt acts and how they can affect their wellbeing citizens will feel motivated to voice their opinions and to condemn the offenders.

2.1 Dynamic Shift 2.0: From "News Media" to "Social Media"

"Networking is the means to an effective political movement. When a concerned group of people who think alike arrive together to confront an existing political system continuously with a specific reason in mind, it can understand as a successful campaign" (Tarrow, 2012). However, in reality the "ultimate key to achievement of a political movement is communication; but seeing the past decades it can be proposed that the conventional media is not the only competent way to spread the word" (Stein, 2009, p 750). "These mainstream media platforms are many a times under the control of dominant personalities which is a challenge for political activists because of their biases and in the past, they have either attacked or omitted social movements. Conventional news media are many times proved incapable to competently spread information in a timely manner, and have a drawback of being one-way" (Raboy, 1981). Many movements like feminist movements, gay and lesbian movements and others have been either showed aggression and blatantly ignored or have received limited media coverage due to the lack of resources" (Kensicki, 2001a,).

"With over a population of 1.2 billion people, India only has over 150 million Internet users as of now" (World Bank, 2012; TOI, 2011)[107]. "Anti-Corruption Movement in India, which was led by social activists from December 2010 to 2012 did had media attention and support locally and all across the world to an extent, but what was arousing was the appropriate information about the movement was passionately and independently dispersed on the social media platforms and mobile phones by influential activists, celebrities, people of knowledge and particularly the educated youth through digital platforms" (Parashar, 2012).

"Conventional media attention continues to be a decisive point of information for political movements to cover huge masses and because any kind publicity is welcome, activists have started assertively changing their communication channels to alternative mediums to broadcast information in order to draw an intellectual crowd who will contribute to such protests slightly considerably and substantially" (William K. Carroll, 2006).

2.2. Background

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[107] World Bank. 2012. Population (Total) Data/ Table
https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL

To understand the role played by social media in the Anti-Corruption Movement, it is important to examine the development process of protests, participants demand, and the government responses.

2.2.1 Corruption in India

Corruption "expands poverty, it demeans human rights, it deteriorates environment, it disrupts growth, which includes private sector development, it can cause conflict in and between the nations and also demolish the trust in democracy and the legitimacy of governments. It debases human dignity and is universally condemned by the world's major faiths"[108]. "Corruption is the abuse of public office for unauthorized private gain" (Yadav, 2011). Sadly, these tendencies are generally exercised in India, despite of consecutive efforts done by different governments that have come into power since Independence, to eradicate corruption. In actuality, "the dynamics of corruption in Indian democracy are multi-faceted. Corruption has destabilized the achievement of all the government institutions in India thus debilitating the rule of law and right to justice" (Kumar, 2011). In reality the foundations of corruption where laid during the post-Independence period in the economic policies that constantly functioned till the late 1980s.

The over regulatory policies, protectionism, and government ownership of industries has caused resulted in low level of economic growth, high unemployment, and widespread poverty. This bureaucratic structure of control by the government has resulted in extensive corruption in the country. There is need for a political will and honesty which is completely missing which is also influential in the blossoming of corruption in India. Corruption is considered to be a primary problem distressing the social structure as well as the political structure of Indian society. As a result, there is a lack of trust in governance and also it impacts the life of every common citizen on a daily basis. The reality is without paying bribes, it is impossible to accomplish anything in any office or institution. In addition there is a prominent increase in political corruption among the elected representatives of the people which has become the subject of much discussion because of its increasing magnitude and frequency.

The Transparency International, a corruption watchdog, has continuously ranked India in the more corrupt half of the countries in the Corruption Perception Index. Quah attributed the widespread prevalence of corruption in public offices in India to its ineffective anti- corruption

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[108] The Durban Commitment to Effective Action against Corruption: it was signed at the Anti-Corruption Conference in October 1999 sponsored by Transparency International.

strategies, accentuated by a lack of political will and unfavorable policy context" (Quah, 2008). "There is a study conducted on petty corruption; where India is on the thirty most corrupt nations list in the world" (Kumar, 2011). Corruption has caused Because of lack of transparency and accountability in India as far as public institutions is considered. This has resulted in authoritative bureaucracy and a high level of misuse of authority. There are many controversial cases of corruption like 2G spectrum allocation[109] or the Commonwealth Games in India[110]. It was important to understand this movement against this background and within no time, it captivated the mind of the so many people and spread like wildfire.

2.2.2 Objectives of the Movement

This movement not only started against the giant corruption scams like the 2G spectrum allocation controversy or the Commonwealth Games debacle but it was like a disagreement to the moral humiliation that the common citizens had to witness in their everyday lives when they had to pay bribes in order to move files or get their work done through the government

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[109] This scandal first came into public limelight with the acceptance of Janata Party president, Subramaniam Swamy's complaints on the issue by the Supreme Court which directed the Central Bureau of Investigation to produce a detailed report on the matter (Kattakayam, The Hindu, 2011). The issue dealt with the sale of licenses of 2G spectrum in 2008 at a price set in the year 2001 by the then Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government. Around 1232 licenses were distributed to 85 companies with few being devoid of any experience in the telecom sector (Press Trust of India, The Times of India, 2011). Though the main accused Andimuthu Raja along with many other politicians, parliamentarians, and bureaucrats have been arrested for their involvement in the scandal, but the loss that occurred to the national exchequer is irrecoverable which the Comptroller and Audit General (CAG) puts in the figure of around 1.76 lakh crores or US$40 billion. In fact, this scandal has turned to be the biggest ever scandal in the history of India (Singh, The Times of India, 2009).

[110] The CWG scandal brought a number of questions in the public mind regarding the use of their money, for the total expenditure in the games surpassed more than six billion dollars whose use in the other sectors could have helped the country develop to a considerable extent (Agence France-Presse, East Asian Times). Apart from violating the various laws including the labor law and the involvement of child labor, the corruption incorporated in every stage of the preparation of the venue of the Games has been colossal. The amount spent for streetscaping and beautification of roads per kilometer for aesthetics before the Games is estimated around. Rs 4.8 crore which according to National Highway Authority of India officials would have cost around 3.5 crore (Das, The Times of India, 2011)). From the collapse of the footbridge due to the poor use of material, the CWG buzzed with unending list of technical faults and malfunctions. The GlobalPost news agency reported the list of scandals that came to light such as shadowy offshore firms, forged emails, inexplicable payments to bogus companies and inflated bills for every purchase from toilet papers to treadmills (GlobalPost). In addition, the Public Works Department (PWD), bought imported luminaries which cost Rs.32,000 avoiding the locally available ones of Rs.15,160 apiece. The Shunglu Committee, set up under the directions of the Prime Minister, had stated that there was an overall wastage of Rs.256 crore in just street lighting and scaping for the Games (Ramakrishnan, Frontline, 2011). The actual loss of CWG scandal still awaits its true figures.

institutions. The objective of the movement was to demand a legislation, which will provide immediate action against the government servants who are responsible for financial deception. In addition, the protagonist of the movement also demanded that civil society should be presented with a say in drafting the Lokpal Bill.

The Jan Lokpal Bill commended making institutions called Jan Lokpal and Jan Lokayukta at central and state level respectively. All the existing committees related to corruption and vigilance will join into these above-mentioned institutions. These institutions will not be advisory bodies, and would be entirely independent institutions with no relations with the government. They will be provided with autonomy in financial and administrative matters and even the decision to give employment to a person from among government officials or from outside the government. The main objective behind making these institutions was to make sure that corrupt officials are punished in a specified time of investigations.

2.2.3 Trajectory of the movement (2011 and 2012)

April 2011 fast

Anna Hazare started his indefinite fast on April 5, 2011 at Jantar Mantar in Delhi to highlight the demand for the expansion of a joint committee which will include the representatives of both the government and civil society to draft a detailed anti-corruption bill with disciplinary actions and giving further independence to the Lokpal and Lokayuktas. The protest was started as the initial demand made by Anna was rejected by the Prime Minister. A lot of social activists supported Anna's hunger strike. Spiritual leaders like Swami Ramdev, Swami Agnivesh, and

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar also marked their support to the anti-corruption campaign. However, Anna deliberately did not share the platform with any political figure, but BJP and the Communist Party of India reach out to his support.

August 2011 events

Anna Hazare challenged the government that the Jan Lokpal Bill should be passed by August 15, 2011. If this didn't happen, he would then again organise one more indefinite fast from August 16, 2011. "He accused the government of creating inconsistency in making of the Lokpal Bill

and offending the civil society members, such as Shanti Bhushan, Prashant Bhushan, Santosh Hegde and Arvind Kejriwal by organizing a 'discreet campaign'[111]. In the end of July 2011, "the Union Cabinet accepted the Lokpal Bill keeping the office of Prime Minister distantly outside its range throughout his tenure and also excluded the higher judiciary members. Prashant Bhushan presented discontentment as the government disregarded most of the issues raised by the civil society, and the option to leave out the office of the Prime Minister from the purview of the Bill would not stand enquiry of the court" (Parsai, 2011).[112] This event all the more reinforced Anna's decision to fast unto death from August 16, 2011.

On 16 August 2011, "Anna along with his close acquaintances was remanded to judicial custody and jailed for seven days. This incident was criticized, and protests exploded throughout the states in India. All the non-Congress political parties and NGOs expressed their grievances. Even the Parliament Houses were suspended. The arrest of anti-corruption crusader Anna Hazare had its echo in Parliament with the complete Opposition asking for suspension of question hour to argue the matter and blaming the government of implementing an 'undemocratic' approach (Dhar, 2011)."[113] Due to the protests which started across India the Delhi Police decided to release Hazare after a week.

Use of various forms of media within Anna movement was discernible through extensive offline, poster, print based mainstream media, and low-tech mode of media production, in comparison to the technology driven social media platforms. In most of the situations Anna movement activists made and distributed media elements across platforms (including analogue media forms and channels) in processes portrayed as trans-media mobilization. During the movement protestors formed and dispersed media texts and self-documentation across every platform they had access to. Social media platforms were fundamental to disperse the narratives formed by everyday protestors. The participation of anonymous activists supported the movement to form new connections and reach to a wider diverse audience.

Arvind Kejriwal during an interview on the role of social media in Anti-corruption movement says that "Social media offers a suitable always available platform for people of related ideology to come together & interact. Social media is believed to be not only influencing but also

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[111] Press Trust of India, June 8, 2011,

[112] Parsai Gargi, Hazare to go on fast from August 16 demanding revised Bill, The Hindu, 28 July, 2011
http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article2302166.ece
16 Dhar, Aarti & Dixit, Sandeep, The Hindu, 16 August, 2011
http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article2362611

influencing opinions and policies. It became especially important medium to get people who dream about a corruption free India together. During the launch of Aam Aadmi Party we received incredible response from people on the social media. Crucial public opinion or feedback is received through this medium. With regard to our objective of Swaraj (individuals' participation in the movement) has been furthered with social media and this is a kind of journey that will continue"[114].

With continuous hunger strike and the national level of manifestation on Jan Lokpal Bill happened on 27 August 2011 in the parliament. "In the discussion he put forth three principles, (i) citizens' charter, (ii) lower bureaucracy to be under Lokpal through appropriate apparatus and the organization of Lokayuktas in the states while both houses of Parliament agreed to the principles. Winding up the day-long debate, (Pranab) Mukherjee said while a 'respected' Gandhian with 'massive support' was on agitation, it was not always necessary to move in conventional straight jacket way"[115]. This eventually led to the end of fast, however Anna makes sure that he was only adjourning his fast and it will only end with the establishment of a strong Lokpal Bill by the Indian Parliament.

On December 27, 2011

After discussions Lokpal Bill was passed to the upper House of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) but the Lokpal was not agreed to be provided with constitutional status as usual. The Lokpal Bill did not pass as it failed to receive two-thirds majority in the voting. The bill was then accepted by the President of India in accordance with the constitutional norms. However, Anna Hazare soon started his fast again asking for a better version of the Lokpal Bill at MMRDA ground in Mumbai. But it received poor response and because of his poor health he called off his fast a day in advance of plan. The actions in parliament got postponed and the bill arrived at a deadlock as the Bill got stuck in the Rajya Sabha and was unable to pass during the winter session of Parliament. They

[114] Arvind kejriwal on the role of Social Media in AAP, Influencing voters, Regulation and More. http://lighthouseinsights.in/interview-with-arvind-kejriwal-on-aap-and-social-media.html/.
[115] Press Trust of India, (August 27, 2011), http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-0827/india/29935496_1_lokpal-bill-anna-hazare-pranab-mukherjee, The Times of India, New Delhi.

planned to fight against the government's rejection to initiate an investigation against the Prime Minister and 14 senior Cabinet Ministers, who were charged of corruption. But the response they received from the public was very passive. Anna broke his fast in August 3, 2012 with a promise to fight for transparency in the system. Team Anna later confirmed to transform their paths and in place of demanding to compel an indifferent structure from outside, they will attempt to revolutionize it from within by forming a political party and contesting elections.

Arvind Kejriwal, one of the most well-known faces of Team Anna, clarifies his assessment to form a political party:

"We call upon Shri Anna Hazare and all his associates, who have been on an indefinite fast, to give up on their expectations from this establishment. Instead, we call upon them to focus their energies on creating an alternative political force that is democratic, accountable, ethical and non-violent and capable of leading an electoral revolution to democratise and decentralise power and make the power structures of the country more accountable to the people".[116]

Facebook was used strongly by diverse participants during the protests. A limited news channels broadcasted news about the movement. Most of the people employed social networking sites to get information about the events. The people who were active during the protest employed Facebook as a substitute communication channel. Before developing any positive and negative conclusions about the effects of Facebook on the process of social and political movements it is important to assess carefully. The impact of social media is to be explained methodically. Explanations and decisions are too formed after analysing the real impact of social media. That is why it is important to comprehend this movement analytically.

2.3 The Indian Revolution 2.0: The IAC Movement's Journey from Online Protests to Offline Rallies

The "Internet has been believed to be a perfect medium for communicating details of social movements because not like traditional media it has effectively authorized the aspirations of the activists to spread knowledge about these social movements but also limited the intrusions of journalists, media gatekeepers and influential governments" (Boyd A. , 2003) In a majority of social movements in the last few years it is observed that social media platforms have the

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[116]Bloomberg, "India Anti-Corruption Movement aims for parliament" , 07 August,2012
http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-08-07/india-s-anti-corruption-movement-aims-forparliament.html

capability to organize and mobilize these movements successfully and efficiently. Political and social matters like corruption can consequently convince the public to contribute online to offline at a universal level.

Movements such as these constantly remind any government and its citizens that the government is *"by the people, for the people, of the people!"* [117] In contemporary situation protestors have opted to choose social media platforms as a means to connect with the public because it encourages deliberation and mutual involvement between people who have common objection towards the government. **"**Disagreement is no longer planned in a linear agreement. Protestors can connect to public as attributed by Downing's theory on alternative forms of media as through these alternative channels they can disclose the unjust powers or policies. The activist uses these platforms of social media to argue, network, and react vigorously and to motivate people to join protests at similar time" (Downing, 2001)**.** "Social media allows the activists to collect funds to continue the online movements by maintain websites and other social platforms" (IAC, Pune, 2012)[118]. Thus, various practices and activities of a social movement are conducted online, which when purposely put in action can jointly direct the public who are involved in the ground.

 The "Anti-Corruption Movement in India was the first time when social networking sites were used aggressively. Social media was logically a new medium for Indians, so it was comparatively challenging for activists to influence public to participate offline. However, the activists gradually created a 'Snowball Effect' and by purposely motivated the educated youth and other Internet users to be active participant of the movement. The movement saw **a** huge number of youth groups from pan India especially metro cities like Delhi, Mumbai, and Hyderabad. These youth groups comprise of unemployed youngsters, students and professionals from different fields like engineering, law and medicine" (Jha, 2013).

"A report released by Facebook exposed that Anna Hazare and the Jan Lokpal Bill were the most talked about status updates in 2011 in India. In 2011 there were over 38 million Facebook users in India"[119]. Politics has penetrated in social media platforms social as they have provided users with new opportunities for conducting politics. "Anti-corruption movement coordinator and supporters employed social media to increasingly spread information and mobilize protests.

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[117] Abraham Lincoln, 1863. The Gettysburg Address.
Available online at: http://www.abrahamlincolnonline.org/lincoln/speeches/gettysburg.htm
[118] IAC, Pune. 2012. Appeal For Donation To Janlokpal Movement.
https://www. iacpune.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/IAC-Pune-Appeal-Letter.pdf
[119] As of March 2017, India has over 213 million Facebook users just behind the US, which had 219 million users.

Social media was also employed to extend support for India against Corruption (IAC) and Anna Hazare, which can be witnessed by the number of 'likes' on the Facebook post. In the initial four days of its existence, IAC had 116,000 fans on its community Facebook page. Many other Facebook pages were created by different individuals to support the movement by discussing, posting status and uploading videos and photos all through the movement. Social media analyst Gaurav Mishra estimated the total online support for the movement around 1.5 million people"[120].

Facebook did host several Anna Hazare associated pages in English as well as in Hindi which included tens of thousands of followers and supporters. "The official IAC Facebook page had more than 500,000 followers as of February 7, 2012. The people who had the access to internet can follow and receive information about the movement through different apps in their respective smart phones. For a social movement to be able to use social media effectively it has to have a population which have internet access and people must be capable enough to use social media substantially. The non-governmental research organization Freedom House scores the Internet in India as "mostly free" in its 2011 Freedom of the Net evaluation"[121].

In accordance with the "World Bank 5.3 percent of the total Indian population had Internet access in 2009. With a population of roughly around 1.1 billion people these figures shows that more than 58 million Indians were using the Internet. Fifty-six percent of Internet users use Facebook" (World Bank, 2011)[122]. Of those, 73 percent are men out of which 50 percent are 18 to 24 years old, as shown in Figure 1.

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[120] Khorana, Sukhmani, and Ramaswami Harindranath, "New Technologies, Gandhian Activism, and Democracy: Re-Examining Civil Society." Australian Political Science Association Conference, Canberra, Australia, September 2011: 1-12.

[121] Freedom House, "Freedom on the Net 2011," A Global Assessment of Internet and Digital Media." April 18, 2011.

[122] World Bank, "Internet Users Per 100 People", 2007-2011. Databank, Washington, D.C. World Bank http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.P2.

Figure 1. Indian Facebook Users by Age Group
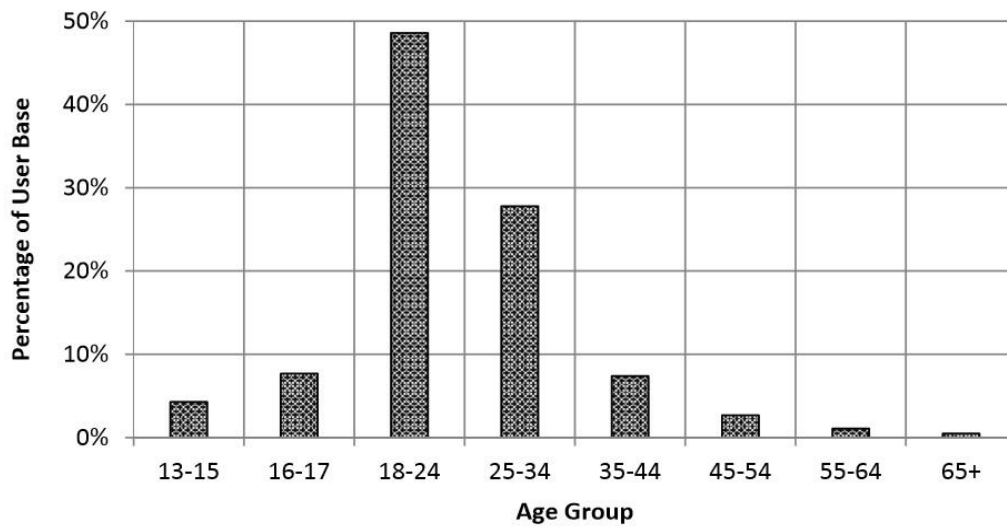
Source: Socialbakers.com

While examining social media momentum India's 2011-2012 Anti –Corruption Movement report, it was observed that during the "first four days of its existence, IAC had 116,000 fans on its community Face book page. People created many other Facebook pages, and individual social media users debated, posted statuses and uploaded videos and photos throughout the movement"[124].The "official IAC Facebook page had almost 500,000 followers around February 7, 2012. The IAC organization used all digital platforms to distribute photos of Anna Hazare fasting, pro-Lokpal rallies, and examples of corruption. This not only mobilised support from other civil society organisations and activists, but also from the general public" (Bong, 2013).

The social media pages were formed on the first meeting and posts were created as an invite to the event page about the details of the fast which is about to be held. Therefore, the role of social media was not just limited in mobilizing events around the movement, it organised people in accordance with the information shared about the fast and the movement. The movement attained recognition through the support which was not only shown through physical turning up at the events, but also by the means of online dialogue on forums and in social media sites through likes

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[123] Sasha Bong, K. C. (2013). *Analyzing Social Media Momentum: India's 2011-2012 Anti corruption movement.* U.S Government Office of South Asia Policy.

[124]This report looks at the role of social media in social movements by analyzing Facebook activity related to India's anticorruption movement in 2011 and early 2012 as a case study. The authors find strong correlations between real-world protest events and substantial increases in Facebook activity. They offer conclusions and implications for actors who seek to monitor and manage the flow of social movements.

and comments. Thus, the support for the movement was captivated through calculated use of communication means ahead of any of the central meetings among the government and the civil society organisations.

Figure 2. Facebook Activity per Day: April 2011 – February 2012
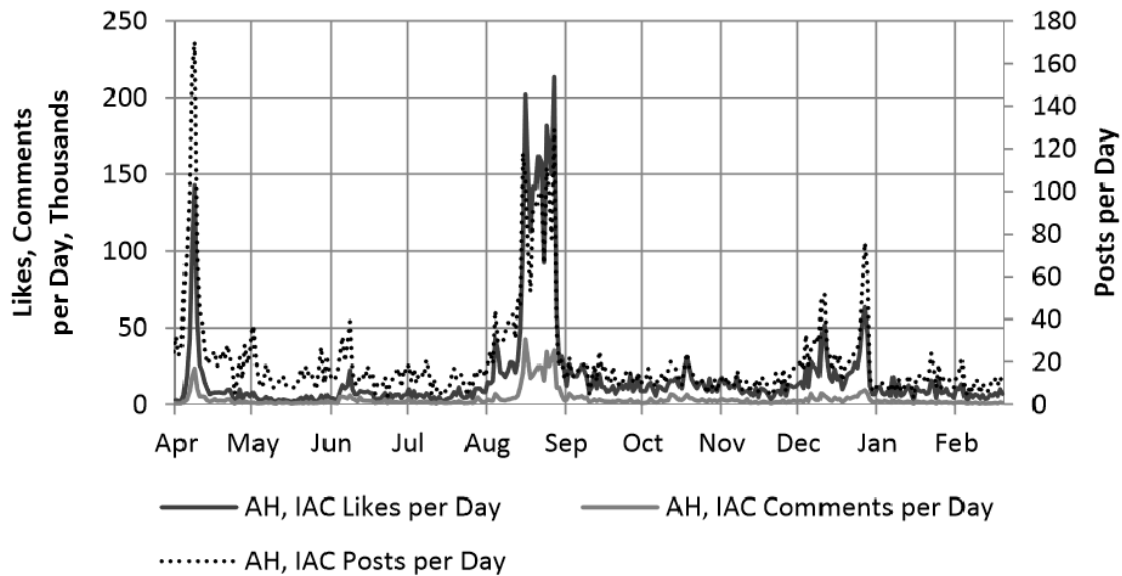
Source: Authors' calculations

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Given below are digital communication practices that will be discussed with regard to the Anti-Corruption Movement. These are:

2.3.1 Timely broadcast and exact information of the movement

"Social-networking sites facilitate information virtuality. Social activists can send updates about the location of protests and events through social media channels like Facebook, Twitter to a large number of people around the world. It could either oppose the mainstream media channels for presenting restricted and asynchronous information of the movement or it can re-circulate appropriate information broadcasted by them"(Downing, 2001).

"After the government rejected the Jan Lokpal Bill, a team of young experts who basically addressed themselves as a part of 'Team Anna' online, mostly directed by Gaurav Bakshi and Shivendra Singh Chauhan to informally protest against the Commonwealth scam in November 2010. They willingly initiated and created different IAC profiles on social media channels like

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[125] Ibid

Facebook, YouTube and Twitter, to inform people and give them particulars of the movement"(Raza, 2012) [126] .To generate added impact, "two teams divided dissimilar responsibilities among themselves where one team monitored and shared advancement and news which was then shared on news channels on IAC websites and social media platforms to start a discussion between users and the other team update real time highlights of Hazare's actions" (Crisis-Network, 2011). The team therefore, as a whole, "was continuously posting live feeds of Hazare's fasting in the form of text, videos and photos, his message to the people, statements released by government officials and the protest location and timings on the official IAC page as well as city details" (Screenshot-1&2).

The "campaign was capable to achieve a considerable number through SMS, email, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter particularly around April 5th 2011, when Hazare began his fast unto death where Team Anna exploited these social media networks to distribute information liberally with no any limits or fear of being banned but also provided all the important updates of the movement for local citizens to participate in and to their fans and followers about the protests happening around the world" (Kurup, 2011)[127]. This also "defined and demarcated the turning points as well as historical moments of this movement. The circulation of information was significant in this particular movement as it gave a powerful impact by influencing the Indian public to present online, particularly the youth and the politically ignorant groups to partake in conversations online which ultimately led to protesting crowds" (Downing, 2001).

The activists through the new networks can disseminate unbiased information on the Internet, unlike TV, radio and newspapers that were previously the only sources of information. These new communication mediums enable interaction and immediate reaction as well as feedback on the information shared, which encourages the activists to carefully outline their subsequent plan.
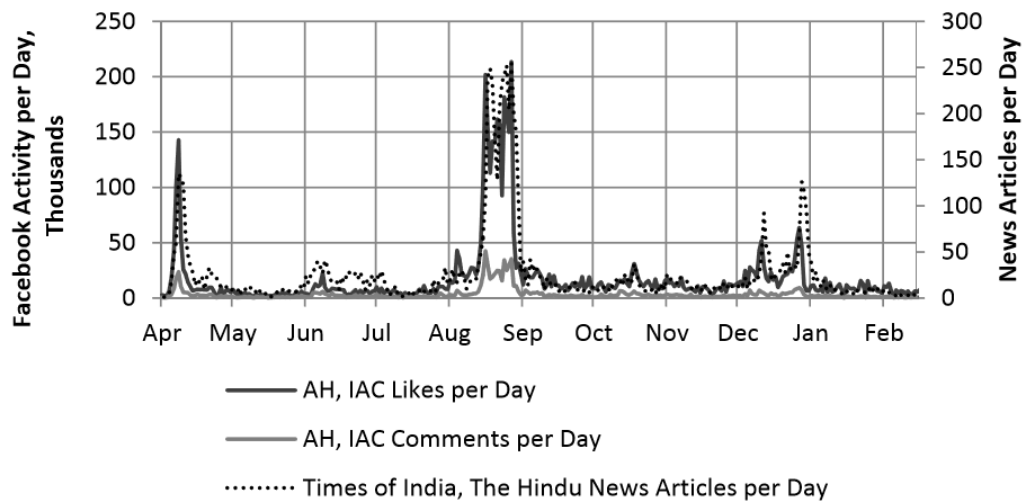
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[126] Danish Raza, 2012. Social media sparked Anna movement , can lead to demise too.
https://www.firstpost.com/india/social-media-sparked-anna-movement-can-lead-to-demise-too-393097.html
[127] Deepa Kurup, 2011. How Web 2.0 responded to hazare.
https://cis-india.org/news/web2.0-responds-to-hazare

Figure 3. Social and News Media Volume, April 2011 – February 2012

Source: Authors' calculations

128

2.3.2 Mobilizing Masses

"Amid January 26th and 30th 2011, Indian social activists came collectively and started marching in protest across 60 different cities in India and some cities across the world asking amendment in the Lokpal bill" (Times, 2011)[129]. "First time the protests were organized through social networking sites. The recently acknowledged IAC Facebook page created more than 20 Facebook events for the January 30th rally, were more than 25,000 users were invited to be part of these events collectively and 18% of the invites replied as either attending or maybe attending" (Facebook, 2011)[130]. The "locations timings of the march were informed through emails, tweets or posted on forums and Google groups motivating Indians to participate in the march in their respective cities" (Appendix: Screenshot-3). The use of these social media networks deliberately sparked a revolution almost immediately" (Tarrow, 2005). More than 5000 citizens filled the

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[128] Through the above figure a strong correlation can be observed between volume trends of Facebook and online versions of newspapers The Times of India and The Hindu. Content of sources are very different from each other. One source may give a different depiction of an event than the alternate source, or an event may be referenced in one source and not the other.

[129] Hindustan Times. 2011. Hazare's anti-corruption movement: Timeline.

[online] Available at: http://www.hindustantimes.com/news-feed/newdelhi/anna-hazare-s-anti-corruption-movement-timeline/article1-683028.aspx

[130] Facebook. 2011. India Against Corruption | Events.

[online] Available at: https://www.facebook.com/Indiacor/events

roads of New Delhi and a similar sight was observed in 60 other cities. counting Mumbai[131]. However, "this is a low number while comparing it to Arab Springs and the Occupy Wall-street movement, but we need to appreciate the fact that this movement initially needed to spread awareness and to bring an educated class join the protest in order to bring qualitative results" (Jha , 2013).

As a result, for the next few months' discussions held on Facebook and Twitter as the activists and the government disagreed. "Besides many celebrities also participated online such as tweets by Kiran Bedi, Anupam Kher and many more encouraged the public to gather on ground to contribute in a variety of protests throughout the year" (Screenshot-4). The most interesting part was that "activists and other people participating in the rallies were also sharing their own updates, videos and pictures from sight of the protests with no censorship, which in turn encouraged their networks to visit the protests as either participants or spectators" (Shirky, 2008) (Screenshot-2). "Though it didn't stop at this. Same kind of situations were seen throughout Hazare's fast in April, arrest in August, and the final fast in December. A popular news website reported around 15,000 protestors at Jantar Mantar, New Delhi at the pinnacle of the movement. But the important point was Hazare's fast from August 13th to 26th 2011, where social networking sites were one of the main reasons for mobilizing over 100,000 people, who visited the Ramlila Maidan, which was the place where Hazare was fasting" (Mohanty, 2012)[132].

"New forms of activism accentuated by the internet has provided with a new space to the people who see this space as an essential platform for debate, and it can serve them as their most potent political weapon" (Castells, 2011). The people have engaged with this medium during Anti- corruption movement in multiple ways like the way they have used the internet as tool for acquiring information and mobilization is credible. "Internet medium has been employed for the production of frameworks to describe the movement and their fields of action through publishing manifestos, principles and policies, creating networks through diverse online groups including think-tanks, legal, volunteer and media services, publishing resources such as online toolkits and how-to guides, and physically marking their political principles through the online organization of events which included stand ins, rallies and marches" (Castells, 2011).

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[131] Daily Star. 2011. Govt. corruption raises protests in India.
[online] Available at: http://archive.thedailystar.net/newDesign/print_news.php?nid=172242
[132] Ranjani Iyer Mohanty, 2012. India Journal: Writing India's Anti- Corruption Movement.
https://blogs.wsj.com/indiarealtime/2012/05/01/india-journal-writing-indias-anti-corruption-movement/

Therefore, the "use of digital and social media platforms has concentrated the obstacles of access to participate in protest movements. This is because these platforms have assisted users with the capability to modify the information they want to consume and their participation in the discussion or event to their ease which has altered their online experience into collective action" (Milan, 2012).

Figure 4. Facebook Activity Threshold, 2011-2012

Source: Authors' calculations
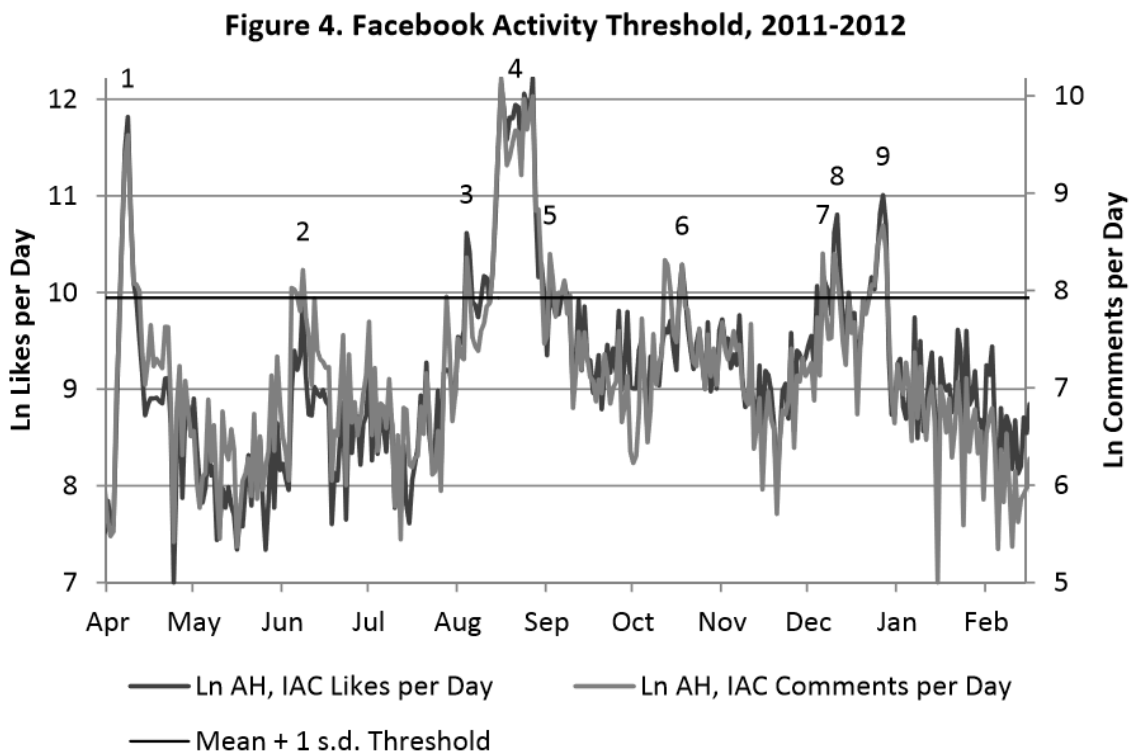
This above figure shows nine major Facebook events during the time of study in the third example, throughout the days leading up to the debate and vote in Parliament on December 27, the AH and IAC pages asked people to join protests considered for the time of the vote in reply to the 'weak version' of the Lokpal bill under deliberation. Many posts on the AH and IAC pages called people to unite for jail bharo, and one post declared that more than 100,000 people have responded to be arrested on December 29.

"IAC Facebook post, December 25, 4:54 a.m. We are not afraid of being monitored. If a strong Lokpal is passed, we will go ahead with our next movement. If the government tries to pass a weak Lokpal, we'll oppose it tooth and nail. We'll oppose the party in power in center, until a strong Lokpal is passed"[133]

Through the above analysis it can understood that users as individuals shared messages powerfully in the Facebook. It definitely has offered an alternative communication and conversation space to these actors. The debates on Facebook are not controlled or structured. In these posts citizens mainly approved to condemn the government approach towards Lokpal. It has been observed that mostly all the actors' posts in the Facebook pages were in opposition to the verdict and decisions of the government authorities. Political opinions, disapproval, information and news were shared in the posts and were available for national and international actors during the movement. "The movement went from cyberspace to urban space with the occupation of the symbolic Jantar Mantar as material support for both deliberate and protests. A hybrid public space made of digital social networks and of a recently formed urban community was at the heart of the movement, both as a instrument of self-reflection and as a statement of people's power" (Castells M. 2015).

The anti-corruption movement led Anna Hazare not only draw the interest of people in India, but also attracted the attention of the world mainly because of the media coverage. The first phase of the movement was criticised for only confining itself to urban areas and the middle class. However, the movement in its second phase, which began in August 2011, saw the participation of diverse constituencies from small towns. In the first phase, Team Anna largely relied on social media, which helped them garner the support of the middle class and draw universal attention as revealed from the support on Facebook. One significant fact emerging from the achievement of the Anna Hazare- led anti- corruption movement in drawing wider public notice is the successful use of social media in attracting the online community into political participation. The online public who was using social media platforms for entertainment purpose or to stay in touch with friends, they became educated to use these sites to engage in politics. Such a growth is new in India but has been in progress in advanced countries.

The growth of social media has positively had democratising impact on the working of newspapers and news channels. The previous monopoly of newspapers and news channels on

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[133] https://www.facebook.com/TheIACPage/.

providing news and breaking stories was destroyed with the expansion and increase in growth of social media. Traditional media now fear losing their integrity to the social media. It is now hard for traditional media channels to conceal a story from the public because now the stories may get broadcast in a blog or be dispersed on social media networks. These demands of the new media may aid in tackling the issue of self- censorship, where the media pass out certain stories or events for their own political and economic interests. The new media can democratise the active public sphere and increase the responsibility of public officials.

2.3.3 Choosing the Right Platform, Constructing Networks and Clear Communication Message

In the IAC movement, "obvious and motivated messaging and real time information to users on social networks brought them offline to actually participate, which exemplifies 'collective behaviour' that eventually describe its victory" (Jennifer Earl, 2011). "The IAC social media team, with almost no budget managed to generate an enormous user support in a noticeably short period. Within March 2011, there were more than 20 unofficial Anti-Corruption and Hazare Facebook pages" (Kurup, 2011) [134]. The "official IAC Facebook managed by 'Team Anna' quickly attained over 500,000 likes and over 140,000 followers on Twitter by September 2011 and the online campaign website Avaaz.org recorded over 6 lakh registrations" (MSLGROUP-Crisis-Network, 2011). "After Hazare and his main members of Team Anna were arrested on 16th August 2011, his declared to the public and released it on YouTube and television networks, which was disseminated on social media platforms motivating the public that he will keep on fasting inside the jail. He asked the nation not to involve themselves in any aggressive activity due to his arrest and instead motivated people to make use of the 'Jail bharo' approach by calling protestors to deliberately get jailed and fill the prisons across the country" (Bedi, 2011)[135].

During the IAC movement, "jingles and taglines like 'I-am-Hazare' became a trend. Hash tags such as #isupportannahazare on Twitter also spread quickly. Multiple Amazingly, business firms

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[134] Deepa Kurup, 2011. How Web 2.0 responded to hazare.

https://cis-india.org/news/web2.0-responds-to-hazare

[135] K, Bedi, 2011. Hazare arrested by Delhi Police ahead of fast.

 https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Anna-Hazare-arrested-by-Delhi-Police-ahead-of-fast/articleshow/9618768.cms

like TATA Tea also initiated an integrated campaign called Jaagore.com which symbolises 'Wake Up'; it was purposefully related to corruption in India. According to Gaurav Mishra, Asia VP-MSL Group, over 15 million people became part of the Anti-Corruption movement online[136]. Hence, a genuine and interesting communication message is considered to be very appealing to strike a discussion online" (Crisis-Network, 2011).

2.3.4 Multidimensional, Multi-platform and Collective Action-oriented Interaction

In relation to the India's IAC movement's presence on social media platforms, Rajesh Lalwani, founder of Blogworks India while giving an interview witnessed an extraordinary swing in the way social media was being employed as a communication tool[137]. He said-

"The major revolution has been that most people are logging on to their social networks immediately after getting online. The possibility to take part in a conversation is better than before" (Subramanian, 2011).

"Mass participation on the web is beneficial in many ways on contrary to individual participation which is time taking and expensive" (Olson, 1971). Internet facilitates a multi-platform communication, aiming audiences of various categories on diverse social-networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter. "It also make easy a multi-layered interaction by initiating discussion among different groups such as activists, among individuals who want to participate in these protests and principally between activists and the concerned Internet based communities" (Milan , 2012).

The Times of India also introduced an Against Corruption Together campaign where 1.2 million people voted against corruption in three days, which also facilitated in mobilization of individuals. This indicates the news media's contribution and proposals on social media platforms, which also allows collective action, particularly in a country like India where even

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[136] Ibid

[137] Karthik Subramanian, 2011. In India, civil and political movements warm to social media. https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/in-india-civil-and-political-movements-warm-to-social-media/article2379719.ece

though the alternative media is growing rapidly, traditional media channels are still believed to be reliable.

Throughout Anti-Corruption movement team Anna Hazare in their protest over the matter of the Jan Lokpal Bill, efficiently used the social media to organize the youth and the middle classes. Social media was used successfully in bringing the concern of people into the cyber space and making it spread globally. Social media helped garnered support for the anti-corruption campaign. However, the movement later lost its vigour due to multiple reasons including internal dissention between its core members, it exemplified the usefulness of social media tools for political mobilization of people. While delivering a speech, the then Law Minister Salman Khurshid said,

"We were caught unawares because Anna's movement was an outstanding amalgamation of traditional politics and new media practices. It's our drawback because we did not use social media as remarkably as Anna's movement did" (Indian Express, 2011)[138].

Such a insight is not without reason, as a report released by Facebook revealed that Anna Hazare and the Jan Lokpal Bill were the most referred status updates in 2011 in India. The common observation that people use the social media mainly for entertainment does not hold true in this case. Similarly, using social media for entertainment doesn't prevent one to use it for political conducts. Politics has undoubtedly penetrated social networking sites, which has released new possibility for accomplishing politics.

"The face book comments during the Anti- corruption movement anticipated the building of an emotional understanding to leave from a logic of isolation, diffusion and compliance that the activists had to face as the characteristic of social experience not only in authoritarian system like Mubarak's Egypt, but also in societies who fall prey to corruption (like India). In these crisis situations in public space, social media have become emotional channels for restructuring a sense of togetherness amongst a spatially diffused electorate, so as to make easy its physical coming together in public space. This consequence clearly goes against a lot of studies on new

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[138] Express News Service, "Team Annas use of social media caught us unawares, says Khurshid", The Indian Express, 19 October, 2011
https://indianexpress.com/article/news-archive/web/team-annas-use-of-social-media-caught-us-unawares-says-khurshid/.

media who have aimed to locate them in a 'virtual reality' or in a 'cyberspace' or in a 'network of brains' isolated from geographic reality"(Castells, 2015).

New Media also changed the manner in which the business of politics is conducted in India. Social media and communication technologies opened up new avenues to mobilise public opinion and facilitated political participation. The success of Anti- corruption movement in obtaining wider visibility can be partially attributed to its successful campaign. On the internet, particularly on social networking sites, which also prompted mainstream media to take up the matter. The internet did play a strategic role in the mobilisation for the anti- corruption campaign by channelling messages to traditional media and to offline communities by interpersonal interactions. The change of the supporters of the anti- corruption movement from a metropolitan and urban middle class to a more widen public can be credited to the occurrence of a hybrid media system or the way in which both new and traditional media in combination with grassroots mobilisation have helped highlight the issue in public arena.

2.3.5 From IAC Movement to Aam Aadmi Party: The Present and the Future

Even though IAC movement was incapable of accomplishing its main purpose of removing corruption from the face of the Indian democracy, but it changed the manner in which activists in India and the young generation mobilized their political protests.

Social media created number of online discussions about the unfairness Indians have been facing since a long time which has resulted in consciousness and willingness among the informed youth, motivating them to raise their voice. "In accordance with the report put together by afaqs.com, during Hazare's fast, conversations with #isupportannahazare recorded over 8000 tweets, over 9000 tweets were recognized with the hashtag *#janlokpal* and 15,000 mentions of Hazare were confirmed from 16th to 18th August 2011" (Ohri,2011)[139]. During the same time, "social pages were created online like 'I-paid-a-bribe' (IPAB) which influenced people to take collective

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[139] Kapil Ohri, 2011. How powerful is Hazare on Facebook and Twitter?afaqs! news & features. https://www.afaqs.com/news/marketing/31413_How-powerful-is-Anna-Hazare-on-Facebook-and-Twitter

action, where over 22,000 stories of corrupt and honest officers in the government have been reported by anonymous local citizens of India" (Jayaraman, 2013)[140].

The way the government responded and acted upon the Lokpal bill led the formation of the Aam Aadmi party. This party fought the elections in 2013 by main members of Team Anna. Their hard work to inform people regarding the illegitimate activities of the government in all spheres of the Indian society primarily on social media has been an achievement.

Their website has been a space for dialogue. "Along with the content tactically posted on their website, they also managed to make the user experience very interactive" (AAP, India, n.d). They cheerfully acknowledged the let-down of their efforts and blamed the government for not passing the Jan Lokpal bill, on their website and have been constantly appealing citizens to support them make a transformation by exposing bribes and corrupt officials on their website. "This constant labour ultimately led AAP winning Delhi elections on 9th December 2013 choosing Kejriwal as the Delhi Chief Minister" (TOI, 2013)[141].

In 2014 "AAP pronounced their existence on 'WhatsApp' so that citizens can have one more seriously used platform to unite with them for concerns and grievances" (TOI, 2014)[142]. In an interview "Kejriwal admired the use of social media in the IAC movement and how it has been helpful in involving the masses with their vision. He stated that crucial public opinion and feedback is received through this means. In this regard, our aim of Swaraj (people participation in the movement) has been promoted with the support of social media" (Naidu, 2013)

This chapter has highlighted the changing contours of new age activism. Features like promotion of participatory democracy at both the organizational level of their mobilizations and its execution leads to constructing newer forms of political representation. Their methods, stretching from creation of new media to the use of the existing ones, do also highlight to us the crisis of the current political systems world over. Revealing their inadequacies in representing

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[140] Pavitra Jayaraman, 2013. Did you pay a bribe today?
https://www.livemint.com/Leisure/hdV1id1T0gHuQoTCyiNIsO/Ipaidabribecom--Did-you-pay-a-bribe-today.html

[141] TOI. 2013. Delhi Elections 2013: BJP winner, Congress zero, AAP hero-The Times Of India.
https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/specials/assembly-elections-2013/delhi-assembly-elections/Delhi-elections-2013-BJP-winner-Congress-zeroAAP-hero/articleshow/27099872.cms

[142] TOI. 2014. AAP now available on Whatsapp.
https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kanpur/AAP-now-available-on-Whatsapp/articleshow/28583648.cms?referral=PM

instances of individual to collective affirmation of subjectivity and in recognizing the universal rights of every individual, that almost always gets denied in complex contemporary societies.[143] In light of this, an important reminder needs mentioning here. The movements are not analysed in terms of the success of their goals, as that itself is an extremely loaded and subjective term. What is of more critical importance is not to decipher the legacies of the movement, though that will form a part in the concluding sections, but to understand the ways in which the ideas that sprouted out were disseminated to a larger section of the masses through the recourse to technological means.

It has also provided an overview of how and why internet-based users employ social media platforms for political movements and what are the strategic digital and social media practices used to motivate users to take part on ground. To emphasize this, point this chapter has tried to comprehend the importance of digital and social media activities of the 'India against Corruption' movement (IAC) in 2011 and if the use of social media platforms was beneficial to build communication and mobilize citizens to participate on ground and protest. Are the activities on the social media were considered as instrumental to the achievement of the overall movement specially when there is low internet penetration in comparison to its overall population.

"Social media networks in India are supporting activists and protesters to overcome the hurdles to communicate and reach out to their online demarcated viewers who can be motivated to take part in the movements. As Kejriwal envisage, these digital platforms have played an important role in showing the Indian activists and citizens a new roadmap to protest" (Naidu, 2013)[144]. These platforms which used to play a very prominent role in the developed world will now play a significant role in influencing policies, engaging with the youth and motivate them to raise their opinions. Despite of the digital divide because of low penetration of internet in India, it has brought diverse groups create, come together and cooperate together in volumes, to revolutionize change. As predicated by Arvind Kejriwal in his interview with Naidu (2013); "This is a journey that will continue."

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[143] Farro, Antimo Luigi, "A New Era for Collective Movements: The Subjectivization of Collective Action," in *Reimagining Social Movements From Collectives to Individuals*, eds. Henri Lustiger-Thaler and Antimo Luigi Farro (England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, Surrey), 31-32.

[144] Arvind kejriwal on the role of Social Media in AAP, Influencing voters, Regulation and More. http://lighthouseinsights.in/interview-with-arvind-kejriwal-on-aap-and-social-media.html/.

Screenshot 1: The below images indicate that Team Anna created different IAC pages attributing to different cities.
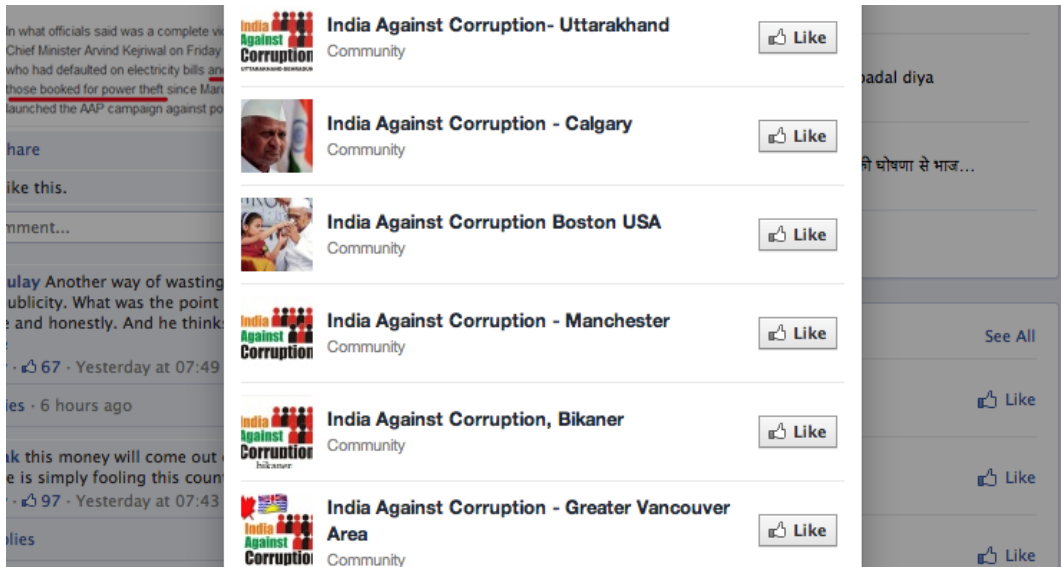
Screenshot 2: Different IAC pages across Facebook encouraging online fans to join the protests on ground through posts, events and creative images.

Screenshot 3: Sample screenshot of the chain emails forwarded to the masses informing the masses about the rally on 31st January 2011.
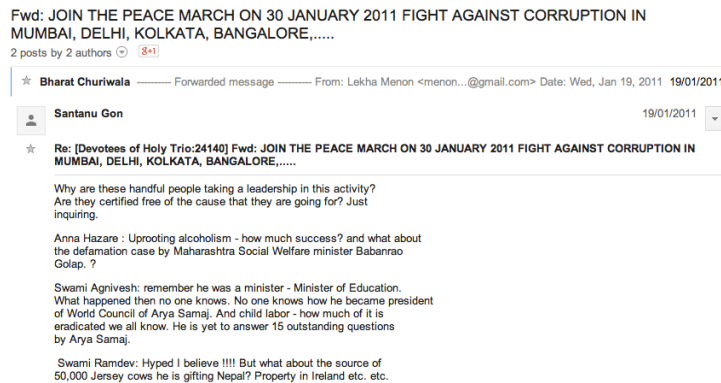
Screenshot 4: Snapshot of celebrities like Anupam Kher encouraging masses to join protests.
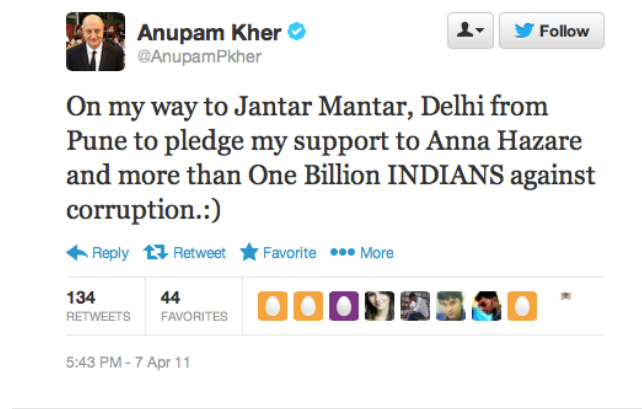
Narendra Modi highest followed political leader in the world on Twitter.

PM Modi Twitter account snapshot using, selfie for promoting to younger generation.

Chapter: III: New Media and the Political Spectacle

A Case Study of BJP 2014 National Election Campaign

This chapter focuses on the creation of the ―Modi Wave or the media spectacle created around the prime ministerial candidate of BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) during the national assembly elections in 2014 to examine the role of media technologies in transforming the image of Narendra Modi and projecting him as the future leader of India by stimulating the national imagination and saturating the public sphere with the images of Modi and his model of development. Simultaneously, through this inquiry, the chapter highlights some experiments with technologies that enabled the ―Modi Wave to overcome distance, linguistic and cultural barriers in order to reach diverse communities spread across India.

In these years, social media became the context for digital campaigns, the leading space in which election campaigns were fought. For some candidates, the platform was simply the quickest and most effective way to build a following, engage that following, and speak to them directly – bypassing mainstream media channels like TV and print. For others, it became a way of reaching key voters with exactly the right message at exactly the right moment. It was not that all these candidates or campaigns necessarily mastered Face book (though some certainly did), but rather that they recognized the power of the platform and embraced it. It helped, of course that the rules and boundaries that existed in other media were for the most part absent from Face book.

Narendra Modi, the leader of India's BJP and their candidate in the 2014 election, built a huge number of followers on Facebook, and engaged with those followers through- out the campaign. From the date the election was announced to when voting closed, Quartz reported, "13 million people engaged in 75 million interactions regarding Modi" on Facebook. Modi encouraged his supporters to become activists in what he called Mission 272+ (272 being the number of seats the BJP needed for a majority), through one of the campaign's Facebook or Android apps. Volunteers signed up in every one of the country's 543 constituencies. The contrast between political communication in this Indian election and the previous one in 2009 was like the difference between the telephone and the loudhailer (Moore, 2018).

During 2009 in India social media was virtually irrelevant. There was only one Indian politician on Twitter – Shashi Tharoor – who had only six thousand followers. At the time of 2014 election campaign there were 227 million Face book interactions (posts, comments, shares and likes), and Modi had sixteen million Facebook followers by the time he was became prime minister. As Facebook's policy manager told the Times of India, "Facebook is really the key place of the conversation that is happening." Modi embraced social media on the other hand his opponent Rahul Gandhi, who led the Indian National Congress, did not have a Facebook or Twitter account. Narendra Modi stimulated the campaign, animated his supporters, boosted his volunteer network and captivate people out to vote. When the results of the election came in, to almost everyone's surprise, Modi's BJP exceeded its target of 272, winning 282 seats and more than doubling its votes from 2009.

In the first part, the chapter follows two major initiatives within his campaign namely the use of 3D holograms to stage virtual rallies, *Chai Pe Charcha* – a video conferencing initiative. The two initiatives explore how new media technologies enabled the possibility of new interfaces between Mr Modi and his audience to remotely reproduce the experience of contact and intimacy. Next, the chapter explores the exploiting of varied social networks for the first-time including platforms such as Facebook, twitter and video-viewing site YouTube but also mobile messenger application *WhatsApp*, that were all actively used by the BJP volunteers. This section also probes the role of humour and the reappropriation of language in reappropriating political messages to help them travel within existing networks of affective exchanges as well as repurpose visuality for the circulation of political messages.

3.1 Social Media and Electoral Mobilisation in India

In the year 2012 Face book shifted from being a relatively passive enabler of democratic disruption to an active agent. Face book in this year chose to turn its extraordinary reach, its noteworthy depth of personal data and its growing grip on the world's attention into dollars. Social media altered the platform into the most powerful behavioural advertising system the world has ever known. Face book also proved to be the best way for campaigns to reach and motivate the young, the unconfident and the downright apolitical. Social media platforms allow the politicians to campaign in a friendly space where people including the young generation.

who have not much interested in politics to have a substantial amount of time every day? This was the strategy – driven by data analysed by data scientists – that Dominic Cummings, the director of the official Leave campaign, used during the EU referendum campaign in Britain in 2016[145].

M. Gautham Machaiah in his study conducted interviews of the members of both houses of the assembly to observe their media practices relation to print, television, radio and social media. The work illustrated that politicians in India in the present times have effectively exploited the new medium of internet, mainly to deal with the uninterested urban electorate. "While the 1999 general elections witnessed the relevance of internet in politics for the first time, the 2004 polls saw the Congress and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) freely running a full-fledged online campaign. The study also discloses that Karnataka was among the States which pioneered the use of internet in politics, with an MP from Bangalore (South), Ananth Kumar, becoming the first parliamentarian in the country to launch his personal website, in the mid-nineties" (Machaiah, 2006).

Arulchelvan in his work argues that "politics and mass communication have been working together since decades. Many parties and their politicians have employed mass communication effectively and have personalized the communication successfully to the shifting forms of communication from time to time, in accordance with their ease, accessibility and reach. With the introduction of these new media technologies the political campaign has achieved a new aspect. He further argues that door-to-door campaigning and print hoardings in regional languages are at the central part of election campaigning in India. This transformed in 2004, when the BJP launched its aggressive nation-wide 'India Shining' campaign. This campaign restored entirely the party's website, sent out text messages to 20 million of mobile users and also well pre-recorded voice clips and emails. He further explains that social media have set a new standard for Election Campaigning and Political Communication as a whole" (Arulchelvan, 2010).

India's socio-political discourse is different because of its overpowering diversity. This is the reason why politicians require media as a medium to communicate with the voters in a huge and diverse country of a billion people. With the introduction of new media there is an increase

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[145] Dominic Cummings has written about the strategy of Vote leave at length on his personal blogs. https://dominiccummings.com/.

in digitally aided human communication, which has resulted in the emergence of well-informed middle class that was considered as technologically driven. In a country like India it is significant that a digitally-aided political communication should work successfully and both the government and political parties together use conventional media to inform and enlighten the people about the benefits of accepting information focused model.

The digital news media is introduced in the past few decades in the wake of India's fast integration into the global economy. The emergence of new media in India is a consequence of the post-liberalisation period which led to privatisation and deregulation and made possible cross-border movement of resources and technology. "The Indian journalism was seen as changing in 2014 general election because the way in which social media was employed by three different stakeholders' politicians, media outlets and normal citizens. The very truth of 'being' or 'using' social media understands to be an alluring feature for politicians to share it with the young, urban, upwardly mobile middle-class citizens of India thus bridging the gap among the old forms of political communication and the new forms" (Chattopadhyay, 2012).

The "Internet has maximum penetration among the young population of India (18-24 years) at around 48% and least penetration of 6% in the older population (54 years and more). The Internet has the ability to reach small towns and the lower strata of the economic ladder sooner than retail chains. The increasing need of Indian consumers also centres on the truth that men are more likely than women to be on the internet (32%) and thrice as liable to be digitally influenced" (Nair, 2013)[146]. "The article according to a report by Boston Consulting Group states that even 18% of lower income households have Internet access and the number of Internet users in India is expected to rise thrice its number from 125 million in 2011 to 330 million in 2016" (Nair, 2013).

The IRIS Knowledge Foundation (IKF) in its study on social media and elections in India "highlighted on the requirement for candidates to have a plan of media planning prepared ahead of elections in order to make their campaigns more successful. By producing content which is appropriate on social media will repeatedly amplify its liability. The study also offered that the majority of Indian voters are young and technologically friendly. A populace of young people

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[146] Nair Priya, "Internet users in India to triple by 2016", Business Standard, 25 April, 2013 (https://www.business-standard.com/article/technology/internet-users-in-india-to-triple-by-2016-113042500185_1.html)

who are enthusiastic to vote and take active part in politics has severe implications for politicians? The new generation of these young voting public who are based in urban areas and has access to the internet and are also self-assured when it comes to attaining what they want and asking for it. Social media provides a platform through which the politicians during the elections execute targeted campaigning which purposely centres on mobilising these young voters" (Foundation, 2013).

In a report released by Internet and Mobile Association (IAMAI) "Social Media in India-2012" - in February 2013 showed some interesting findings. The study revealed that "one- third of the Social Media users, were from smaller towns in India with population of fewer than 500,000. This is a significant finding as it shows that a section of Social Media users are residents of towns with a population less than 200,000" (Foundation, 2013).

Siddharth Banerjee argues that "campaigns were handled in-house by representatives of the party itself. The growth of India's GDP and rise of the middle class in the decades following liberalization in the 1990s saw a broad social transformation. Accompanied by the technological changes such as the advent of television, internet and social media, the nature of political campaigns in India has seen a sea change. The article justifies this by quoting the example of BJP hiring a number of international public relations firms as early as 2009" (Bannerjee).

The two Indian national parties-Congress and BJP were very advance with regard to other national parties when it came to using social media. "It has produced a 'paradigm shift' principally in the one of the largest elections in the world in 2014 which had 814.5 million voters with 23.1 million (2%) first time voters in the age group of 18-19 years, where amusingly, the total voter turnout was around 66.38%. The Indian politicians to escape the gate keepers of media have now taken refuge under social media. This new form of media has crushed media labels and has become a medium for open discourse. Calling it as the new power centre, new media has knocked down conventional media which exerted power for more than a century" (Asha K N, 2014).

Social media provides a platform through which the contemporary digitalized world communicates. Social media cannot entirely substitute conventional media like radio, newspaper and television, but they perform as a space which offers politicians to do direct communication with the public, and can be used along with the established forms of

communication. It is in background the implication of social media in the elections enhanced even though at first there was apprehension whether social media will be a important tool for political communication or not.

India is the second most populous country in the world and is among the fastest growing countries in terms of the number of social media users. Face book and twitter are ranked among the top three sites used for social networking in India. Face book with 59.64 million and 3.88 million Twitter users. Because of this increasing popularity of social media, all major Indian political parties who were trying to form a government in the centre in 2014 gave special attention to social media presence, making Face book pages and Twitter profiles to network with their supporters and to send out information about their respective electoral agendas, political rallies, and other related events. The Bhartiya Janta Party strategy of aggressively using social media networks was caused by a shocked defeat in the 2013 Delhi elections when AAP (common man's party) won most of the seats and most of the credit for their victory was given to a smart use of social media. "By that time Narendra Modi was sworn in as the prime minister of India in May 2014, he had more than 16 million 'likes' on Face book, the second most for any politician in the world, and he was the sixth most followed leader on Twitter" (Ali, 2014).

"The usage of Twitter in India unlike Facebook, among politicians was in a very early phase at the time of 2014 elections and has a long way to go. Although, the BJP and Congress attempted to leverage social media in their campaigning, the leftist parties were not active on Twitter. Narendra Modi and Shashi Tharoor were among the top 15 leaders on Twitter with the majority of followers. Politicians in India need to be more active and innovative in their tweeting actions. As more leaders connect Twitter and learn how to Tweet, the more decisive role Twitter will play in painting the political picture of India" (Rajput, 2014).

"Narendra Modi's social media presence is huge with regard to any other politician globally. He on twitter presently placed second in following to Barack Obama. With a mix of messages, shout-outs to other celebrities, and well-timed ritualized responses, as well as a cautious approach to 'follow backs' for a small selection of his most active followers, Modi has been able to develop his following radically particularly since 2013. He uses Twitter to directly converse with an important constituency of listeners and use it as medium to reach the main stream media. Consequently, the appearance of his employing social media efficiently is in

itself helpful in building his public image as a Technology-savvy leader, allied with the goal of a new Indian modernity" (Pal, 2014).

Elections across the globe in present times are mediated in the logic of being permeated by the ambient existence and open employment of diverse media, the 2014 national elections presents an exact reason of mediated populism that has become internationally prominent lately. "To understand this logic, it is imperative to study the contexts and lineages of the present moment of mediated populism which are the wider political-economic dynamics and situations that forms and implant the Modi phenomenon. The centre of attention should be on the shifting relationship between privatized media across platforms, political elites and conceptions/productions of 'the people' that these particular political historical dynamics have affected and enabled" (Roy, 2015).

"Social media platforms present campaigns the power to arrive at precise location of people independently, to infiltrate their social news at a moment of the campaign's choosing, and to apply peer pressure. The stage facilitated by social media became an influential motivator to political action in both the digital and in the real world. Consequently, social media platform particularly Face book performs political engagement on its space without taking into consideration whether it is supporting or undermining the democratic procedures. In case for example, Face book algorithms would expose people to numerous and contradictory news and information, or to perception that established or even polarized what they previously thought. Whether face book communities which were created to reconstruct democratic groups or merely endorse echo chambers. The Face book news feed and communities would give people an opportunity to discuss on political issues or just to promote partisanship" (Moore, 2018).

3.2 Background to Elections in India

"Indian elections are multifaceted and different in nature and also been expressed as one of the biggest events in the world. Indian election system is based on federal structure and officials are elected at the central, state, and local levels and are determined by the 'first past the post[147]' system. Though to process a just and unbiased election is a challenge in the second most

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[147] A first-past-the-post voting method is one in which voters indicate on a ballot the candidate of their choice, and the candidate who receives the most votes wins. This is sometimes described as winner takes all. First-past-the –post voting is plurality voting method. FPTP methods can be used for single-and multiple-member electoral divisions. In a single member election, each voter casts up to the same number of votes as there are positions to be filled, and those elected are highest-placed candidates corresponding to that number of positions.

populated country in the world. In India, the voting is performed based on universal adult franchise where every citizen above the age of 18 years has the right to cast vote. The elections are directed by the Election Commission of India (EC) which was formed on 25th January 1950 as an independent, constitutionally recognized federal authority" (Hickok,2018).

The 2014 parliamentary elections in India surprised many people as after 30 years a single party managed to achieve majority on its own and for the first time in democratic history of India it was not Congress Party. In its place, the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) which achieved its first parliamentary majority, on the promises of economic progress and development over religious majoritarianism. This kind of involvement was not seen ever since Indira Gandhi's Prime Minister Ship in the1970s. The elections were revolved around the contention of an individual, projected as the national leader– Narendra Modi giving elections a quasi-presidential sense. The levels of expenditure spend by the BJP and its successful existence in the news media and new media also gave these elections a different outlook from its past experience.

"The rationale is repeatedly expressed in the context of India's 2014 general election, in which more than 554 million registered electorates turned out at a record rate of 66.4% to give a crucial win to the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, or BJP which ended decades of awkward coalition rule in the country. The election was held in nine separate phases over a five-week period. The BJP supporters were viewed as especially active in employing the affordances of social media to share political information, organize events for candidates, promote party messages, and encourage members of their social networks to support the party, with young voters seen as playing an especially critical role" (A, 2014).

"Till around 1980s, India was constantly under the rule of single party, the Indian National Congress. Apart from a break in 1977 when INC removed out of power in the election that pursued the two-year deferral of civil and political liberties by its leader Indira Gandhi who dictated the country's political setting. Until this point election campaigns in India were perceived on the idea that citizens were alarmed with local and regional matters and are more liable to focus on parties rather than candidates. Campaigns were also mainly decided on rural constituents with parties using conventional get-out-the-vote methods such as public rallies and candidate appearances across the country. Electorates in urban settings on the other hand, were contacted through door-to-door canvassing as well as the circulation of posters, handbills, flags, and banners, usually in regional languages" (Seidman, 2008).

During the initial 50 years of independence, campaign in elections used to be low technologically inclined and didn't present many signs of the tele visualization which increasingly characterized elections in the developed world. "This traditional model started to change when the BJP, which had been leading India as the leader of a centre-right coalition government since 1998, determined to alter its approach in the general election of 2004 by initiating the countrywide India Shining campaign. This campaign was significantly different from earlier election campaigns in its use of technology to reach electorates particularly those residing in urban regions, with about 5% of the party's campaign budget being focused to e-campaigning, restoring the party's website and pushing out text messages, pre-recorded voice clips, and e-mails to its record of 20 million e-mail and mobile phone users" (Gupta, 2014).

"Social media become the focus which fashioned the part of the electoral approach of all parties although it was stimulated by number of factors. Besides, the above talked about growth in Internet use, India observed a major growth in social media use with the figure of users rising to 90 million in the era leading up to the 2014 election" (Foundation, 2013) . "In the meantime, the levels of usage were especially high between the approximately 150 million people in the middle of the ages of 18 and 23, who became entitled to vote for the first time" (Chilkoti, 2014).

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) campaign engaged with those first-time voters in huge numbers of who were dissatisfied with the corruption, poor economic performance, and dynastic politics linked with the ruling Congress-led coalition. The main centre of its electoral calculations. "Narendra Modi, the BJP's candidate for Prime Minister regularly communicated through his Twitter account and his YouTube videos were interpreted into numerous regional languages which highlighted issues such as jobs, security, and the use of technology" (Bhan, 2014).

All through this time "media accounts constantly referred to the BJP's endeavours to 'make over' its image by 'transcending' what Graham termed the 'limitations of its origins' in particular, its traditional identification as a party of the Hindi-speaking, northern heartland supported primarily by middle-class, upper-caste Hindus and draw in supporters from the ranks of young, first-time voters" (Graham, 2007). "The BJP's victory is based in their recruiting young electorates which were undoubtedly seen in the strong positive association between the percentage of first-time electors and transformation in the BJP's vote share between 2009 and 2014 across Indian states. As a result, one of the crucial factors fundamental in BJP's unexpected electoral success was its ability to reach out to first-time electorates. A growth that the campaign credited to the efficient use of a 'grassroots' social media campaign relating thousands of supporters who vigorously endorsed the party's message" (Basu, 2014).

During 2012, "India had 137 Million internet users, which cross over 200 million mark by 2014 general elections and it was normal to see it growing over 450 Million internet users by June 2017" (Chopra, 2014). The swift enhancement in number of internet users has generated an increase in digital influence on public opinion towards the political entities. According to Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), by 2015, "the number of internet subscribers in rural India has seen a rise of 50 million. However, in urban India, this number rose to around 150 million users. The report from IAMAI focus on the fact that 52% of internet users from rural areas access the internet for the prime purpose of entertainment, followed by 39% for social media and 37% for communication. The immense adoption of low-price smart phones is allowing the users to carry their digital world with them" (Foundation, 2013).

Conventionally candidates were dependent on local and refined information and have employed practices like opinion polls, vote banks, door to door campaigning, booth wise caste and religious profiling and volunteers to focus on faction of electorates. But in comparison to earlier elections the 2014 national elections have employed the data, technology, and social networking sites which performed a vital role in the manner the campaigns were planned, structured, targeted, executed and communicated. Data and Technology are principal means in consciously finding the complexities of demographics, religion, politics, caste, geography, and community in India. Though other elections have taken advantages of internet platforms before 2014, but this election in India manifested a shift in electioneering strategy.

"This eminence on the use of digital technologies that firstly appeared in the 2009 campaign achieved major speed in 2014, with a meticulous drive on the use of social media platforms. The reality that Indian voters were more liable to connect to the Internet through mobile devices, political parties developed Smartphone apps such as the BJP's 272+ mobile app which seek electorates and made use of active mobile messaging apps such as WhatsApp. While in the

earlier times online electoral strategies had focused on websites, in the 2014 election, political parties centred on the expansion of successful social media outreach, which was generally recognized as the means to electoral success" (Patel, 2014).

The 2014 Lok Sabha election marked a transitional phase in campaigning - where candidates still held large rallies to set the political agenda, this time it was an army of volunteers, supporters and sympathisers that took to New Media to run a parallel online campaign. They repackaged, shared and reinforced the political message to the social networks, especially the young, hitherto

disinterested voters. Politicians of all age groups realised the need to present themselves in a new avatar which is of a new age, innovative, leader who shares space with his constituencies in the virtual world. The initiative evoked encouraging response and the potential voters reciprocated by going an extra mile to make the best of the new found interactivity of Web 2.0 and rediscover democratic processes by engaging with their leaders, participating in online political discussions and even turning producers of user-generated content (UGC). "Nonetheless, as an recognized party with the capability to influence substantial financial and organizational resources, the BJP come out as a leader particularly in exploiting big data and analytics, using a state-of-the-art social media war room to track possible electorates across India's 92,000 villages" (Kaul, 2014).

By late-2013, the stage was set for online campaigns as underlined by a report by the "*Internet Mobile Association of India and IRIS Knowledge Foundation[148]*" that declared that "out of India's Lok Sabha 543 constituencies, 160 can be termed as 'high impact' which means they will most likely be influenced by social media in the general elections. High impact constituencies are those where the numbers of Face book users are more than the margin of victory of the winner in the last Lok Sabha election, or where face book user's account for over 10% of the voting population" (Foundation, 2013). According to the above analysis, the 2014 Lok Sabha candidates integrated new media into their overall campaigns. However, the

widespread sentiment is that online campaign itself could not ensure victory in the elections and a balance needs to be struck between traditional electioneering and campaign on New Media.

However, after US President Barack Obama's successful use of social media in 2008, online campaign is now a necessity for any vibrant democracy boasting of a networked society. Ultimately this research will primarily be centred around the question on what factors helped the Bharatiya Janata Party, to became the first party since 1984 to win an absolute majority in the parliamentary elections and how did they communicated with the electorates in the environment of the party's liberal and electorally victorious social media campaign. This chapter will highlight

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[148] The Internet and Mobile Association of India are responsible for the development and innovation of the mobile and Internet industry India. The Internet and Mobile Association of India also deal with the concerns, issues, and the challenges faced by the mobile and Internet industry. The Internet and Mobile Association of India was set up in the year 2004 by the top Indian Internet portals and the Internet and Mobile Association of India is the only organization of its kind which cater to the rights and privileges of the mobile and Internet industry. The Internet and Mobile Association of India have its offices in Delhi and Mumbai.

the basis on which the campaign mobilised the voters in a manner which was different from the conservative top-down model of campaigning towards a more participatory, bottom-up approach which will potentially develop deliberative democracy. Till now, there has been no comprehensive research on political use of New Media in the Indian content that looks at various aspects of the online exercise. Complete replication of the American model of new media campaigns is not possible in the Indian context as there it is based on personality clashes with an entirely different format that includes primaries.

3.3 Rallying Around Modi: Beyond Parties

It is important to understand the reasons that led to the landslide victory of BJP. "The question that needs to be asked is whether the party's success is result of the fact that voters turned their backs on the not so accepted, incumbent Congress Party, or whether the Bharatiya Janata Party successfully mobilised new voters by striking a connection with 117 million voters who are new to the electoral roll, or by getting existing electorates who were politically passive in the past. The BJP's victory was not as simple as gaining from the Congress Party's bad luck. Although the Congress Party lost votes in unparalleled figures, only around a third of previous Congress voters turned to the BJP. One of the many causes that led to the success of Bharatiya Janata Party was its capacity to plea to electorates who had earlier not been mobilized properly. Therefore, the BJP's victory hinged on its capability to strengthen its position in constituencies it had won in 2009, plus its capacity to mobilize new electorates elsewhere" (Heath, 2015).

"The reliance of the BJP on the headship of Narendra Modi circumvents the party institutions direct on the way to longer term accountability for the party. Although, Modi's win may not transform into longer time realignment in favour of the BJP. But BJP may acquire some encouragement from the truth that its success rested more on its ability to bring new voters into the political process who had not previously been well mobilized. Rather than relying on the potentially more fickle support of 'swing' voters switching allegiance between parties" (Heath, 2015).

The BJP in the past few years have made powerful connect in the rural parts outside its conventional support base among urban upper castes and middle-class voters. Although it still performs better in India's cities. Narendra Modi was equally familiar with the ambitions of rural voters he addressed them as 'urban' dream which would bring urban style amenities to rural areas.

The way urbanisation is unfolding in India it has transformed the discourse of electoral politics and has added significantly in the performance of BJP in 2014 national elections. India's urban constituencies tremendously supported the BJP and its allies in 2014. They won 80% of the 40 most highly urbanised seats (those where at least 75% of voters live in urban areas) and 56% of the 123 semi-urban seats (where 25% of the population or more live-in cities).

"The urban constituencies generally and over a period of time, have had lower levels of turnout and electoral competitiveness than rural seats. But specifically in 2014 urban seats saw a considerably larger margin of victory on average compared to rural seats. The urban–rural difference in margin of victory was considerably higher than those seen in other Lok Sabha elections since 1977. The ability of the BJP to dominate urban space was an important part of their victory" (Tillin, 2015).

Christophe Jaffrelot argues "that the BJP's campaign in 2014 was extraordinary because, more than any time since Indira Gandhi, it depended profoundly on the persona of its leader. This was a first time that a prime ministerial candidate used his record as Chief Minister of a state to propose for national office. Narendra Modi challenged the collegial traditions of the BJP by using a complementary structure of support by activists with personal commitment to him. This led to the side-lining of party veterans. New communication strategies were also employed to 'saturate' the public sphere and reach voters directly. The BJP, under Modi, appropriated themes such as corruption and caste that are more strongly associated with other parties, as well as building on Modi's experience as Chief Minister of Gujarat. He also fell back on more traditional Hindu nationalist themes and relied on the support of the RSS. It was this combination of new and old, that distinguished the BJP's campaign in 2014" (Jaffrelot, 2015).

Throughout the 2014 national elections "the campaign strategy of the winning party (Bharatiya Janata Party or BJP) mainly revolved around the growing popularity of the prime ministerial candidate among the wider electorate. His personality, charisma, the information about his non-political background and the way he connected with the electorates throughout the election campaign by different social media platforms like Twitter tweets, Face book posts, YouTube videos and google hangout" (Kazmin, 2014).

They made the "use of 3D holograms to make t e BJP prime ministerial candidate appear to be present at various political rallies in remote locations all over India. The BJP, won by an absolute majority for the first time in the 2014 general election. Many commentators credited main acknowledgment to the role of social media in helping build this historic victory. In particular, in

cementing a huge fan following and a popular personality base for Modi" (A B. N., 2014). Narendra Modi employed social networking sites comparatively sooner, which provided him great benefits on the way to communicate individually and personally in the electoral campaign.
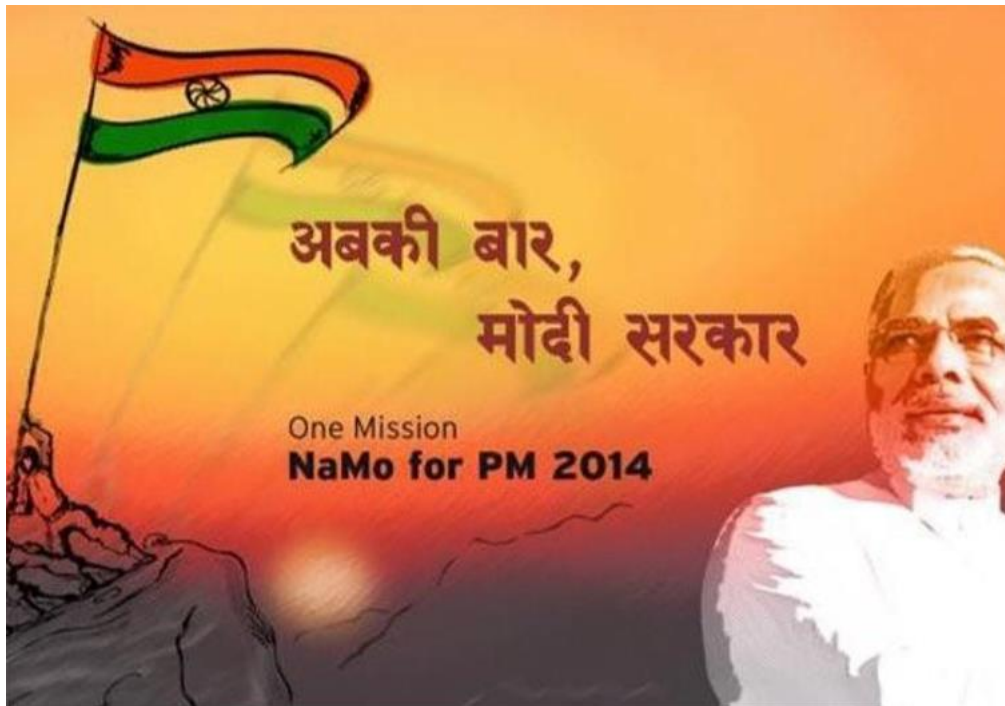
"The personalisation in politics is not a recent phenomenon. In both India as well as the world politics, we have seen various examples of charismatic leaders who have been remembered more for their vibrant persona rather than policies. Theoretically in a democratic (parliamentary) country like India the party should be the highlight of the campaign. But, as established in previous election studies, even in parliamentary systems like India, individual candidates have repetitively attained centre stage. This shows that individual political personalities have become part of the party's core campaign strategy in order to expand recognition among the voters. Such personalisation in politics is affected and increased by external features such as media coverage of a political leader, leader's facade in television debates and lately, by the presence, activeness and visibility of the leader on social media" (Bacha, 2004).

"The social media strategy reflected and further developed this approach of personalisation of politics. In case of stronger political leaders, the personal Twitter feed of a political leader as well as their party try to employ the strategy of personalisation where either the ideas were related to the individuals rather than a party or the personal characteristics of individuals were exemplified as the representative of the party ideology" (Bacha, 2004).

Narendra Modi not only rejected the Congress, he rejected any party and argues that 'In 2014, let us not cast our vote for any party or individual but let us VOTE FOR INDIA!', which explains that being the candidate contesting for the position of Prime Minister and he was not very keen on making parties a significant part of the campaign. Narendra Modi extensively used social media platforms to create a new story about him, which is not similar to what's anticipated in conventional media. He wanted to place a broader dialogue on economy and development issues. Traditional media has severely been critical of him in past for his active participation in the 2002 Gujarat riots. One of the reasons to use social media expansively in 2014 is to counteract this issue. "He with his own twitter account which was different from his party's official twitter account tries to emphasise more on showcasing himself as a potential prime minister candidate with qualities, principles and with a developmental programme" (Yadav,2017).

He tried to project himself through social media "as an outsider, who is against the establishment and who wants to revolutionize the system. Since mainstream Indian media has been criticised as corrupt and influenced by powerful interests, Modi's intimation of being mistreated by the

same media exchange the chords with the electorates. He outshine mainstream media through social networking sites to communicate to the citizens directly which proved crucial, particularly with younger, internet-friendly electorates who have shifted from traditional to social media" (Yadav,2017).

Figure 5: BJP party election campaign advert

"The personalisation of the BJP election campaign was reflected in the downplaying of the party apparatus and coalition politics. It created expression in slogans such as 'Har har Modi', 'ghar, ghar Modi' or 'Abki bar, Modi sarkar!' In fact, the entire campaign of the BJP concentrated on the virtues of its leader, instead of the party's agenda. The image that was proposed was that of a 'doer' which echoed the skills of a CEO. On one of the posters used during the campaign, Modi was showcased as 'Initiator, Innovator, and Implementer'. Additionally, this was the turn down of the collegial modus operandi of the BJP and the sidelining of senior leaders. While he promoted Amit Shah, his right-hand man in Gujarat, to lead the election campaign in UP, Jaswant Singh was denied a ticket. Advani himself was 'persuaded' to fight from Gandhinagar. M.M. Joshi had to leave his Varanasi seat which Modi wanted to contest, and Rajnath Singh himself had to move from Ghaziabad to Luck now" (Joshi, 2014).

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[149] https://twitter.com/BJP4India. Accessed on 20 February, 2018.

"Narendra Modi was an early adopter of social media among Indian politicians who connected to both Twitter and Face book in 2009 and the BJP also achieved benefit from it. He was ranked up in April 2014 with 12.46 million Face book supporters, compared to 4.9 million for AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal. He had the highest rising Face book page of any politician globally. In Twitter too Modi had 3.6 million followers, more than twice that of Kejriwal's 1.6 million. The BJP's social media campaign, which focused on the personality of its leader, Narendra Modi, was thus significantly more far-reaching in terms of scale than that of Aam Aadmi Party or the Congress Party. As journalist Anant Goenka, who heads the new media division of the Indian Express newspaper group, put it, The BJP is by far ahead of the rest, there is no comparison particularly with the Congress, even though a lot of the Aam Aadmi's campaign has been on social media too" (Crabtree, 2014)

3.2.1 Creation of the Modi Wave

Mr. Narendra Modi came to power with the promise of development and to ameliorate the people from the corruption-ridden systems of the previous government. "The 2014 election saw the use of new media on the rise for campaigning and publicity. It is important to note that the new media technologies were used with the purpose of disseminating one's ideological teachings. The old media of mass communication was shunned in favour of social media and the prime minister had his own team who was constantly communicating information on twitter and engaging with people on new media" (Pal, 2006). "The digital technologies were considered an important aspect that bolstered the government's image with many programs catering both at the policy and cultural level. The selfie trend that Mr. Narendra Modi started was to motivate supporters to take selfies with black mark on their fingers after voting as a way to make people participate in the political process" (Rao, 2018). The Modi mosaic was a digital initiative to suffuse all the selfies into making the image of Modi's face, including the people in the identity and the ideology that the present government endorses. "His policy of smart cities and digital India, Aadhar card that promises distribution of resources through digital linkage and communication witnessed lapses as accessibility to these digital technologies remain poor.

The images of his travels abroad and meetings with other international personalities are shared whereas there is less information about the legislative work and the judiciary functions" (Gurumurthy, 2016). "Selfie nationalism is where every policy and work has been reduced to

the surface level of digital visibility. The visibility gives a semblance of presence of the government in the lives of individuals even when the prime minister is absent on the ground level of governance. Neoliberalism is merged with the Hindutva model that gives rise to an aggressive kind of market economy and privatization, exclusive of welfare state and the upliftment of the marginalised communities"(Rao, 2018).

"Donald Trump was not the only politician to profited from the change in the public's news consumption habits. Like him, India's Narendra Modi used Twitter to circumvent conventional media and converse directly to the citizens, showcasing himself as the voice of a silent majority. 'If you want to listen to Modi, one analyst of his tweets wrote in 2015, you go to his social media feed – whether you are a citizen, a print reporter or a television channel" (Pal, 2014). Like Trump, Modi focused public attention on himself – rather than on the state or party – in what communications scholar Shakuntala Rao has called "selfie nationalism" (Rao, 2018). As Rao documents, through his ubiquitous and constant presence on social media, Modi has shown himself as the 'people's prime minister' who represents Jana shakti (people's power). In practice, this has meant ignoring the boring aspects of governance – the legislative process, the judicial system, the implementation of policy – and focusing on attention- grabbing new initiatives, illustrations of power in action (such as photographs of meetings with international leaders) and demonstrations of nationalism and religious devoutness (exclusively playing to the Hindu majority). Tellingly, Modi does not tweet links to news stories – mainstream media is to be bypassed and ignored, not promoted.

At the time when Narendra Modi, the chief minister of Gujarat, a state in Western India was declared the prime ministerial candidate of the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) in September 2013, many leaders including L.K Advani, a veteran leader in his own party did not approve of his nomination[150]. Even after the start of his prime ministerial campaigning, voices discouraging people to vote for him came from several directions including leaders of other states like Nitish Kumar, Mamata Banerjee and Naveen Pattanaik[151] but also from a number of intellectuals within

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[150] Rao, Apoorva, "LK Advani and Sushma Swaraj continue to give Narendra Modi headache. Advani possibly next Speaker of Lok Sabha", Daily News & Analysis, 15 May, 2014
(https://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-lk-advani-and-sushma-swaraj-continue-to-give-narendra-modi-a-headache-advani-possibly-next-speaker-of-lok-sabha-1988226)

[151] ET Bureau, "Fears of stronger BJP in their backyard behind Jayalalithaa, Mamta and Mulayam's anger towards Modi?", The Economic Times, 18 April, 2014(https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/fears-of-stronger-bjp-in-their-backyard-behind-jayalalithaa-mamata-and-mulayams-anger-towards-modi/articleshow/33874682.cms).

civil society, the prime reason for opposing the candidature of Modi was his alleged complacency in massive communal riots that happened in Gujarat in 2002 leading to the death of over 1000 people, most of whom were Muslims[152].

On several occasions, he had been called a Fascist ', mass murderer, merchant of death[153] and was seen as a deeply divisive political figure. Not only this, his party, the BJP (Bhartiya Janata Party) is perceived as a conservative right wing Hindu party and has affiliations to extremist Hindu organizations such as the RSS (Rashtriya Sevak Sangh), VHP (Vishwa Hindu Parishad), Bajrang Dal etc. A third reason why leaders inside the BJP did not approve of Mr Modi 's candidature was because he had relatively no experience or background in national politics and was in fact seen as a staunch advocate of Gujarati identity, marking him as a regional leader[154]. Thus, it was unclear how he would succeed in establishing himself as a national figure.

The creation of the "Modi Wave" which was a systematic series of media events and appearances was orchestrated precisely with a view to transforming the image of a leader in order to project him as a national leader[155] This task required highlighting him as a decisive leader as against the incumbent prime minister, Dr Manmohan Singh who had been criticized on several occasions for being a passive and meek leader[156]. It also required popularizing Mr Modi across Indian states where linguistic and regional leaders dominate the political scene. Lastly, the media campaign had to focus on sanitizing and obscuring his links with the communal riots by turning him into an icon of economic development through the highlighting of his urban development and technology initiatives executed in the state of Gujarat.

What followed the announcement of his candidature in September 2013 up till the elections in April 2014 was a period of massive media mobilization in order to overcome the challenges discussed above and help Mr Modi win the elections eventually. To get a sense of the "massive" nature of this mobilization, Mr Modi addressed 437 rallies and participated in a total 5827 public

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[152] BBC News, "Gujrat riot death toll revealed", 11 May, 2005

(http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4536199.stm)

[153] PTI, "Maut ka saudagar' is apt description of Narendra Modi: Congress", 21 March, 2014

(https://indianexpress.com/article/india/politics/maut-ka-saudagar-is-apt-description-of-narendra-modi-congress/)

[154] Pande, Shamni, "Just the Right Image", Bussiness Today, 08 June, 2014

(https://www.businesstoday.in/magazine/case-study/case-study-strategy-tactics-behind-creation-of-brand-narendra-modi/story/206321.html)

[155] Ibid.

[156] The Statesman, "Disappointing Tenure", 19 May, 2014.

interfacing events travelling over 3 lakh kilometres across 25 states[157]. The estimated expenditure of his entire media campaigns allegedly amounted to Rs 5,000 crores, one sixth of the total expenditure incurred by all political parties and the Election Commission to conduct nine phases of polling[158]. The BJP also engaged lyricist Prasoon Joshi to write their anthem and delegated Piyush Pandey, the Indian head of advertising firm Ogilvy & Mather to create the popular campaign "Ab ki baar, Modi Sarkaar"(This time, Modi government).

A news report stated, "Modi 's image was ubiquitous in this campaign. He stared out of full, front page ads in newspapers across languages, commercials across television channels and hoardings across cities, especially Delhi"[159]. According to an estimate by the Centre for Media Studies, 33 percent of primetime television coverage was devoted to Modi – over three times as much as the next highest coverage of any other personality, and eight times as much as that of his rival Rahul Gandhi[160]. Commercial time was bought on radio networks to reach out to tier two and three cities.

Popular media planner, Sam Balsara, the head of Madison World who was hired for the Modi campaign explained, "We created roadblocks — before the 9 p.m. news at key polling days, we showed a BJP ad on all major channels"[161]. On the digital front, Mr Modi 's micro-blogging account on *Twitter* garnered a following of 4 million users in the first week, which was about one third of the total Indian users of the site[162]. In the areas where there was no digital connectivity, "Modi-raths" (literally meaning Modi-carts) with his "pre-recorded video messages were sent to scale up the reach"[163]. A *Financial Times* blog reported that Modi was present simultaneously at 150 locations, using the 3D hologram images created for his public meetings[164].

[157] TNN, "Narendra Modi's electoral milestone: 437 rallies, 3 lakh km", 30 April, 2014
[158] Gurtoo, Himani Chandana, "BJP's advertisement plan may cost a whopping Rs. 5000cr", 13 April, 2014
[159] Bansal, Shuchi, "How BJP sold brand Narendra Modi", Live Mint, 17 May, 2014
[160] Chauhan, Chetan, "Modi tops TV charts, leaves rivals far behind", Hindustan Times, 07 May, 2014
[161] Seervai, Shanoor, :"Lessons From Narendra Modi's Media Campaign", The Wall Street Journal, 11 June, 2014
[162] PTI, "Modi becomes third most followed world leader on Twitter", BGR.in, 04 July, 2014
(https://www.bgr.in/news/modi-becomes-third-most-followed-world-leader-on-twitter-316833)
[163] Verma Lalmani, "The Namo Rath: Playing near them, 54-inch Narendra Modi", The Indian Express, 23 March, 2014
[164] Mallet, Victor, "IT-savvy army takes Modi's campaign to new levels", Financial Times, 14 May, 2014

Ultimately, in order to strengthen the image of Modi, the person as a heroic figure, his team also published *Bal Narendra* comics referring to Narendra Modi 's heroic tales as a young child. The comic book also played on the name Narendra (as shared by Modi and freedom fighter, Swami Vivekananda whose childhood name was Narendra) to evoke similarities in terms of the sacrifice of personal pleasures for public welfare[165].

3.2.2 The travelling image of Narendra Modi

Borrowing from Raymond Williams's notion of mobile privatization (Williams, 2003), Milly Buonanno has proposed that television has always offered its viewers a hyper realistic sense of "being there", connecting the televisual image to the idea of symbolic and imaginative mobility (Buonanno, 2008). On the other hand, Daniel Lerner calls the televisual image as a "mobility multiplier" (Roth, 2005), that which not only affords the image itself to travel but also allows its audiences to travel (and imagine) as they watch the travelling image on the telly.

I use these concepts to understand how the travelling (and changing) televisual and digital image of Mr Modi performed the dual function of spanning India 's cultural geography as well as tried to overcome the challenge of his image as a regional leader. To generate his symbolic presence across different states, Modi not only ensured that his advertisements and other promotional material appeared in local languages on regional television channels, but he also performed his identity as a national leader through a careful selection of attire and a refashioning of his speeches. In the state of Assam, he donned the traditional hat 'Japi' and in Meghalaya he wore traditional hornbill head gear[166]. During his speech in the southern city of Hyderabad, he started by welcoming his audiences in the regional Telugu language. Not only this, taking cognizance of the ongoing *Telangana* movement for a separate state within Andhra Pradesh, he also incorporated his support for the movement and congratulated its people on the formation of the new state[167].

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[165] Basu, Samit, "Bal Narendra is a deeply dull comic book that I cannot imagine any child voluntarily reading", Carvan, 28 April, 2014

[166] Rameshan, Radhika, Easy lies the head that wears many caps but one", The Telegraph, 18 April, 2014

[167] PTI, Narendra Modi to address joint rallies with N Chandrababu Naidu in Telegana", The Economic Times, 15 April, 2014

These spectacles were covered by national English and Hindi news channels as well as local Telugu channels simultaneously broadcasting the Modi image through not only Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, and Delhi but also other cities in the entire country. He performed local identities not only in a bid to appease his local audiences but also to simultaneously produce a televisual map of the nation as marked through his travels. Another way in which the image of Modi travelled was through the stories of his travels itself. According to the "BJP's records from September 2013 to May 2014, Mr Modi addressed 437 big rallies and participated in a total 5827 public interfacing events travelling over 3 lakh kilometres across 25 states in his attempt to connect himself to the people everywhere"[168].

An organization that helps Indian citizens register records in the Guinness Book of World Records even sent an application to register Modi for a record 1,800 rallies. In the same article it is also mentioned that some within the BJP claim a total of 5,000 rallies[169]. A news report describing his daily schedule described how a fleet of three aircrafts ensured that he travelled to a different part of the country every day and yet returned to his house in Gandhinagar every night[170]. The constant images circulating around in different social media platforms where Mr Modi is seen in action – flying, walking among crowds, donning different dresses, shaking hands with regional leaders clubbed with the appearance of his simulated presence in the form of holograms in other places reinforced his image as a mobile and active leader as against Dr Manmohan Singh who only appeared in the media on formal occasions and was rarely seen at public rallies.

"The judgment to project Modi tremendously benefits the party. Between June 2013 and January 2014, the popularity of Modi escalated, and he became victorious in compelling a plebiscitary option on the voters. National Election Study (NES) 2014 also found that many voters may have voted for BJP because of the "Modi factor". If he had not been BJP's candidate for prime minister, 27% of BJP voters responded positively. The leadership of Modi was one of the influential reasons in these elections and that the impact of leadership feature needs to be examined in the context. The Congress leadership which was proven as ineffective and directionless further sheen to the BJP's projection of Modi as influential, efficient and qualified leader" (Palshikar, Suri, 2014).

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[168] See footnote 8.

[169] PTI, Narendra Modi's Bhopal rally is a world record, says BJP", The Economic Times, 28 September, 2013

[170] Mishra, Piyush & Kaushik, Himanshu K, "Fleet of 3 aircraft ensures Modi is home every night day's campaigning", The Times of India, 22 April, 2014

3.2.3 Virtual Spectacles: 3D hologram rallies

Although photographs have always played an important role in Indian electoral campaigns, Modi's use of selfies to connect with his support base was unprecedented. However, this was not the first instance in which Modi effectively used technological means of dissemination for political leverage. In 2012, for instance, Modi's campaign mobilized three-dimensional holography to project a 10-foot-tall image of him delivering a speech across several BJP rallies and public meetings in the country. The use of 3-D holographic technology revealed a keen understanding of the impact of techno-spectacular media[171] and the benefits of the ostensible "omnipresence" that they accorded. [172] However, unlike the "capital-intensive holographic projections that were reported to have cost Rs. 5 crore (approximately $8 million) per projection, 4 Modi's selfies were much less cost- and labour-intensive. Affordable and easy to produce, selfies accorded Modi's public self with something that the spectacular hologram could never achieve—a touch of virality. The holographic projection required people to attend a rally to see it, whereas Modi's viral self-proved to be a much more effective delivery system that could reach his audience in more convenient and intimate interfaces—desktops, tablets, and mobile phones. The holographic projections demanded a singular presence, but the selfies compressed time and space and allowed the recipients to simultaneously inhabit two places. In corollary, Narendra Modi, the man in the selfies, could now infiltrate the spaces of the everyday" (Baishya, 2015).

In fact, selfies offered a unique two-way connection between the prime ministerial candidate and his supporters. On his website, for instance, Modi claims that social media was integral to his campaign, acting as a "direct means of information" that he and his party "gained tremendously

[171] I am indebted to Guy Debord's (2002) notion of the spectacle, where he claims: "The spectacle cannot be understood as a mere deception produced by mass-media technologies. It is a worldview that has actually been materialized" (p. 6). In essence, the spectacle of Narendra Modi produced by the campaign was technologically enabled, but it externalized the iconicity associated with the cult of the personality that BJP's electoral campaign banked upon so heavily.

[172] In fact, a section in Narendra Modi's official website is dedicated to explaining the technology behind 3-D holography. There is an almost didactic function attached to this inclusion, because it helped project Modi's image as a man who is in sync with the technological developments that can lead to progress and development. See http://www.narendramodi.in/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/3D-Technology.pdf

from."[173] Not only was Modi posting his own selfies, but he was also encouraging his supporters to do the same, citing the selfies of his supporters shared over social media as proof of a positive political culture. Although such claims of optimism deserve critical dissection, one thing is certain: Social media and the possibilities of viral circulation had been actively recognized and tapped as potent political tools.

In effect, what social media and selfies helped Narendra Modi and the BJP attain was a consolidation of a political vantage point where the public image of the prime ministerial candidate could circulate virally at an accelerated pace. In "Virality: Contagion Theory in the Age of Networks, Tony Sampson argues that the viral inhabits a space in which affects are significantly passed on, via suggestions made by others, more and more through networks" (Sampson, 2012). Such was the nature of #NaMo, the digital avatar of BJP's electoral spearhead; #NaMo was a viral warhead that existed outside the time of the real world, yet claimed to be from within it. From suggestion to suggestion, image to image, #NaMo spread virally through an affectively charged electoral field, until #NaMo, the viral candidate was made flesh as Narendra Modi, the prime minister.

The one reason which makes it difficult to determine the number of public appearances Mr Modi made was because not all of his appearances were "real". In his original bid to solve the problem of traversing the length and breadth of the country, one experiment with virtual presence was the use of 3D holograms[174] to reproduce his presence simultaneously at many locations across the country. After having successfully tested it in the Gujarat State assembly elections for the first time, the hologram technology was employed nationally to reach five million more voters in the final two weeks of the election campaign where he appeared "live", in 3-D at more than 90 rallies in towns of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh. By the end of the campaigning season, while he had made over 400 actual appearances, he had also appeared as a three-dimensional holographic image in 1350 rallies[175].

Dean Nelson recalls the most popular use of hologram as a simulation technology at Coachella 2012 concert where the famous rapper Tupac Shakur posthumously performed as a holographic

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[173] See http://www.narendramodi.in/a-victory-for-the-people-a-victory-for-india-and-the-triumph-of-theballot/.

[174] 3D Holograms refer to three dimensionally simulated through the interference of light beams from multiple laser sources to create a lifelike image of an object. In this case, Narendra Modi's body was reproduced as a 3D hologram in various places.

[175] Mannathukkaren Nissim, "The hologram becomes the face", The Hindu, 07 June 2014

image. However, the use of holograms in a general election campaign, he said, has been done for the first time by Mr Modi[176]. Talking about performing the paradox of absence and presence through holograms, Vivian Patraka introduces "Michel de Certeau's notion of 'place' and 'space'. De Certeau, as Patraka describes, draws dissimilarity between place and space in his application of spatial terms to a narrative. For de Certeau, while a place refers to those operations that make an object reducible to a permanent location, because it eliminates the prospect of two things being in the same location at once, space occurs as the consequence produced by operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize it thus multiplying spaces and what can be located inside them" (Vivian, 2001, 139-166). Employing this distinction to see how holograms work, one can say that while the hologram only appears *for* the person or *in place* of the real person, thus signifying his absence, it also performs an indexical function of recalling the absent body through its exaggeratedly realistic reproduction in the three-dimensional image thus establishing a spatial continuity by evoking what the body stands for.

As in the case of Mr Modi 's hologram, "it is known that the three dimensional image is only a placeholder for his actual presence but as explained above, the act of beaming and viewing the hologram reproduces the place as a space marked by Mr Modi 's presence. As Anna Munster notes despite much of cyberculture's disregard for the body, virtuality does not exist in a realm beyond or transcend corporeal experience" (Munster, 2006). Rather, as in the case of the hologram the un-anchoring and diffusion of Modi 's body through its electronic mediation allows for the construction of continuity and appropriates its audiences in a shared experience of interacting with new technologies. The hologram then, is not about reproducing Mr Modi 's presence and making it felt to his audiences but rather in reproducing his audiences as participants in the larger spectacle, of recreating contact or touch by their participation in the experience. While traditional rallies are a conventional mode of bringing the leader and his audiences in "contact" through mutual acts of looking at each other, delivering a speech and being reciprocated through cheering, the hologram indicates the evolution of a new immersive interface that also brings together the leader and his audiences reproducing the experience of contact remotely.

Another distinguishing aspect of the holographic form that attracted people to the rallies was the form of 3-D and the spectacle of wonder that it created. While the audiences were used to viewing 3-D films in the theatre, the idea of witnessing a standalone three-dimensional projection

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[176] Nelson Dean, "Magic Modi uses hologram to address dozens of rallies at once", The Telegraph, 02 May, 2014 (https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/india/10803961/Magic-Modi-uses-hologram-to-address-dozens-of-rallies-at-once.html)

produced mixed reactions of awe and disbelief. Describing it as "Modi magic" Nelson narrates how the "lifelike performance" of the hologram was received by its audiences with a mix of awe and disbelief. Mainly poorly educated voters, he says, "had stayed behind after rallies to check…if he was really there"[177].

This brand-new confidence in the high tech potential of a resurgent India is evident across the political spectrum, but its most vocal support base has been noticeable in the impressive narratives of the present ruling dispensation under the right-wing nationalist BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party). "This can be related to the fact that the party has a global support base among the middle classes both in India and abroad. Jaffrelot and Therwath have showcased the importance of the Indian diaspora to the political triumphs of the BJP. They emphasize the global attempt of the conservative Hindu outfit RSS" (Prasad, 2017), which has close ties with BJP and the party, is measured through political proxy, to acquire political support internationally so that they can encourage *Hindutva* politics in India. Way back in 1996, when BJP came into power briefly, NRIs (Non-Resident Indians) were considerably revealed in the party's election manifesto.[178]

This kind of "Hindu nationalism became the socially conservative cultural component of the neoliberal economic policies, giving shape to a techno-cultural nationalism that supported free trade and open markets as the way forward. The essence of techno-cultural nationalism lies within a culturally distinct and strong Hindu civilization, which at the same time is economically and technologically a power state in the globalized world" (Prasad, 2017). The Internet exercised the symbolic power of both a global and technologically capable India, becoming key to the creation and articulation of techno-cultural nationalism. Particularly after getting victory in 2014 general elections, the present Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been pronouncing major schemes that highlight the centrality of the information technology sector in the nation's growth. For e.g., campaigns like Make in India, Digital India, Start-up India, amongst others have a larger role for the IT sector in their execution.

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[177] Ibid (see footnote 8 in page number 21)

[178] C. Jaffrelot and I. Therwath, "The Sangh Parivar and the Hindu diaspora in the west: what kind of 'long-distance nationalism'?" *International Political Sociology* 1, no. 3 (2007): 278–295.

3.2.4 Chai pe Charcha- rearranging screens, mirroring consent

In a series of events that were a part of the BJP 's campaign which required to brand tea-stalls all around the country with Narendra Modi's face to draw attention back to Modi's humble beginnings as a tea vendor himself. In January 2014, Mani Shankar Aiyar, a veteran leader of the then incumbent Congress government made an errant remark that "Narendra Modi will never become the Prime Minister of the country. ...But if he wants to distribute tea here, we will find a place for him". To subvert Aiyar's dismissive remark and to utilize this opportunity to win the support of tea-stall vendors across states and languages, CAG (Citizens for Accountable Governance), the non-profit organization working for Mr Modi devised "Chai Pe Charcha" (literally meaning discussion over tea) campaign in February 2014.

"Modi is connected to thousands of tea stalls all around the country for 'Chai pe Charcha'. In 4000 tea stalls spread over 24 states, he could engage with Indian citizens thanks to amalgamation of technologies such as DTH, Video Conferencing, and Mobile Broadband. These actions were made achievable because of the ways in which Modi fascinated 'vote mobilisers', 'individuals whose support for a particular party goes beyond simple voting and instead entails monetary donations, door-to-door canvassing, leaflet and poster circulation etc" (Ostermann, 2014). "This category of actors plays an important role in a country like India where politicians cannot rely only on media exposure for winning elections. And Modi has been particularly effective in the recruitment of 'vote mobilisers' beyond the BJP activists. According to Chibber and Ostermann, only 19% of the 'vote mobilisers' working for Modi were party members. And almost 32% of them would have voted for another party had he not been the BJP candidate for prime ministership" ((Jaffrelot, 2015).

Tea-stalls with a combination of tobacco shops and food carts occupy a ubiquitous presence in the Indian public sphere. Although mostly occupied by men, they constitute a regular place of "hanging out" and daily discussion of society, politics, family affairs and more for people from different classes alike. People of different classes intermingle at tea stalls, enabling "common sensical" and informal commentaries on daily happenings as well as regional and national politics. Modi himself described tea stalls as footpath parliaments[179]. Zach Marks recalls that a

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[179] Agencies, Narendra Modi kicks off BJP's 'Chai Pe Charcha' campaign; says tea stalls are Footpath Parliament", The Economic Times, 12 February 2014

local activist in Patna, the capital of Bihar, Arun Pathak told him, his [tea-stall] was the one place in politics where caste did not matter. He said, "People all vote on caste lines, but over a cup of tea we're all secular...This is where you find the real pulse of Patna"[180]. In BJP's own articulation, Chai Pe Charcha was an effort to establish direct contact with the poor and weaker sections of society through video and teleconferencing.

In the first session held at Iscon Gathiya, a famous tea stall in Ahmedabad, Modi sat among the gathering of ordinary citizens sipping tea for three hours. His ears were plugged to earphones and he was being live telecast to 1000 tea stalls across 300 cities in the country using a combination of DBS (Direct Broadcast Satellite) and wireless transmission. Not only the people at the Ahmedabad tea stall but also select others at the other venues could ask him questions about his agenda of development and governance. Instead of resorting to his standard fiery, rhetorical and loud speeches he explained his plans, answered questions in simple terms[181]. Time and again he thanked the people for sending their questions but more importantly, he beckoned to them to recognize the uniqueness of this technological moment they were in.

It was certainly not the first time that video conferencing was being used for a national discussion. In fact, Narendra Modi became the first leader in August 2012 to organize a Google Hangout with ordinary people[182]. What differentiated the Chai Pe Charcha campaign was that it not only used video conferencing in order to connect Mr Modi to voters across the country but it employed a unique reorganization of visuality because it involved screens at three different locations – one at the space where Mr Modi sat, another space where interactive screens were setup to view Mr Modi and be viewed by everyone, and a third order of multiple screens in different locations only for viewing where people congregated to watch and listen to the question-answers. In that sense, video conferencing does not perform its original or supposed function of enabling face to face interaction between two parties but produces a feeling of belonging through viewing. Unlike a Google Hangout where the conversation was only between those posing questions and Mr Modi, the third layer of audiences here ensured that the conversation also became a staging. Not only

[180] India Today Online, "Narendra Modi's 'chai pe charcha': How global media covered it", 14 February, 2014. (https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/narendra-modis-chai-pe-charcha-event-gets-rave-reviews-in-global-media-181022-2014-02-14)

[181] Ghosh, Shamik, : Narendra Modi's 'chai pe charcha': Between sips of tea, a strong political pitch", NDTV, 13 February, 2014

[182] The dandy Mr Modi: PM's fashion designer is all western, no swadeshi" First Post, FP Staff, 21 July 2014 (https://www.firstpost.com/living/the-dandy-mr-modi-pms-fashion-designer-is-all-western-no-swadeshi-1627255.html)

this, given the novelty associated with the campaign, television news channels also simultaneously broadcast the spectacle, adding multiple layers of audiences to the conversation in different degrees of distance. Both, Chai Pe Charcha and the hologram project, I argue, are not only an investment in spectacle building but also crucial in furthering the logic that technological advancement is closely linked to progress in modern societies. The video conferencing events, then, are also producing an encounter with technologies; visions that were previously unimagined by its publics.

The initiatives described above also reflect Modi's longer history of obsession with and proactive use of new technologies that prefigured a speck in the larger e-governance narrative in the Indian context involving the transformation of urban spaces and citizenship through the deployment of technologies, some of which I will discuss in the last section of this chapter. Campaigning then also became a ritual of reiterating, imagining together and spelling out the kind of nation and in turn, the kind of citizens that we collectively wished to imagine. Ideologically, whether these campaigns succeeded or failed in gathering votes, the pervasive desire to manifest, portray and collectively view technological progress and efficiency as harbingers of national development continue to foster.

3.2.5 The merging of the affective and political – mobile campaigning

Reflecting on the nature of the mobile interface, Howard Rheingold describes an epiphany in his book, *Smart Mobs* called the 'Shibuya Epiphany' (Rheingold, 2007) where he observed teenagers texting in Shibuya city of Japan and suddenly realized they weren't holding the phone to their ears, but staring at it. This moment, for Rheingold was indicative of a significant visual shift in communication from the oral medium, a recurrent quality of new interfaces. To build on his formulation, mobile interfaces especially, not only privilege acts of looking and reading but are also extremely personal objects that we possess and are attached to. Observing how people on the subway or bus were able to reorient geographically by disconnecting from their immediate physical environment and instead tune into a carefully curated world where their friends and interests existed, Jason Farman says that mobile phones are not just "mobile" because they can be carried around but also because they impart us with the power to choose our environments (Farman, 2012). Their small size as pocket devices and the reliance on the visual and literate modes of communication versus aural, also renders them less visible and allows their usage unobtrusively as we perform other tasks.

One of the defining factors of the 2014 elections was the participation of youth in it. Of the 800 million voters, about 40% were below the age of 35[183]. Thus, targeting the youth required a confluence of their preferred medium as well as a restyling of political messages that were not pedantic. This section explores how mobile technologies served as the primary mode for engaging young people through restyled political messages and the use of social sharing networks, merging affective and political communication in the same interface.

Although the practice of forwarding text messages to convey personal appeals to voters have been in use since the 'India Shining' campaign during former prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, only 20 million mobile connections existed back then[184]. Also, since mobile phones were still a relatively new technology, bulk message sending in the earlier times was only a one-way strategy where the recipients could not respond. However, during the 2014 campaign, a specific and detailed strategy was evolved around political communications leveraging the presence of approximately 900 million mobile phone connections. The BJP digital team headed by Dr Arvind Gupta and monitored by leader, Amit Shah set up "war rooms" that solely focused on strategizing and disseminating messages to an expansive volunteer network that was made available through BJP 's affiliate party, the RSS (Rashtriya Sevak Sangh). These volunteers were imparted with the task of forwarding the messages received from above to the people in their local databases. As observed in the efforts of RSS volunteers as well as CAG to systematize and maximize the effectiveness of campaigning, organization of voters through information collection was a major and permanent change introduced to the sphere of Indian political canvassing.

The collection of information through local volunteers enabled the rendering visible of several constituencies that were not digitally connected, especially in the state of Uttar Pradesh and hence had to be "mapped" and brought to the realm of mainstream media campaigning[185]. Messages regarding rallies would be disseminated through SMS forwards, WhatsApp messenger, Facebook groups such as 272+ that were dedicated grounds for the congregation of Modi followers and further to twitter account operators who would attempt to make hash tags related to Mr Modi's daily rally trend by spamming twitter with thousands of tweets in a day. However, apart from the

[183] Virmani, Priya, "Note to India's leaders: your 150m young people are calling for change". The Guardian, 08 April, 2014

[184] Rediff.com, "BJP unveils high-tech campaign". 26 February, 2004

[185] Suanshu Khurana, "Man behind 'Ab ki baar Modi sarkaar' is Spice Jet Co- owner", Hindustan Times, 20 May 2014

gigantic digital media spectacle that the party was able to assemble, what became interesting was the content of the messages being circulated. Before the 2014 elections, Facebook and twitter were both used largely in the Indian public sphere only for sharing personal messages, photographs and keeping in touch with friends. Having observed the primacy of humorous and witty content being circulated through social media networks, the content of the political messages was restyled to incorporate jokes, sarcastic and witty comments on statements by leaders of the Congress party as well as funny couplets using political references.

An important term associated with the 'mobility' of mobile objects is virality or the ability to spread to a large scale within a short time through sharing among digital networks. It is important to note that a shift to mobile and digital technologies also induces a renewed pace and frenzy in the way messages are being circulated, which was illustrated when YouTube videos and forwarded bulk text messages became potent vehicles for rumour mongering to incite panic among students of North East Indian states living in Bangalore city[186] to flee for their home states in 201280 and in 2013 a morphed video of violence between Jats and Muslims, two communities in Muzaffarnagar district of Uttar Pradesh instigated riots[187].

3.2.6 'New' kinds of volunteering

Through my discussion in the earlier sections, I have tried to engage with the use of different tools in order to mount the actual political spectacle of the "Modi Wave". However, merely the presence or availability of technologies does not transform change in an environment. Rather, they perform crucial social functions of binding communities by making it possible for people to interact in new ways. After the rise of new media, Manuel Castells has suggested that the gradual erosion of traditional political formations such as the political party and trade unions have enabled 'loose coalitions', ad hoc assemblages and spontaneous mobilizations to substitute for permanent and more organized structures (Castells, 2001). In the context of this election spectacle, the

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[186] In August 2012, over 5000 students and professionals from North Eastern States living in Banglore started fleeing the city after having received SMS threatening violence against them. Special trains had to be deployed overnight to facilitate their return. The government also used social media networks, text messges and others to combat rumours being spread through SMS. Eventually, six ment were arrested on the charge of spreading rumours.

[187] Rashid, Omar, "Social media rife with inflammatory material in Muzaffarnagar", The Hindu, 09 September, 2013

category of 'loose coalitions' becomes a useful way to think of the temporary mobilization of a vast range of volunteers through offline and online media.

Modi's success was attached to his capability to draw 'vote mobilisers' i.e., individuals who campaign for the party. Modi attracted more of these mobilisers to the BJP than any other leaders drew to their respective parties, more than even Vajpayee attracted to the BJP in the 2004 general elections. These vote mobilisers are vital because they get leaders elected and they do so by turning out the vote for the party of their choice. Leaders attract support by persuading mobilisers that they are able to win and govern. And this is exactly what Modi successfully did. The BJP mobilisers have higher than standard media coverage in comparison to other respondents which means that they have been drawn to the party as a result of Modi's omnipresence on all media platforms, traditional as well new media during the campaign. "Once encouraged, these vote mobilisers were able to go to other electorates with low media exposure and convince them to vote in the BJP's favour. In other words, through the media, Modi managed to draw a set of mobilisers to the BJP who had the time or money to offer and who were well positioned to present these things in those places where party required them the most. By using NES 2014[188] data it can be examined that, with the result of increase in the number of BJP vote mobilisers the increases in the percentage of the vote for the BJP among non-mobilisers also goes up. In reality the BJP's mobilisers were either social conformist or those who wanted the state to withdraw from regulating businesses and providing subsidies, or both" (Chibber, Ostermann, 2014).

Refigured modes of political communication that evolved during the course of the election generated a broad range of activities for remote participation to produce "real change". An account of a female volunteer, Smita Barooah, an Indian professional living and working in Singapore who took a three month sabbatical to volunteer for BJP's 'Mission 272 Plus'[189]. As Barooah describes, she left her sons and her work to join the campaign because she was —motivated by a desperate hope for change and by Modi's vision for India[190]. She describes her daily routine of coordinating with women volunteers across the country, tracking and responding

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[188] The National Election Study (NES) is a large-scale nationwide survey of voters' opinions and attitudes conducted by Lokniti-CSDS during Lok Sabha elections. The NES series, which now includes surveys carried out in 1967, 1971, 1996, 1998, 1999, 2004, 2009 and 2014 is the most comprehensive information database of social and political change in India and these surveys have been cited as well as used extensively as a source for political science research. Three of these studies (2004, 2009 and 2014) were done with large sample sizes that allowed for State-wise analysis.

[189] Barooah, Smita, "Smita Barooah's insider account: From right inside Modi's hectic campaign", The Economic Times, 19 May, 2014

[190] Ibid.

to those who "missed call" to support their cause, designing slogans and t-shirts for their missions. The "missed call" as Barooah explained, is a way to generate a telephone database of supporters who will then on keep receiving updates on local meetings, rallies and more through automated phone calls, text messages and internet messaging apps such as WhatsApp.

My attempt through this brief mapping of the volunteers, party workers and supporters of the Modi campaign was to illustrate how participation as understood in terms of temporal and material investment has undergone a massive shift in the context of political action in general, even beyond this campaign. Although the mediated strategies of political participation discussed in this section were implemented for the first time during the elections, they contributed to a paradigmatic shift in the way we perceive civic participation in larger movements by highlighting the possibilities of remote and selective action.

3.3 Critique of the Spectacle

After the landslide victory of Mr Modi and the BJP, several journalists and public intellectuals deemed it as the success of the spectacle, implying that the intense penetration of the Modi image through every medium of mass communication had resulted in a sensorial hijacking of the masses and swayed them to vote for him. Criticising the hologram rallies as a farce, Nissim Mannathukkaren asks a la McLuhan "what happens when the medium becomes the message, and the hologram becomes the face?[191] He described the hologram as a shining interface executed in part by film technicians and received as a magical apparition. This reminds one of the original spectacles of cinema where symbolic presence almost succeeds not only in representing the real but also replacing it. For Mannathukkaren, the hologram [and the mediatisation of Indian politics at large] signifies an erosion of ethics and a subsuming of the local by the national- a hollowing of the message itself that gets shrouded by the newness of the technological spectacle evident in the fact that voters turned up at local polling booths unaware (and unconcerned) who their local candidates were, looking for Modi's name in their ballots. Mannathukkaren's anxiety about the "hollowness" of the spectacle compels us to ask if the mediatisation of politics can lead to a complete manufacturing of public opinion.

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[191] Ibid (see footnote 23 in page number 25)

This question prompts me to address two historical philosophical positions that speculated on the effects of Spectacle on society. The most celebrated position was that of French situationist philosopher Guy Debord in his essay Society of the Spectacle' who described the dominant function of spectacle not as a collection of images but as a social relationship between people increasingly mediated by images due to which the only way of experiencing things is through their mediation by images. Further, Debord says, "In societies where modern conditions of production prevail, all of life presents itself as an immense accumulation of spectacles. Everything that was directly lived has moved away into a representation" (Debord, 1967) .

To paraphrase his premise, when every sphere of human experience and interaction gets commodified through representation, there is a loss of authenticity in communicative acts. In such a world as Debord describes, civic action and social transformation do not *really* change the conditions of living, but they only signify a change in what we see in the mass media. Written in 1967, his essay on the Spectacle was deeply influenced by the rise of Fascism in Europe during the Second World War. Another theorist, writing almost a decade after Debord who commented on the explosion of the electronic image was Jean Baudrillard. Focusing on the state of the social in a televised world, Jean Baudrillard argued that postmodernity is a post-social world of *hyperreality* dominated by images and signs produced by electronic mass media (Baudrillard, 1981). To elaborate, according to Baudrillard, the real and social as categories could no longer be studied as realms of expression because they were inundated with 'simulated images' that exist, reproduce, and circulate without any dependence on or relation to a real object.

Essentially, both the above positions and the critiques of the election spectacle express the fear of the flattening and obscuring of our "real" conditions of living as we increasingly consume reality through a series of images, or in this case, consume politics through a series of media campaigns. Drawing from Zygmunt Bauman's formulation of the "bovine masses" (Bauman, 2003), I argue that the proclamation of the death of social not only takes away the agency of the audience/citizen/consumer at the receiving end of the spectacle to change her own social conditions but it also does not adequately capture the transformative potential of the larger forces of material production that prepare the ground for our enchantment with images.

To elaborate, in the context of the Modi Wave, the mediatised spectacle run for a period of six months before the actual elections cannot completely explain how dissent with the incumbent government, a desire for speed and progress embedded in the middle class and largely young

population contributed to the eventual success of Modi's developmental vision as received through the mass media.

The above chapter has examined the shifting role of social media from its earlier roles as an instrument for democratization of politics against authoritarian political regimes on the way to an important new role as instruments of marketization and professionalization of campaigning of political actors and political organizations. Besides, campaigns and elections, parties and their candidates have increasingly employed social media platforms as strategic specialized campaigning tools in the national election. Campaigns have gradually stopped following an inflexible plan of approach and have begun shaping each element of the campaign with regard to the user responses. Everything that has anything to do with the campaign is taken carefully to make sure it's precisely what people would like to see. Thousands of customised e-mails are circulated, and diverse translations of the campaign website are demonstrated to different groups of people and real-time enhancement is done after examining the reactions. Previously, campaigns would inevitably go in one direction. But in present times, campaigns have the suppleness to reach everyone   and change in any way to strike the correct chord with the public.

In these years, social media became the context for digital campaigns, the leading space in which election campaigns were fought. For some candidates, the platform was simply the quickest and most effective way to build a following, engage that following, and speak to them directly – bypassing mainstream media channels like TV and print. For others, it became a way of reaching key voters with exactly the right message at exactly the right moment. It was not that all these candidates or campaigns necessarily mastered Face book (though some certainly did), but rather that they recognized the power of the platform and embraced it. It helped, of course that the rules and boundaries that existed in other media were for the most part absent from Face book.

Modi, the leader of India's BJP and their candidate in the 2014 election, built a huge number of followers on Facebook, and engaged with those followers through- out the campaign. From the date the election was announced to when voting closed, Quartz reported, "13 million people engaged in 75 million interactions regarding Modi" on Facebook. Modi encouraged his supporters to become activists in what he called Mission 272+, through one of the campaign's Facebook or Android apps. Volunteers signed up in every one of the country's 543 constituencies. The contrast between political communication in this Indian election and the previous one in 2009 was like the difference between the telephone and the loudhailer.

Chapter IV: A Comparative Study of Anti- Corruption Movement and 2014 National Election Campaign of BJP

Many scholars have examined the role of conventional media and the manner in which they have impacted political and social mobilisation in contemporary India. However, the present chapter will try to understand the shift in the process of political mobilisation after the appearance of social media. This chapter will focus on "new information networks and the way they have transformed the dynamics of citizen's participation and complement the role of conventional media and face- to- face interaction, leading to the emergence of what Andrew Chadwick called a 'hybrid' media system" (Chadwick, 2006). Political communication in present times happens in a more multifaceted space where both conventional and new media are employed by a variety of people such as political parties and protest movements to communicate with citizens and to influence the opinion of the public and the political agenda.

The focus of the chapter is both mobilization for electoral politics and grassroots mobilization where citizens and groups from different class and caste backgrounds actively participate in mediated activities in the public arena. This chapter will examine developments such as movements against corruption led by Anna Hazare that drive him and the country into the global news all through 2011 as well as the 2014 national election campaign of BJP, and the communication among traditional and social media and the way they have transformed the structures and dynamics of political mobilization in contemporary India. The concept of hybrid media system is employed to understand the interplay between traditional and new media; as well grassroots political mobilization consisting of diverse actors while also examining the political and social developments.

Instead of concentrating entirely on either social media or traditional media, this chapter will explain the intricacy and the binaries between the two due to hybrid media environment, where conventional media maintains a significant position besides social media and face- to- face interactions. Although, the hybrid media environment of India is different from the media environments in developed countries where majority of people have excess to the Internet. Over the last decade, we witnessed a correlation between the development of the social networking sites and the degree to which it is being employed in the political process. It has emerged as a well-liked medium for candidates, activists, journalists, and citizens at the same time. Despite

this growth, there are still contradictory views on the answers as to what really is the impact of social media on the Indian political system. Does social media encourage a 'participatory' image of democracy or does it enable a wider range of citizens to become involved in the political process? There are discussions on these questions to establish whether social media promotes democracy for both candidates and the voters, or if it genuinely manipulates final voting outcomes. Although it is reasonable to argue that social media does not form a completely new political order, as it is leveraged within the structures of existing institutions, but it does present a new and improved space for association, communication, and cooperation in campaigns and elections.

"How successful you are in politics nowadays is extremely influenced by the online activities of political institutions. They can exchange their opinions on these platforms on the most recent political growth or hot topics, engaging the public and citizens to observe and hold on to their political programs" (Phillips, Young, 2009). Social media have the potential of escaping the 'top down' politics of mass democracy in which political parties make policies without low level of citizen's participation. Social media offers means for high separation of political information and facts with slightest theoretical potential of participation and high degree of sharing in discussions and feedback among leaders and followers.

"The Internet has not fundamentally changed the way politics is done today but it has provided with medium that empower people to have a more direct, constant, and personal participation in the formal political process if they want to" (Hindman, 2008). Social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter are more intensely employed to organise political campaigns as since its pervasiveness shows its significance. Social media might aid better communication among politicians and citizens but in major cases it remains largely employed as a one-way flow of information, from politicians to the citizens. Since this point of view, social media is also employed just like traditional media. Coleman has also "questioned the quality of the information, arguing that in some cases while it may be good quality it is not easily accessible" (Coleman, 2005).

The introduction of Web 2.0 has been seen as a great step towards reviving political participation by facilitating easy communication between political parties and voters. In certain cases, these social media networks provide political opportunities. The platforms of Web 2.0 provide political parties to promote direct participation of people in their actions, like for

instance contributing in parties' campaigns with money, signing petitions, or even partaking in discussions on policy issues.

"There are three important issues to debate about the use of the Internet which possibly would influence the political party landscape. Internet enhances party competitiveness. Marginalized new parties and non-party political movements may gain from the Internet to increase their visualness. There are several instances where minor political factions have experienced disadvantage because of their small size. Because internet is not very costly medium and it is more accessible than other communication technologies, minor parties can communicate with richer parties at a parallel level of visibility. The Internet permits minor political parties to reach possible supporters equally to main parties. The effect of this situation is an enhancement of pluralism, which enables citizens to better recognize with claims appealing their political engagement. This may lead to the increase in voter turnout" (Chadwick, 2006).

Conventional media networks such as printed press and the television are still influential in giving information and creating advertising campaign although the structure of their communication is not as affluent and fragmented, the way it is in digital mediums. Social media networks allow distribution of large quantities of information giving people authority to analyse political matters according to their own interest and needs. Social media assists people to form their own opinions which make them more capable to participate in political deliberations.

"Social media permits distribution of power among citizens, which improves public supervision over political leaders and candidates. The composition of social networks in Internet helps in maintaining continuous relations between the candidates and their supporters who in this case have more power in controlling their leaders. This kind of interaction help politicians replenish their political programs reacting to the needs and demands of supporters articulated through the social networking sites. At the same time the parties can also mobilize their volunteers more effortlessly and swiftly to do coordinate in important issues campaigning and fundraising. Social media is efficient in encouraging citizens to be more active politically and support their candidates more vigorously" (Neyazi, 2018).

"Political parties and the candidates who have a bigger support base can now use their digital communication strategies more efficiently. More insightful websites and talented staff are recruited to work for the affluent political parties. They will also have improved resources to enhance their capacity to converge media strategies, assimilating television and social media

campaigns into one online and off-line structure of communication. Party competition threat is getting weak by this, where social media platforms are decreased as another platform in which the previously present political disparity in off-line politics is maintained. Although it is hard to consider that social media tools on their own can be successful without traditional ways of mobilization. The use of these social networking sites for information and communication has immense impact, but when simultaneously employed with conventional forms of activism. The inherent possibility these platforms have for social change will complement and increase classical forms of civic engagement" (Neyazi, 2018).

These "social media platforms offer new ways communication which is horizontal and vertical and helps in civic engagement and deliberative democracy. Undoubtedly, social networking sites promote unanticipated prospects in the areas of information, communication, and political mobilization globally. The new features of Internet are ideal for new social movements that have used have mobilised this instrument to broadcast ideas and information and to captivate supporters across the world and stimulated transnational planning by conducting online discussion which is open for everyone who is interested to be part of it. With the use of these networks' individuals can become part of pressure groups, connect to organizations, contribute with funds, receive emails regarding political matters and make suggestions to the authorities, interfere in 'online' debates, distribute electronic petitions, broadcast information or actions and call for protest movements. Social media not only facilitates mobilization but have also formed citizen support to global associations. This present tendency has gone parallel with the comparative waning of party identification and membership" (Tarrow, 2005).

Social media occupies a significant place in forming a "global civic society, which function in an online public sphere. The discussions among individuals happen through internet tools and social networking sites have broadened the 'habermasian' concept of public space" (Patrut, 2014). The public sphere is now universal and not essentially confined to the physicality of a space. These social media networks and communication technologies collectively with conventional media have improved collective action, fostering deliberation, and deviating means of decision-making. Therefore, the "hybrid media system will encourage political participation, through both representative and participatory means, and support in a gradual formation of a global civic society engaged in mutual confrontations and apprehensions. Direct democracy will not replace representative government, but it will complement and expand representation.

through turning representative government into wealthier representative governance where civil society will have a incredible existence" (Neyazi, 2018).

Social media increases the ability to mobilise rapidly. Through the posts, images and videos people get informed about undesired circumstances and it motivates people to think more about the desirable future. The use of untraditional techniques or strategies to attract people's support and the information which spread like wildfire through social media are considered as more attractive, interactive, and engaging. The rising relations between people and social media permits growing the possibility of sharing information and at the same time development of mutual efforts to pursue common goals. One of the primary contributions of social media in social movements is that it comprehends multiple levels of communication, from official to unofficial and those which happen in the closed or open structures, and the situations and requirements are always different in each case.

Dissemination of information and particularly activities are significantly fast and in real time via social media. Oral distribution adds to enormous adhesion of behaviours in comparatively shorter period. Videos which get viral are viewed by different people and which impacts world public opinion. In web 2.0 age social media have altered the traditional agenda setting model.

"In contemporary period television broadcasting and the development of Internet and communication technology always carry out changing pattern of political communication and political marketing of parties and their candidates while negotiating with structural and cultural modifications of political market situation. During 1960s television became powerfully concerned with the political sphere, there have been transformations in the manner politicians design their political messages and present themselves to connect with the voters. The intensification of television coverage has changed the mediatisation of politics in which political advertising and campaigning have altered from the propaganda age to the media and marketing ages" (Maarek, 1995).

As marketization of politics progressively encroached the political sphere, majority of the campaigning strategies of the political parties and their candidates are now planned and customized to follow the media logic. As soon as the post-modern campaigning, the professional campaigning and the hyper-media campaigning increasingly occupied the political space there is an increase in the Internet and social networking usage by political parties, their candidates, and voters all around the democratic countries in the globe.

In present time most of the parties along with their candidates who are competing in national or local elections in India understand the significance of media portals to influence the positive notion and for political marketing and coordinating political discussions across diverse group of electorates. As advertising and campaigning have been increasingly executed by means of the commercial media platforms and as of now no precise rules are employed to limit the campaign finances that are spent on advertising and for publicity of the candidates or political parties , campaigning budgets of parties and their candidates has been continuously growing.

With the emergence of smart phone technology, the access to Internet and social networking sites has become a lot easier. This access provided by smart phone technology is now increasingly adopted by political party leaders, party officials, campaign managers of different parties, and their candidates as well as voters. Social media can be employed for multiple purposes like for engaging with voters or candidates, creating political message and for sharing and broadcasting information that are offered by parties and their candidates to political market ground. In addition to this, these equipment's are also used for restating the political message and advertising or personal branding of the parties and their candidates as well as for mobilisation and collective action across impulsive voters.

Social networking sites perform an imperative "role in extending the meaning of civic citizenship through the demonstration of speech-act activism in virtual public space which has can be seen in the evaluation and appraisal of political developments. Social media has multiple layers and that's the reason why it has been used for political communication that provides results and experiences that are different from one another" (Patrut, 2014). To understand how effective and social media platforms can be for political communication, it is essential to examine specific situations that create the knowledge and consequence with reference to the way social media is used and to analyse the characteristics of this new media environment that are formed by the supporters and the people who have social media account.

The online communities formed on social media during the national elections are centred on the candidate's beliefs and political programme. These contemporary campaigns are established to "successfully create a community where young electorates can feel a sense of independence within their respective political organizations. Similarly, the candidates are free to interact online with their political communities with the purpose of mobilizing the young electorates" (Patrut, 2014). Social media and digital communication technologies have grown exponentially within

the last few decades due to the continuous recognition by different political leaders. This has led to a remarkable shift in public sphere where democratic politics is executed and has presented itself with new prospects and challenges for political communication. During election campaign specifically social media networks allow political actors to directly engage, connect, receive feedback and organize electorates by avoiding in this manner editorial dominance of the conventional news media groups and certainly lowering down campaign expenses.

The participative nature of social media presents politicians with creative ways of reaching and mobilizing the voters. The open space provided by social media enhances direct engagement of the citizens in the election process which improves the communication in democratic politics. Although a lot of assertions were formed about the democratic potential of online technologies since its inception time. But due to its rapid increase in last few years it has invigorated these hopes predominantly in reference to the probability of mobilization of young voters who uses social media extensively.

These networks have provided people with the opportunity to engage in the campaign process on a massive scale. Bringing campaign process online has had a transformational result on campaigns letting them considerably enlarge their success and progress translation rates. It has offered a means for vigorous engagement among the candidates and voters in their constituency. Social media help to cast focus on the person rather than the political party, intensifying the space for enlarged personalised reach. These networks fit well into the candidate's requirement to communicate directly with individuals and placed the basis for long-term relationships among the electorate and the candidate.

Social media performs an active role for campaigns, stimulating networks of followers and supporters extended across the constituency to connect them collectively for the campaign. These networks of social media have by now built up an audience, and a candidate who is familiar to effectively influence these platforms has the possibility to turn the opinion of millions of electorates in their support. Social media networks presents new prospects of engagement for candidates to get attach with voters receive feedback on political matters and keep followers updated about the growth of the campaign. These networks have altered the manners in which the volunteers are engaged for campaigns. There was a time when volunteers were largely recruited by giving out leaflets, broachers and reaching the word around through your connections. Social Media has made it simple and a lot easier for the word campaigns to recruit volunteers as well as for those people who are interested to join.

Digital political communication has a stronger impact on citizen's political participation. The digital technologies and social networking sites are not just new formation of already recognized communication structure, but it offers extraordinary opportunities for protesters, citizens and social movements. Moreover, the use of these social media platforms remains a minority recreation primarily by the middle-class section, but this doesn't mean that the democratising effect will get diminished due to existing hierarchical structure in information and communication because they still being democratised. Consequently, it is impossible to imagine a social and political reform or revolution can nowadays happen with no the internet and social networking sites performing an important role in it.
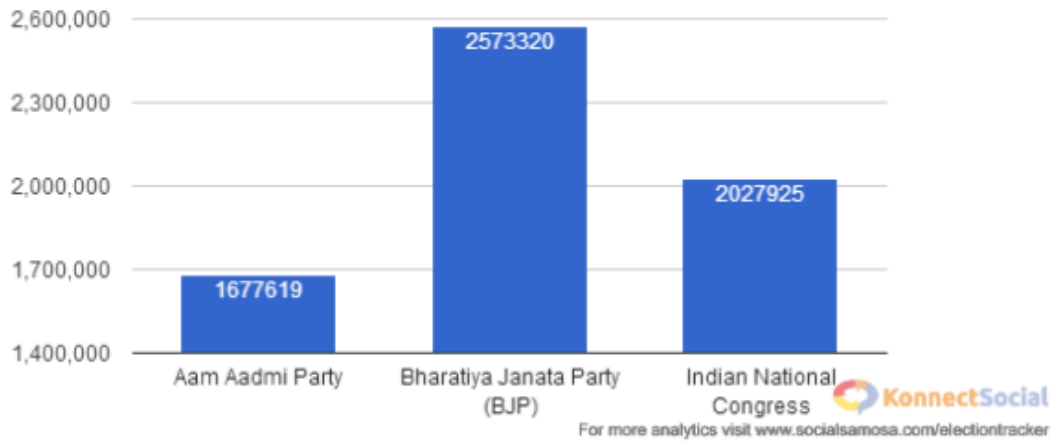
4.1 Social Media Campaign of BJP

Social media are now seen as platforms for marketization and professionalization for parties and the candidates in democratic countries all around the world. Within the Indian political context, we have witnessed comprehensive usage of social media that happened throughout the 2014 national election. All through the elections, BJP 's campaign group, campaign executives, campaign experts, and campaign volunteers succeeded in using the social media tools not only for increasing campaign aids, but also for mobilizing swing electorates[192]. "BJP throughout 2014 election had a very powerful and vigorous existence on key social media networks for example Facebook, Twitter and YouTube in comparison to other parties. The party as shown in the graph below had the maximum number of followers (2.5 million) on Facebook, in comparison to their competitors"[193]. Aside from the certified page, there were many other pages which use to help the party in the attempt to connect with maximum number of people on Facebook.

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[192] A swing voter or a floating voter is a <u>voter</u> who may not be affiliated with a particular <u>political party</u> which means he is Independent or who will vote across party lines. In American politics, many <u>centrists</u>, <u>liberal</u> <u>Republicans</u>, and <u>conservative</u> <u>Democrats</u> are considered "swing voters" since their voting patterns cannot be predicted with certainty.

[193] https://www.socialsamosa.com/2014/03/social-media-strategy-review-bharatiya-janta-party/.

Graph: 1

2,600,000 | | 2573320 |
2,300,000 |
2,000,000 | | | 2027925
1,700,000 | 1677619
1,400,000 |
Aam Aadmi Party | Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) | Indian National Congress

KonnectSocial
For more analytics visit www.socialsamosa.com/electiontracker

194

The BJP's social media team was innovating their strategies all the time. On every voting day, they would send out personalized messages on Twitter encouraging people to go out and vote. "We used Facebook and Twitter to make micro messaging part of our election strategy, a bit like what Obama did in the US,' is how a Team Modi member described it".

194 https://www.socialsamosa.com/2014/03/social-media-strategy-review-bharatiya-janta-party/.

Graph: 2

600,000

450,000

374233

300,000

Followers

150,000

536630

32616

0

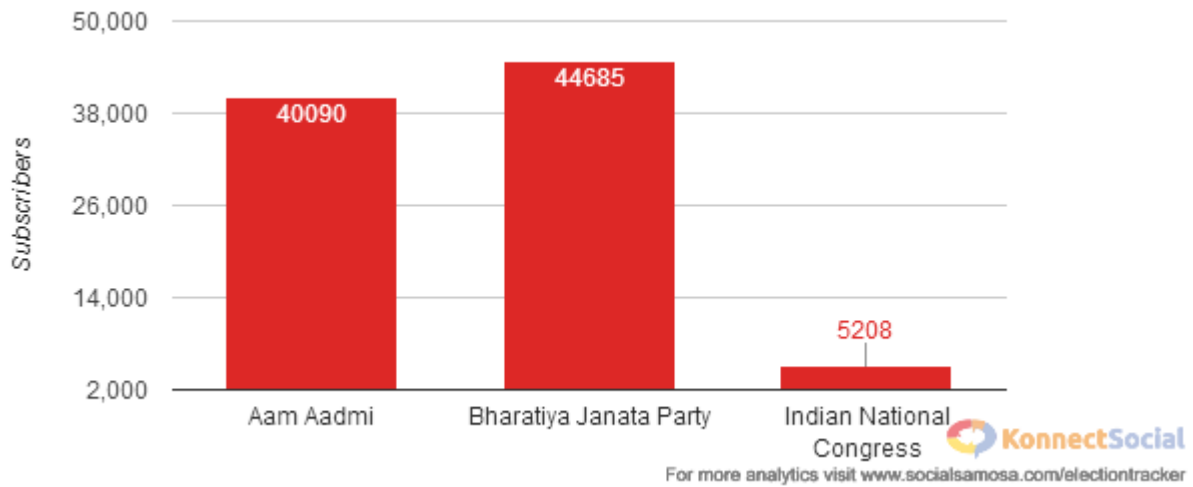BJP4India   AamAadmiParty   WithCongress
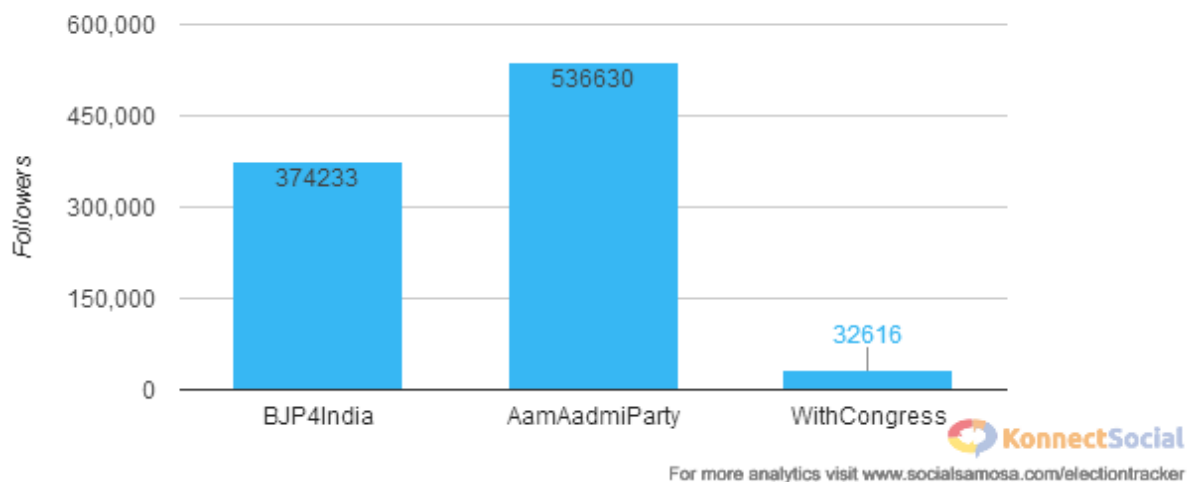
195

Although on twitter the Bharatiya Janata Party was behind one of the competitors, the Aam Aadmi Party, as shown in the above graph with 374 thousand followers but it had many well-coordinated networks of twitter accounts which widen their reach and timeline releases. The BJP's prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi's official twitter account had 3.5 million supporters while Aam Aadmi Party convener Arvind Kejriwal had 1.47 million followers during the time of 2014 elections in India.

The presence of BJP on YouTube was also ahead of its counterparts in 2014 as shown in the graph below with 44,685 subscribers and more than 6.2 million views. The party used YouTube platform as the second panel for all its programmes, be it inspirational speeches from the top leaders, videos with social messages or a call for being the part of the rallies related to the campaigns.

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[195] https://www.socialsamosa.com/2014/03/social-media-strategy-review-bharatiya-janta-party/

Graph: 3

50,000

44685

38,000

40090

Subscribers

26,000

14,000

5208

2,000

Aam Aadmi   Bharatiya Janata Party   Indian National
                                                    Congress

KonnectSocial
For more analytics visit www.socialsamosa.com/electiontracker

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Social media collapsed the distance between voter and politician. The personal connect worked. For example, just ahead of a rally in Hyderabad, a Modi follower tweeted how his elderly mother was a great fan of the BJP leader and wanted to meet him. The local BJP unit was asked to contact the woman—she was brought on stage and Modi sought her blessings. *"It was just the kind of human touch we were looking for,'* says a Modi aide". Even when Modi was not observing his tweets himself, his team of experts and supporters surely did. "If the Gandhi family were benefited by their political friends, Modi had his 'Internet Hindus' or bhakts, as they are often referred as. I often found myself facing the rage of what seemed as an organized, systematic campaign of hate and abuse against anyone who did not follow the prearranged narrative. Their social media profile generally was 'Proud Hindu nationalist. Want Namo for PM.' Internet Hindus are highly organized and motivated, and destroying the narratives and status of conventional media practitioners is their confirmed purpose" (Sardesi, 2014).

The Modi selfie when he went out to vote was another good example. When a prime ministerial candidate putting out a selfie gives a better symbol of a tech-friendly leader. The selfie with the black-and-white lotus had another function. By holding up the election symbol designed to look exactly the way it looked on the EVM (in black and white and not saffron) and by associating his face with it especially for those voter's keen to vote for Modi, if not the BJP, Modi had put into the public space an image which was both viral-worthy and politically communicative. For

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[196] https://www.socialsamosa.com/2014/03/social-media-strategy-review-bharatiya-janta-party/

the 2014 elections, Jain created a digital software system that was truly revolutionary. It would create a voter identity database right down to the booth level. 'We could track the smallest of households and use the data to build a volunteer base at the booth level which is critical in an election,' a Team Modi member told me. If anyone wished to volunteer for the Modi campaign, all they needed to do was dial 7820078200 and punch in their voter ID card number (Sardesi, 2014).

Another measure which was remarkably interesting was the complete 360-degree approach to the election campaign. "When journalists tracking the BJP's, manifesto arrived at the party headquarters in early April, they were given a pen drive with a film and the contents of the manifesto. The manifesto release was not only live on television, but it was also playing out on the party websites, YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, mobile dial-ins and WhatsApp. From thirty seconds to thirty minutes, separate videos were created depending on the platform. 'This was multimedia carpet-bombing" (Sardesi, 2014).

As in the case with television, it would be an exaggeration to suggest the digital offensive won Modi the 2014 election. Though it acted as a force multiplier. There are many parts of rural India in particular still aren't connected to the Net revolution. But when you look at the millions who now use smartphones, the Internet and Mobile Association[197] claims that mobile Internet users had touched 185 million by mid-2014. It is difficult to ignore social media in any future election campaign plan. Indeed, the Internet blitz was another crucial piece in the reinvention of Modi. Like for example, by building a large and devout Twitter following, Modi was able to challenge the monopoly of the traditional media on opinion making.

He was always certain that a huge segment of the English-language media would by no means make him not remember the 2002 riots. Thousands of handles on Twitter systematically attacked any narrative that challenged Modi in particular and the BJP in general. Journalists increasingly tend to follow Twitter like a wire service and watching social media trends has become part of a reporter's duties. Thus, by sheer force of numbers, Team Modi wielded social media's power over mainstream media's news priorities. On Facebook, too, he was able to connect to a wide

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[197] The Internet and Mobile Association of India are responsible for the development and innovation of the mobile and Internet industry India. The Internet and Mobile Association of India also deal with the concerns, issues, and the challenges faced by the mobile and Internet industry. The Internet and Mobile Association of India was set up in the year 2004 by the top Indian Internet portals and the Internet and Mobile Association of India is the only organization of its kind which cater to the rights and privileges of the mobile and Internet industry. The Internet and Mobile Association of India have its offices in Delhi and Mumbai.

urban audience that was looking for a leader they could engage with. It became another vital platform to spread his ideas effectively.

Social media enabled Modi to consolidate his new image as a modern technocrat-administrator. This was not a pracharak with a closed shakha mindset, but a leader with an eye to the future. Tech geeks can be ideologically rigid and illiberal, but technology also symbolizes an egalitarian spirit based on merit and opportunity. Modi may have been twenty years older than Rahul, but technology helped him look and feel much younger. The BJP has often been stereotyped as an ageing Hindu revivalist party which takes up potentially divisive issues like Ram mandir[198]. The technology drive gave it a dramatically new avatar as a party that was holding out the dream of a 'digital democracy', a nation of mouse, and not snake, charmers, as Modi put it. For a younger, inspirational India, this was just the kind of message of hope they wanted to hear from their leadership. The main strategy of BJP was to forecast Narendra Modi as a reliable, influential leader and sway public emotions among fence sitters and form a wave that would move forward the BJP beyond 272[199]. The approach was twofold. Targeting of the public anger against the UPA-II government, and then create a sense of hope that Modi would usher in change. Anger and hope would become the twin planks of the advertising assault as also argued by Manuel Castells in his book *"Networks of Outrage and Hope"*.

During "June 2014, there were roughly around 243 million internet users, 114.8 million Facebook users, and 33 million twitter users in India" (Hickok, 2018). In 2014 elections India witnessed a turnout of 83.41 crore voters which is (66.4%). Although other elections have also utilised social media platforms before 2014, but in 2014 general elections India modified its electioneering techniques which was unlike the earlier electoral campaigns in India.

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[198] The Ayodhya Dispute is a political, historical and socio-religious debate in India, centered on a plot of land in the city of <u>Ayodhya</u>, located in <u>Ayodhya District</u>, <u>Uttar Pradesh</u>. The main issues revolve around access to a site traditionally regarded among Hindus to be the birthplace of the Hindu deity <u>Rama</u> the history and location of the <u>Babri Masjid</u> at the site, and whether a previously alleged Hindu temple was demolished or modified to create the mosque.

[199] India272+ is an online and on-ground volunteering platform to help the BJP in its mission towards gaining a 272+ seat majority in the 545 seat Lok Sabha. The idea for India 272+ has been derived from Obama's presidential campaign, where the volunteers and supporters were provided a dashboard to connect, collaborate and contribute their efforts.

In previous elections candidates mainly used to focus on "local and refined information and used strategies such as opinion polls, voter banks, door to door campaigning, booth wise caste, religious profiling, key community leaders, and volunteers to centre on groups of electorates" (Sharma, 2018)[200]. However, in "2014 elections, the use of data, technology, and digital platforms played a central role in the way the campaigns were designed, structured, targeted, implemented, and communicated. Technology and data were employed very strategically in comprehending the intricacies of demographics, religion, politics, caste, geography, and community in India" (Hickok, 2018).

The interaction of social media and politics has considerably altered the manner in which the election campaigning is executed and how the citizens communicate with their elected officials. Social media has the capacity to circulate content and broadcast it to millions of people within no time which help political parties to vigilantly direct their candidate's image with the support of analytics in real time. Political campaigns can keep a count on the information about the individual who follows them on social media and based on this analytics they can formulate their strategies depending on particular demographics.

In other words, "a campaign may find one message suitable for electorates below the age of 30 years old which will not be valuable for 60 years old. The predominance of social media lies in its spontaneity. Political leaders are unaware about the consequences of their policy statements or political decisions among the electorates but Twitter and Face book both permit them to instantly estimate how the public is reacting to an issue or debate. Politicians now have an incredible opportunity to revise their campaign accordingly in real time" (Murse, 2018)[201].

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[200] Shantanu Nandan Sharma, The Economic Times, "Why India Has Nothing to Fear From Rightful Use of Big Data", 01, April, 2018.
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/why-india-has-nothing-to-fear-from-rightful-use-of-big-data/articleshow/63560703.cms
[201] Tom Murse, ThoughtCo, "How Social Media Has Changed Politics: 10 Ways Twitter and Facebook Have Altered Campaigns". 01 June, 2018
https://www.thoughtco.com/how-social-media-has-changed-politics-3367534.

4.2 Social Media and Anti – Corruption Movement

Social media is by far considered as the internet's most hybrid creation merging its exceptional characteristics as communication technology and at the similar time as mass media. It has remarkable presence in conditions of frequency, mobilization, popularity, and effect. It has delivered present-day movements as distinctive in terms of their drive to mobilize power. There is no denial to the fact that social media offers platforms for engaging and communicating on matters of common interest which somehow transforms the political process in the direction of more discursive and linguistic structures. The function of social media platforms was not only confined to organising events around the movement, but it was used for mobilising people on the basis of information shared about the fast and the movement. The movement achieved was acknowledged all around the world because it received not just physical support by joining the movement but also the way it created online dialogue on social networking sites by receiving a certain number of likes and comments and other kinds of participation techniques accessible online.

The India against Corruption movement throughout its life has its own online discussion forums which they significantly used for deliberations specific issues raised in the forum with their own set of structural structures and limitations. Debates produced by television or print media in their own online websites also became platforms for deliberations and discussions.

The Anti- corruption movement employed wide use of both offline as well as online mobilization methods. Many a time's real-world activities influenced the online communications between supporters of the movement. The movement constantly mobilized so that they can maintain the support base and make it more impactful regardless of the obligation to the lawful restrictions. The movement throughout the mobilization expected to involve huge support base, through a variety of communication strategies and principally through the social media platforms despite of the levels of expertise or skill needed in drafting process.

4.3 Political Mobilization in a Hybrid Media Environment

Andrew Chackwick's conceptualisation of the hybrid media system extended beyond the binary of traditional and new media and attempted to understand the media system in a more holistic manner that captures the interactions between political actors, journalists, broadcasters, bloggers, and the public. He further questioned the traditional understanding of the media logic that revolved around fixed norms, boundaries and hierarchies. The media tends to reduce important messages into bylines by polarising, sensationalising and personalising the issues or taking advantage of their medium to survive in the existing hyper- competitive media market. However, the concept of media logic that developed in the mass communication era, in which there was a single media cycle, may not be the same in understanding the complexity and fluidity of interactions among media and political actors in emerging hybrid media system.

In a hybrid media system, according to Chadwick, "political existence is arbitrated through the web of networked actions relating offline and online communication as well as grassroots activism. Instead of displacing the older media, the onset of social media assists the emergences of a hybrid media system where engagements between older and newer media is repeatedly hybrid, as the new public is the also the user of older media, partially combined combinations of groups, organisations, social standards and practices that were formerly connected with older media" (Chadwick, 2006).

He developed this framework of hybrid media to specifically understand the rapid transformation in political communication in the developed nations of Britain and United States. However, this framework can be extended to India, where there is simultaneous growth of print, broadcast and social media. In today's globalised world, technological innovation migrates from one place to another in a short period of time that leads the elite of the country to adapt to global lifestyles, rendering the earlier binaries of global north and underdeveloped south increasingly blurred. One example of this is the rapid diffusion of mobile phones and the internet, which now has more users in developing countries than in developed countries[202].

A "report by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) point out that till October 2015, there were 375 million alleged internet users, 246 million in urban cites and 129 million in

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[202] There were 3.2 billion people using the internet globally at the end of 2015, 2 billion of whom were from developing countries (International Telecommunication Union [ITU].

rural villages. In 2011, the amount of internet users in India was more than 100 million" (Foundation, 2013). "Despite the low penetration of the internet in India, Team Anna decided to use social media. This decision was partially influenced by the fact that mobilising the internet public and the middle- class would certainly draw the attention of traditional media such as news channels and newspapers" (Neyazi, 2018). One feature that is common in both the Anti-corruption movement and 2014 electoral campaign of BJP is the convergence of old and new media in this new structured hybrid media logic.

"Cyberspace clearly transforms space and time. When we communicate through e-mail, we do not need to be in the similar place with whom we are communicating. During chatting we require temporal copresence but no spatial copresence. The conventional sociological idea of space has been linked to borders and fixity. But in reality, the new information and communication technologies go beyond borders which have resulted in predicament of the space idea in sociology. Cyberspace is a sort of social space where communication is technologically reconciled and is mobilized on a worldwide time-space dimension. A virtual community is not a space that is comprised by mutual values, identities, or customs. What join people in a virtual community is common interest in certain subjects and communication familiarize on these topics. Cyberspace doesn't mark the conclusion of space but the quickening of communication and the expansion of few social systems to a universal scale" (Fuchs, 2008).

It is imperative to note down that neither technological network creates neither "protest networks nor is the other way round, both conjectures are quantified as one-dimensional. The network is not an outcome of the protest, rather it is Internet. Protest movements require network technologies because they support them in proceeding networked types of protest. Similarly, the digital technologies and social networking sites are and not the consequence of worldwide networked protests, although movements have altered networked technologies and the acceptance of the social media by these movements have produced new technological strategies such as electronic mass media, war blogs, diverse kinds of online protest and online campaigning, and so on" (Fuchs, 2008).

The networks of global protest and electronic networks are in a way showing a change of societal mindsets from fixed notions of places to the notions of fluidity, flows, and networks. Throughout the world protest networks employ social media technologies in order to mobilise their networks to form organization, and they also create new features of network technologies which includes a variety of cyber protest and cyber activism.

Therefore, it is not reasonable to argue that "network technologies generate network protests or the other way round. Both developments happen in a similar time. The network technologies are accepted, advanced, and altered by the way it is employed in a global protest, and these technologies facilitate and restrain the protest exercises of global protest movements. Social systems and technologies are dialectically associated and create each other equally in dynamic processes" (Fuchs, 2008). The Internet arbitrates the distribution of struggles of universal protest movements which leads to construction of meanings and practices of protest. These are virtually circulated which "spread and exaggerate with the assistance of cyberspace. The distribution of struggles can be defined as the production and deployment of material relations and communications that devastate isolation and allow people to struggle in corresponding ways—both against the restraint which reduce them and the alternatives they construct, independently and together" (Cleaver, 2000).

"Cyber protest is a virtual flow of struggles of universal protest movements. New information technologies thus emerge not just as tools for the distribution of commodities, but simultaneously as means for the spread of struggles. Cyberspace is essential as a political arena, because it is a space where virtual disagreement substitute struggles on the field, although it is a medium inside which terrestrial struggles can be made noticeable and correlated with one another" (Witheford, 1999). For protest movements, the social media has diverse purposes to carry out. Social media while acting as a means of communication is used for organising and coordinating protests, it acts as a means to exchange views, strategies, and goals, and it also acts as information and broadcasting medium to distribute the unconventional knowledge, and lastly it acts as means to channelize finally virtual protests.

Social media facilitate social-movement activists and organisers to communicate and produce information and later broadcast that information economically and efficiently. Social media are autonomously owned and directed, and they communicate opinions which are in a way dissonant from those of traditional media. They build horizontal connection among their audiences, instead of top-down, vertical flows of conventional print and broadcast media. Anti- corruption movement is the first known movement in contemporary India to utilise the social media tools to mobilise support. New media combined with traditional media have the potential to mobilise the public and influence policy making. The campaign was launched in 2011 by 74-year-old Indian social activist and self-styled Gandhian, Anna Hazare, to support the passage of legislation called Jan Lokpal Bill to combat the menace of corruption. The campaign for the Jan Lokpal Bill received global attention because of the extensive media coverage of the protests. The interactions among print, television and the internet produced a new space for political mobilisation, or a 'hybrid media system', which was seen throughout Anna Hazare's campaign against corruption.

The successful use of social media not only transferred the anti- corruption movement into cyberspace and made it more universal, but also gathered enormous support for anti- corruption protests, which Time magazine scheduled among the top 10 news stories of 2011. Simultaneously, media coverage of the event triggered actual political participation. People from different parts of India visits Jantar Mantar in New Delhi, where Anna Hazare commences fast-unto death protest to press for his demands. An indirect effect of the mobilisation for the anti-corruption movement was the emergence of a new political party, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), In Delhi in 2012, whose leaders emerged from the movement. The new political surprised everyone by winning a high number of seats in the Delhi assembly elections in 2013 and then went to win Delhi assembly elections in 2015 with a landslide. Since the 2011 anti- corruption movement targeted the political class, particularly the Congress party, which was ruling at the centre, which further discredited and tarnished the image of the Congress party and may have influenced the outcome of the 2014 Lok Sabha election.

With the escalation of digital media, the mobilization process have been considerably transformed, and new forms of political participation emerged that were not possible within the traditional media environment, such as supporting a movement online by signing a petition, joining social networks, or cyber-attacks for a good cause or to achieve a political goal, which is termed as 'hacktivism' (Neyazi, 2018). In this age of digital communications technologies, social movements, which often encounter difficulties obtaining space in traditional media, begin by using the new media in order to mobilize support for their cause. The social media technology help the movements instantly communicate with and mobilize potential supporters worldwide. Once the movement begins gaining visibility, it may get picked up by the traditional media, which has an amplification effect and mobilizes a wider audience, which leads to virality.

This dependence on the media to mobilize public opinion instead of mobilizing support at grassroots level first also challenges the movement's sustainability. The long – term articulation of demands requires building grassroots support rather than beginning the movement with the media without having first established a solid support base (Neyazi, 2018). Mobile phones proved to be significant in the anti– corruption movement. Team Anna developed the innovative idea of asking people to make a missed call to a designated number to show their support for the movement[203]. The idea of missed call was promoted as a strategy aimed at those who are unable to come to Delhi's Jantar Mantar to participate in the protest. During the movement, the team leaders received 6.6 million missed calls in three months, and nearly 25 million missed calls were received in six months from different parts of the country (Gowda, 2014).

This strategy of mobilization by missed calls was subsequently used by Narendra Modi during the campaign in September 2011 when he was the Chief Minister of the state of Gujrat[204]. Social Media particularly social networking sites are believed to have played an important role in the anti- corruption movement. Law minister Salman Khursid said,

"We were caught unawares because Anna's movement was a remarkable combination of traditional politics and unconventional modern practices" (Express News Service, 2011)[205].

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[203] This practice of missed call is also known as beeping, flashing, pranking, fishing or a boom call, deliberate missed call, and has been used for instrumental and expressive purposes in various parts of the world.

[204] Narendra Modi during his Sadbhavana Mission in September 2011 used similar mobilisation tactics and asked his supporters to make missed calls to designated numbers to show their support.

[205] Express News Service, "Team Anna's Use of Social Media Caught Us Unawares, Says Khurshid, The Indian Express, 19 October, 2011.
https://indianexpress.com/article/news-archive/web/team-annas-use-of-social-media-caught-us-unawares-says-khurshid/.

Many pages sprang up on Facebook showing support for Anna Hazare. At the end of August 2011, when the movement was in its peak, it is estimates that there were more than 200 pages on Facebook dedicated to Anna Hazare, with over one million supporters and approximately 37,500 followers on Twitter: the Jan Lokpal itself had 2,11,000 followers (Neyazi, 2018). India Against Corruption had approximately 6,03,000 supporters on Facebook at the end of 2011[206]. Indian against corruption had dedicated pages for different cities across India that each averged 1,000 supporters. For example, a small city like Ujjain had over 1,000 supporters, and Hyderabad and Pune had approximately 4,000 supporters. At the same time, 'India Against Corruption' pages existed outside India- in the US, Singapore, Malaysia, London, Dubai, Japan, Switzerland and Australia.

The official account of Jan Lokpal was one of the most influential brands on twitter in India an aggregate score of 71.29 according to the Klout score of December 2011[207]. It is places second after NDTV in terms of rank which has a aggregate score of 80.08. The Twitter account of Jan Lokpal has continuously maintained the highest aggregate score since 2011.

The more interesting aspect of anti- corruption movement is the way in which social media were used in conjunction with mobile phones to continue informing the public about everyday activities, including details of the places in which protests were to be organised, support from different celebrities, the condition of Anna Hazare's fasting health, and documents comparing Jan Lokpal and the government's version of Lokpal. After few minutes of the arrest of Anna Hazare he was preparing to fast on 16 August, a video was posted on the YouTube with the

message from Anna Hazare in which he appealed to the people to support the movement by non-violent means and spoke of second line of leadership. Similarly, within few hours of the arrest of Anna Hazare, the #supportannahazare became the top- trending topic on Twitter in India for two days[208].

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[206] The decisive and all out shift in the stance of 'India Against Corruption', the group that spearheaded the anti-corruption movement in favour of BJP, shows that the movement was supported by Hindutva groups that wanted to discredit the legitimacy of the state and the ruling party to govern and to create a fertile ground for the rise of alternative parties, including the BJP. The selection of symbols on display also demonstrated a strong version of Hindutva nationalism. However the movement subsequently began using inclusive symbols.

[207] Klout.com determines the social influence of people/ brands on Twitter. The score for Indian people/brands is published by pinstorm.com. Accessed the database on 24 December 2018.

[208] Times News India(TNN), "No Curbs But Media Needs to Sensitise Itself: Ambika Soni", 5 November, 2011 https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/No-curbs-but-media-needs-to-sensitize-itself-Ambika-Soni/articleshow/10613980.cms. 5 November 2011.

Team Anna in the first phase of the movement largely relied on social media, which helped them garner the support of the middle class and attract worldwide attention. However, when the movement began being covered on television and in the newspaper, the support base of the movement swelled. The time when movement entered the second phase, it had been converted into a mass movement with substantial support among the people other than middle class.

It is important to understand that one of the main reasons for the success of the movement was in gathering the attention of the public and social media platforms supported the movement by channelizing that attention of online public into political participation. Social networking sites which were previously seen as the medium for entertainment are now employed by people to engage in politics. This kind of development is new in India but is successfully practised in western countries since years. However, what is needed here to understand and study is the influence of social media in connection with the traditional media such as newspaper and TV. In the case of Anna Hazare- led anti- corruption movement, it would not have been possible for social media alone to take the movement to the diverse public. It was the entry of newspapers and television, which began providing extensive coverage that helped to increase and broaden the base of public support.

Examining this connectivity and convergence among established and social media and the emerging hybrid system is imperative in developing countries where the reach of social media remains limited. Social media can be more democratic than traditional media because anyone with access to the internet can raise an issue in public arena. However, it would not be possible for new media alone to influence the wider sections of the society unless they are able to influence traditional media. Similarly, with traditional media to reach out to a transnational audience it must acknowledge the social media. Such connectivity and convergence between traditional and social media were quite evident and relevant in the Anna Hazare campaign against corruption.

"The growth of social media has definitely had democratising consequence on the working of newspapers and news channels. The previous domination of newspapers and news channels on broadcasting news and breaking stories was destroyed with the increase of social media. Newspapers and news channels now are apprehensive of losing their integrity to this new medium. It is now complex for established news channels to hide a story from the public because such stories may get print in a blog or dispersed on social networking sites. In this context, Dahlgren argued that it is true that 'the internet extends and pluralises the public sphere" (Dahlgren, The Internet, Public Spheres, and Political Communication: Dispersion and Deliberation., 2005). The arrival of the new media has certainly empowered protest groups

globally to mobilise public opinion and raise support for their cause, which was difficult during the broadcast era. In the anti-corruption movement, it was the alignment of issue, personality and the means that determined the success of the movement.

The movement dispersed in quite short time because of internal dissension and disagreements among the core members, but the long-term effects cannot be ignored. The rise of AAP from the movement challenged the established political parties (Congress and BJP) at the centre and formed the state- level government in Delhi 2015. The BJP's victory in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections can be alleged as having a huge part played by the ruling Congress- led UPA government.

"The 2014 Indian national election is measured as extraordinary because of the surprising role played by Narendra Modi- led Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the formation of the first single-party majority government at the centre after 25 years. Social networking sites use was exceptional particularly to mobilize support especially by Narendra Modi and the digital team in the BJP, in comparison to the Congress party which did not had a digital strategy in 2014. This made scholars and commentators to consider 2014 election as the first social media election" (Neyazi, 2018).

"Narendra Modi's widespread use of both social media and traditional media for campaigning has been dubbed as 'maidan to media' (from field to media'), attributing to the greater prominence on media rather than on traditional conducts of campaigning in India, for example, rallies and meetings" ((Sardesi, 2014). Narendra Modi employed social networking sites successfully throughout his campaign however it was just one part of his massive electoral campaigning. He primarily maintained a balance between older and new media which shows the hybrid inclination of his election campaign. His campaign strategy also included traditional campaign methods like grassroots mobilization, rallies and volunteer activism both in India and abroad.

"The 2014 election campaign was not only confined to Mr Modi, but it regards a new age in political mobilization practices in India where specialized campaign managers, journalists, volunteer activists, entertainment media and ordinary citizens collectively played a prominent role. Today, the advances in campaigning can be found largely in digital communication technologies. Political campaigns in most of the advanced democracies have been extensively using the internet to reach their voters and mobilize support" (Galley, 2014).

In this hybrid media environment, we are also witnessing the return of 'two- step flow' model where personal influence is getting channelled through online communities to traditional media

and face- to- face interactions. Personal influence through social media was exploited by Obama in 2008 and 2012 US presidential elections campaigns but that does not mean that the importance of grassroots campaigns involving doorsteps canvassing were reduced in any manner (Galley, 2014). In few years we have seen the emergence of a hybrid media system where political actors try to reach potential supporters through various media depending on exigencies. The hybrid articulation of political campaigns was also withenesed in India's 2014 national election. It was not just traditional platforms such as rallies, door- to - door canvassing, neighbourhood meetings, newspaper, radio and television reporting and advertising, but newer channels such as Twitter, Facebook and other social media, as well as WhatsApp, that were used by political parties to reach out to voters.

The mobile phone and short messaging service (SMS) were used to transmit recorded messages from party leaders, while 'missed call' advertising was an integral part of the campaign strategies used by all three main parties. However, it was the Narendra Modi- led BJP that exploited the hybrid media ecology better than other political parties (Neyazi, 2016). The focus here is on the emergence of the hybrid media environment in India. The environment which conventional media continues to occupy an important place along with new media and face- to- face interactions, and how these were exploited by BJP to reach out to voters and how voters engaged with the hybrid campaigns.

The 2014 Lok Sabha election was a contest among political parties and candidates for visibility, space, and time, in the media by making controversial statements. Even if candidate was addressing a rally in the most remote location, the aim usually was attracting the attention of media coverage. Narendra Modi was more successful in placing himself in the agenda because his campaign made better use of hybrid media ecology and more effectively used Twitter in addition to the strategic placements of advertisements on different channels.

The BJP's innovative Mission 272 + strategy signalled the party's goal of achieving an absolute majority in the Lower House of Parliament. Mission 272+ was largely driven by a national programme of volunteers who were connected with the mission headquarters in Bengaluru. They obtained cell phone numbers of potential voters who wanted to hear from Narendra Modi and ensured they were sent a continuous stream of SMS messages from the party leader and his live speeches across the country via cellphone.

Internet penetration remains low in India, though it is considered huge in terms of the absolute number- 462 at the end of 2016[209]. Most of these new internet users are in urban India where they have been drawing attention of political parties and traditional news organisations. In India's hybrid media system, mobile phones are perhaps the most essential to understand the information flows and collaborative relations between all actors in an electoral campaign.

The importance of mobile phones and access to social media applications on mobile phone devices was measured as one of the most crucial factors by political parties all through the campaign. "The use of Twitter and texting via SMS in the campaign to influence and shape information flows was widely witnessed and reported, majorly in urban constituencies" (Goyal, 2014)[210]. Social media was extensively used by BJP as compared to other political parties. BJP was much more active on Twitter, followed by AAP and INC during the campaign period as shown in the table below:

Table 1

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[209] Internet Live Stats(2016).
http://www.internetlivestats.com/internet-users/.

[210] Malini Goyal, "How BJP, AAP, Congress and their candidates are using social media to woo voters", The Economic Times, 10 January, 2019
https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/how-bjp-aap-congress-and-their-candidates-are-using-social-media-to-woo-voters/articleshow/33299451.cms.

AAP (21%)		
Total number of Tweets sent	=	1,906
Re-tweeted by AAP or leaders of AAP	=	551(29%)
Re-tweeted by others	=	652(34.2%)
Not re-tweeted	=	703(36.8%)
BJP (70.5%)		
Total number of Tweets sent	=	6,422
Re-tweeted by BJP or leaders of BJP	=	1,774(27.5%)
Re-tweeted by others this includes a large number of celebrities	=	2,432(37.5%)
Not re-tweeted	=	2,246(35%)
INC (9.5%)		
Total number of Tweets sent	=	770
Re-tweeted by INC or leaders of INC	=	225(28%)
Re-tweeted by others	=	194(25%)
Not re-tweeted	=	283(37%)

[211]

The emergence of hybrid media ecology did result in the flow of information from new media to traditional media and vice versa. Most of the happenings on social media were subsequently rechannelled in the traditional media and offline, a process known as remediation (Neyazi, 2018). "Mr Modi's advertising technique was highly praised by all political parties, including Mr Gandhi in an interview with Aaj Tak on 6 April. Narendra Modi through his multi- faceted campaigns that included rallies, road shows, 3D hologram appearances at simultaneous rallies in 53 cities on 10 April and direct phone calls to citizens on their mobiles, contacted about 18 times more voters than Mr Gandhi" (Kunal Pradhan, 2014)[212].

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[211] Holi Semetko, Anup Kumar, Taberez A. Neyazi, Jonathan Mellon, Dhavan Shah, Arash Sangar. (2016). "Social and Traditional Media Use and Influences on the Vote in India". Paper Presented at Internal Communication Association 112 th Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, USA, 1-4 September.

[212] Uday Mahurkar, Kunal Pradhan, "Maximum Campaign: Modi unleashes a blitzkrieg never seen before in Indian electoral history", India Today, 19, December, 2014.
 https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/cover-story/story/20140519-narendra-modi-bjp-campaign-indian-electoral-history-lok-sabha-elections-2014-802633-1999-11-30. Accessed on 10 January 2019.

The chapter has tried to show how digital and social media has opened up new avenues to mobilize public opinion and has also facilitated political participation. The success of Anna Hazare- led anti- corruption movement and 2014 electoral mobilization of BJP in obtaining wider visibility can be partially attributed to their successful campaigns on the internet, particularly on social networking sites, which also compelled traditional media to take up the issue.

Social media played a deliberative role in the mobilization of anti- corruption movement by channelling messages to traditional media and to offline communities by interpersonal interactions. During the Anti-corruption movement there was a shift of support base which happened from a city and urban middle class to a more extensive community which is an attribute to prevalence of hybrid media environment or the way both new and traditional media in combination with grassroots mobilization have helped highlight the issue in public platform. The desire to influence the media or to adapt to be noticed by the media is one of the significant techniques which differentiated new protest movements from earlier movements that believed in grassroots mobilization as their primary technique.

The simultaneous integration and fragmentation of spaces in the emerging hybrid media system have simultaneously created new opportunities for political actors to utilise different media based on exigencies to influence voters. Although only a small fraction of population had access to the internet due to digital divide, still social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook captivated public attention. Traditional media reporting content of social media provided integrity to social media as a dependable basis of public sentiment. The most remarkable thing about BJP's strategy is that the content was tailored to suit the requirement of a particular media and communication was relayed simultaneously across a wide range of sources.

The BJP not only aggressively used the traditional techniques of campaigns such as face- to- face contacts with voters, but also new media such as mobile phones and the internet to reach out to voters. The calibrated party strategies along with hybrid media campaigns did pay a dividend for the BJP. Media of the kinds, social media and traditional media have definitely appeared as significant institution for communication in present-day India as well as in other developing countries and it has altered the manner in which politics is executed. By creating creation, one's existence in media has now become central for political parties as well as for oppositional politics such as protest movements to ensure wider validation of cause.

The focus of this chapter is both mobilization for electoral politics and grassroots mobilization where citizens and groups from different class and caste backgrounds actively participate in mediated activities in the public arena. This chapter has examined developments such as

movements against corruption led by Anna Hazare that pushed him and the country into the world news all through 2011 as well as the 2014 national election campaign of BJP, and the communications between traditional and social media and how they have altered the structures and dynamics of political mobilization in contemporary India. The concept of hybrid media system is employed to understand the interplay between traditional and new media; as well grassroots political mobilization consisting of diverse actors while also examining the political and social developments.

Instead of paying attention entirely on online media or traditional media, this chapter has showed the complexity and the binaries between the two as a consequence of a hybrid media environment, in which conventional media maintains to occupy a significant position besides social media and face- to- face interactions. Though, the hybrid media environment of India is different from the media environment in developed countries where most citizens have accessibility to the Internet. Over the last decade, we have witnessed a connection among the development of the social networking sites and the degree to which it is being employed in the political process. It has become a prominent channel for candidates, activists, journalists, and citizens at the same time. In spite of this development, there are still contradictory opinions on the results as to what the actual impact of social networking sites is on the Indian political system. Even though it is logical to argue that social media does not produce a completely new political order, as it is leveraged inside the structures of established institutions, but it does offer a new and improved space for organization, communication, and cooperation in campaigns and elections. Social media has now become a critical part of the human existence. The discovery, which was initially meant for information exchange, has diversified itself into more than just mere information dissemination.

Conclusion

To begin with, the thesis had its inception in the form of a series of queries related to the implications of social media and how it has altered the political landscape in India. Some of

these questions were: What kind of role has social media played in creating new patterns of political mobilization in India? How has BJP employed social media to shape citizens perceptions and thereby influence & control the flow of information? What binaries can be drawn between street politics and virtual politics? Starting from these and other related queries the research went on to come up with few interesting findings. The work opened with the hypothesis that social media offers new possibilities for transforming the political process in India. So, be it the case of Anti-Corruption movement or the electoral mobilization of BJP it was found that social networking sites created interaction without regarding geographical barriers which in turn provided a prominent increase in efficiency of political information and generated a new calculus in the political sphere. Social media platforms provided the opportunities to consumers of the news, to themselves become producers of news. These elements brought interactivity to media technology and allowed the citizens to deliberate with politicians or other groups of citizens from considerable distances. It also provided platforms to politicians to escape conventional news creators to establish a direct line of communication with the citizens which is unfiltered and unhindered by the norms and structural constraints of conventional print and broadcast journalism. Through this research an effort was made to provide a profound and realistic approach to social media and locate its potential significance in the context of cultural relativity, local situations, and Indian particularities.

The 'new' in new media comes with the promise of expanding the creative and communication horizons. The instantaneity and the proximity due to the space-time compression results in quick dissemination of information. The new mediascape is integrated along with political, economic and social institutions that shape and are further shaped by these cultural artefacts. The two foundational premises which were covered efficiently were, first it makes individuals capable enough to choose their "own network of communication and allows citizens to self-select their content in a way that overcome any unlikable ideas or interpretations and secondly,

the networks themselves exist outside the traditional media machine, which endures political actors which includes both parties and candidates to fashion and often dictate their content"[213]. Social networking sites on one hand supports traditional offline collective action with regard to their organisation, mobilization and trans nationalisation and on the other hand it creates new

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[213] Jason Gainous, Kevin M. Wagner. Tweeting to Power: The Social Media Revolution In American Politics.2014. Oxford University Press.

ways to do collective action. The growing penetration of broadband and cell phones has configured a new audience and thus a new activist ecology has been forming. New media and digital forms of organising protests have necessitated redefining the conventional way of conceptualising collective action. The conventional methods of looking at civic activism seemed as if they were insufficient to understand the online forms of collective action.

Other significant findings of this study emerged slowly while working on the mentioned two case studies. Taking the case of political communication one can argue that in present times it takes place in a more complex space where both traditional and newer media are utilized by a varied group of actors such as political parties and protest movements to engage with the public and influence their opinion and political agenda. This research has also looked upon some continuations between new and old audio and visual media technologies to list new possibilities as well as the altered ways in which they allow for a convergence of previously disparate forms & effects as well as a remediation of older mediated texts.

Anti-corruption movement and 2014 electoral campaign of BJP were quite diverse from the earlier mobilizations that have taken place in India because both social and mainstream media performed together to inform and spread the news and the things happening on the ground. Social media acted as a channel of bringing people on the street. Therefore, it becomes important to recognize both the mobilizations not only from the prism of technology and as being created by media, since this idea of the mobilization would be inadequate to their wider outlook. The growth of social media should not only be seen as an improvement in communication technologies, but it has created quite an introductory swing in how people communicate, not just between themselves but with political actors and institutions. However, it is difficult to consider that social media tools on their own can be successful without traditional ways of mobilization as observed in the present research. The use of these social networking sites for information and communication are immensely impactful only when they are simultaneously employed with conventional forms of activism. The inherent possibility these

platforms have for social change will complement and increase classical forms of civic engagement.

It is not feasible to argue that social media alone can influence the wider sections of the society unless they are able to influence traditional media. Similarly, with traditional media to reach out to a transnational audience it must acknowledge the social media. Such connectivity and

convergence between traditional and social media were quite evident and relevant in the Anna Hazare campaign against corruption. In few years we have witnesses the emergence of a hybrid media system where political actors try to reach potential supporters through various media depending on exigencies. This hybrid articulation of political campaigns was also observed in India's 2014 national elections. It was not just traditional platforms such as rallies, door- to - door canvassing, neighbourhood meetings, newspaper, radio and television reporting and advertising, but newer channels such as Twitter, Facebook, and other social media, as well as WhatsApp, that were used by political parties to reach out to voters. In both Anti-corruption movement and Electoral mobilization of BJP it was observed that digital technology provided the opportunity to reform political process far more intensely than the telephone or television could ever have imagined. It offered the possibility of direct two-way interaction between the citizens and politicians. This has empowered the people to communicate and engage with large number of people who are in distance and gives the capability to coproduce content and share with them.

Examining this connectivity and convergence among traditional and social media and the emerging hybrid system is imperative in developing countries where the reach of social media remains limited. Social media can be more democratic than traditional media because anyone with access to the internet can raise an issue in public arena. However, it would not be possible for new media alone to influence the wider sections of the society unless they are able to influence traditional media. Similarly, with traditional media to reach out to a transnational audience it must acknowledge the social media. Such connectivity and convergence between traditional and social media were quite evident and relevant in the Anna Hazare campaign against corruption and BJP electoral campaign.

During 2014 national elections Narendra Modi employed social networking sites successfully throughout his campaign however it was just one part of his massive electoral campaigning. He primarily maintained a balance between older and new media which shows the hybrid inclination of his election campaign. His campaign strategy also included traditional campaign methods like grassroots mobilization, rallies and volunteer activism both in India and abroad. Similarly social

media also played a deliberative role in the mobilization of anti- corruption movement by channeling messages to traditional media and to offline communities by interpersonal interactions. It also resulted in the shift of support base which happened from a city and urban middle class to a more extensive community which is an attribute to prevalence of hybrid media environment or the way both new and traditional media in combination with grassroots mobilization has helped highlight the issue in public platform. The desire to influence the media or to adapt to be noticed by the media is one of the significant techniques which differentiated new protest movements from the old.

Instead of paying attention entirely on online media or traditional media, this thesis has showed the complexity and the binaries between the two because of a hybrid media environment, in which conventional media maintains to occupy a significant position besides social media and face- to- face interactions. Though, the hybrid media environment of India is different from the media environment in developed countries where most citizens have accessibility to the Internet. Over the last decade, we have witnessed a connection among the development of the social networking sites and the degree to which it is being employed in the political process. It has become a prominent channel for candidates, activists, journalists, and citizens at the same time. In spite of this development, there are still contradictory opinions on the results as to what the actual impact of social networking sites is on the Indian political system. Even though it is logical to argue that social media does not produce a completely new political order, as it is leveraged inside the structures of established institutions, but it does offer a new and improved space for organization, communication, and cooperation in political movements and elections.

The research has also tried to understand the fundamental question of democratizing of the society through the use of Internet. The thesis explored the vital linkage between cyber activism and the role it plays in enhancing or subduing the forces of democracy. It unravelled the numerous ways in which the idea of democracy has taken root and expanded digitally through the use of technological tools. The role of social network tools thus takes on different guises under each circumstance. Technology ensures that anyone with an Internet connection can perceive of themselves as a part of these new democratic upsurges. It does not differentiate on usual parameters of class, colour and gender in seeking to establish a more egalitarian society and a level playing field. The research showcased how theories of democracy, that usually assign importance to the communicative interaction amongst citizens, have come to get enriched or thwarted by the recent developments in cyber activism over the internet. As the basis of political participation through better communication tools has been key to the functioning of the public

sphere in the modern times. This view has remained central to significant formulations of neo-republicanism, radical or 'strong' democracy, and certainly of deliberative aspects of democracy.[214]

Nowadays, a substantial amount of civic discussion takes place over the Internet not just as a medium of conducting politics but for networking by activist organizations and social movements. The case studies of Anti – Corruption movement and the way BJP employed social media networks for political campaigning showcases how effectively the present-day digital activism has engaged itself with keeping a certain form and idea of the medium intact as well. As in the case of Anti – corruption movement, the activists could sense that the Internet and its alleged 'free lanes' were threatened by some form of governmental control alongside commercialization via market forces. This led to the coalescing together of new, fluid publics, affinity groups and citizen networks that was provided by the medium itself through its structure of horizontal form of civic communication. This does remain one of the interesting findings coming out of this study where the alleged 'subject-object dichotomy' of the Internet itself was seemingly getting fused together into paving the way forward for a new kind of politics. Activists whether operating exclusively through the 'digital lanes' or complementing and strengthening a cause offline, were increasingly found staking a moral claim to the right to protest. Thus while analysing the actions of Anti -corruption movement one could not but ignore the sense of deep betrayal and exclusion that the common masses felt due to the deep rooted corruption. The protesters had a deeper aspiration to socially transform their societies from within. A society, which the protesters thought, had got hollowed out from within due to the actions of the corrupt classes including the corporate sector, bureaucracy, politicians, and other ruling elite.

Through the symbolic demands of #I am- Hazare or #isupportannahazare, the agitators were seen to be trying to regain the lost space that the representational forms of democracy had denied them. Thus, they increasingly spoke of and demanded a pluralistic democratic society that respected and stood for freedom of speech and expression and promoted an active citizenry in place of the docile, obedient crowds that the political masters wanted them to be. The new media has blurred

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[214] Peter Dahlgren, *Cyberprotest New media, citizens and social movements*, (eds.) Wim van de Donk, Brian D.Loader, Paul G.Nixon and Dieter Rucht, (London: Routledge, 2004), X.

the modernist idea of the public and the private where someone can post and write critically about the policies and the governance within the confines of their private sphere.

This is how social media networks are replacing hierarchical traditional media institutions. Social media is giving citizens a platform to share political information and commentary with other citizens breaking the monopoly of 'professional communicators' i.e., news organizations and journalists. In both the case of mobilizations the use of digital and social media platforms have concentrated the obstacles of access to participation. This is because these platforms have assisted users with the capability to modify the information they want to consume and their participation in the discussion or event to their ease which has altered their online experience into collective action.

Social media has also changed the manner in which the business of politics is conducted in India. Social media and communication technologies opened up new avenues to mobilize public opinion and facilitated political participation. Similarity can be drawn in the success of both Anti-corruption movement and electoral mobilization of BJP in obtaining wider visibility which can be partially attributed to their successful campaign on social media platforms that also prompted mainstream media to take up the matter. Social media did play a strategic role in both the mobilizations by channelling messages to traditional media and to offline communities by interpersonal interactions. The change of the supporters of both the mobilizations from a metropolitan and urban middle class to a more widen public can be credited to the occurrence of a hybrid media system or the way in which both new and traditional media in combination with grassroots mobilization have helped highlight the issue in public arena.

Conventionally candidates were dependent on local and refined information and employed practices like opinion polls, vote banks, door to door campaigning, booth wise caste & religious profiling and had volunteers stationed to focus on faction of electorates. But in comparison to earlier elections, the 2014 national elections employed the data, technology, and social networking sites which performed a vital role in the manner the campaigns were planned, structured, targeted, executed, and communicated. Data and Technology were the principal means in consciously finding the complexities of demographics, religion, politics, caste, geography, and community in India. Though other elections had taken advantages of internet platforms before 2014, but this election in India manifested a shift in electioneering strategy.

While keeping these interfaces in mind this research has tried to explore how technology and specifically the use of SNSs on the Internet, forced a change in how people engage with each

other and the political system. By creating an entirely new system to distribute and engage with news and opinion, social media changed a long-held power association over the control of information. It considerably changed who controls information, who consumes information, how that information is dispersed, and most importantly, how that information is understood. For instance, in the postcolonial India, media was an institution regulated by the state and considered a pedagogical instrument for creating and modifying the consciousness of people. The Indian citizens were considered as political and social actors with almost no participation in the traditional media monopolized by the state. With the coming of "web 2.0 and the convergence of old and new media, it has become possible for people to create and upload content and post their views giving rise to "prosumers.

During the 2014 national election campaign social media networks became the platform which was simply the quickest and most effective way to build a following, engage that following, and speak to them directly – bypassing mainstream media channels like TV and print. It became a way to reach to the key voters with exactly the right message at exactly the right moment. It was not that all these candidates or campaigns necessarily mastered Face book (though some certainly did), but rather that they recognized the power of the platform and embraced it. It helped them obviously because the rules and boundaries that existed in other media were for the most part absent from social media platforms. Despite the low penetration of the internet in India, Team Anna also decided to use social media. This decision was partially influenced by the fact that mobilizing the internet public and the middle- class would certainly draw the attention of traditional media such as news channels and newspapers. One feature that is common in both the Anti- corruption movement and 2014 electoral campaign of BJP is the convergence of old and new media in this new structured hybrid media logic.

Another important observation that came out of this study is the new role performed by social media as instrument of marketization and professionalization of campaigning of political actors and political organizations. Besides, campaigns and elections, parties and their candidates have increasingly employed social media platforms as strategic specialized campaigning tools in the national election. Campaigns have gradually stopped following an inflexible plan of approach and have begun shaping each element of the campaign with regard to the user responses. Everything that has anything to do with the campaign is taken carefully to make sure it is precisely what people would like to see. Thousands of customised e-mails are circulated, and diverse translations of the campaign website are demonstrated to different groups of people and real-time enhancement is done after examining the reactions. Previously, campaigns would inevitably go in one direction. But as witnessed in the 2014 election campaign of BJP, campaigns now have

the suppleness to reach everyone　and change in any way to strike the correct chord with the public.

Social media have therefore become the context for digital campaigns, the leading space in which election campaigns were fought. Therefore, the issue of data storage, handling, and processing becomes critically important for the future of any given state since everything is becoming virtually integrated and has blurred the lines of public and private realms. Phenomenon like the spread of fake news that is used for spreading fabricated opinions disguised as news through digital media platforms or the increasing stature of giant tech companies like Facebook, Twitter and Google have also become causes of concern for all stakeholders within the digital environment. With the escalation of digital media, the mobilization process has been considerably transformed, and new forms of political participation have emerged that were not possible within the traditional media environment, such as supporting a mobilization online by signing a petition, joining social networks, or cyber-attacks for a good cause or to achieve a political goal. In this age of digital communications technologies, social movements, which often encounter difficulties obtaining space in traditional media, begin by using the new media in order to mobilize support for their cause. The social media technology helps the movements instantly communicate with and mobilize potential supporters worldwide. Once the movement begins gaining visibility, it may get picked up by the traditional media, which has an amplification effect and mobilizes a wider audience, which leads to virality.

Evidently one can argue that technology and platforms give more power to people – power not for the sake of it, but power so that people can participate constructively, power so that people can be heard, power so that people can change things. There are countries and communities where citizens and civil society have taken the lead, and where elected representatives have followed. Where technology has been used to enhance participation and strengthen the democratic process, including deliberation and compromise, without being naïve about the dangers. These start to give us an inkling of where democratic politics could go next.

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