

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE VOTING BEHAVIOUR OF THE PEOPLE OF TAMIL NADU

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ABSTRACT

Social media has emerged as a significant platform for political communication between the people, between the people and their leaders, and between the people and the government. It is an undeniable fact that, in recent years, social media has had a profound influence on the voting behaviour of the people, especially among youth and first-time voters, as evident from recent Assembly and Parliamentary elections. On the other hand, political leaders, by joining hands with political consultants, have reached both urban and rural masses through social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and LinkedIn, thereby significantly influencing voters in favour of their political parties. Further, social media platforms have become effective tools for disseminating political information, shaping public opinion, and enhancing voter participation during elections.

This targeted exposure not only affects how individuals perceive candidates and political issues but also influences their likelihood to vote and their choices in elections. Emotional appeals within social media campaigns are found to be highly effective in mobilizing support and influencing undecided voters. By analysing these digital dynamics, the study highlights how modern democracies are being transformed by online behaviour. Understanding the psychological effects of social media is becoming increasingly essential for political strategists, candidates, and voters navigating the rapidly evolving information environment. The present study seeks to investigate the increasing influence of social media on the voting behaviour of the people and its role in the entire electioneering process, with a particular focus on the behavioural processes that shape political perceptions and political decision-making during elections. Further, the study explores how social media contributes to the formation of echo chambers by reinforcing existing beliefs and filtering information through personalised content.

KEYWORDS: *Social Media, Voters Transformation, Electioneering, Digital Democracy.*

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