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RESEARCH PAPER

Empowering Pakistani Voters: The Role of Social Media in Defeating Electoral Rigging

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to explore the crucial role of social media in combating electoral rigging in Pakistan's most recent elections, focusing on its impact on election outcomes and voter behavior. The study outlined the history of electoral wrongdoings and examines how traditional and social media have transformed Pakistan's political landscape. By analyzing specific instances where digital platforms such as Face and Twitter highlighted irregularities, the paper goes to show how social media can act as a powerful tool for promoting transparency and accountability. Through analyzing a survey that was conducted among voters in Punjab, stratified by age, gender, profession and locality this paper quantifies the effect of social media on political mobilization. The findings reveal a strong correlation between the use of social media and increased political awareness, particularly among young urban voters. Based on these results, the paper recommends measures to further integrate social media into Pakistan's electoral process to foster a more fair and transparent democracy.

| **Keywords:** | Campaign, Elections, Malpractice, Rigging, Social Media |

Introduction

Pakistan's "Pakistan's electoral history is marred by electoral malpractices"(Khan, 2010) . With all other problems, electoral rigging has led to extreme political instability in the past. In a democratic country, a fair and free election is the only way through which people can express their political thoughts, critiques, and goals. Elections free of rigging show the attachment of the masses to the country's political system and its authorities. Consequently, leading to political stability and proper functioning.

To understand electoral rigging efficiently, it is important to understand what elections are free of rigging. A fair election is characterized by certain internationally recognized standards like the right to campaign freely, the freedom to vote for anyone despite race and gender, and the ability to express thoughts and beliefs without any external pressure from any organization/authority. The most sure way of making an election fair is by counting the votes without any involvement of any third party except the election commission (Kesselman et al., 2019).

Electoral rigging is carefully planned out. These activities may relate to the pre-poll, polling day, and post-poll phase of the election. Specifically, the whole process can be compressed down into a four-phased phenomenon: system rigging continues till pre-poll to polling day and post-poll rigging. Responsibility for their origin lies with three key actors in Pakistan: bureaucrats, military, and politicians.

That being said, we can't deny the role social media has played in politics globally, especially in Pakistan. Social media has increased the general population's awareness of the power and importance of voting. In the past, financial constraints forced many people to avoid elections and generally the political process leading up to election. With the unprecedented growth of social media, people can easily participate in the process online. Social media has not only impacted voter turnout significantly but it has allowed to combat electoral rigging by enabling real-time reporting and crowd sourced evidence of irregularities. Also, social media has allowed for increased scrutiny of the electoral processes and has raised mobilization and public awareness against fraud. We can't underestimate the role that social media has played in combating electoral rigging.

Literature Review

Overview of the Electoral Malpractices in Pakistan

Throughout Pakistan's history, the landscape has been characterized by power struggles, electoral malpractices, and high influence of the military and civil bureaucracy leading to constant political instability and challenges in establishing a solid democracy.

Despite the passing of the constitution in 1956, political progress was hindered by bureaucratic intervention and vested interests, eventually leading to martial law by Ayub. Despite the Awami league winning the 1970 election they were refused control of the government eventually leading to the creation of Bangladesh in 1971. Subsequently, Bhutto implemented authoritarian policies. The 1977 election was completely rigged which led to widespread protest and unrest in the country. General Zia imposed martial law and promised elections but delayed them. Surprisingly he held an election but without any party to rule the country for some more time. His sudden death in 1988 led to the return of party-based elections.

In 1988 elections did take place. The elections were organized by ISI. Despite various techniques by the ISI and the Pakistan Army to hinder the power of the PPP it still won a majority of seats at the center. Nevertheless, Benazir was not allowed PM until she accepted the demands of the military. Consequently, Benazir formed the Government amidst strong opposition. Ghulam Ishaq Khan following the footsteps of Zia, dismissed the Government in 1990.

The 1990's were not quite different. It was marked by engineered elections and political manipulation by the military and the presidency. The elections that took place in 1990 between Islamic Democratic Alliance and PPP were not any different. The military establishment went against what the PPP wanted and rigged the election. Fareed, et. al., 2019)Every authority went simply against Benazir. She was accused of extreme allegations. On the polling day, many 'irregularities' and problems created by the establishment turned the result in favor of IDA and Nawaz Sharif became Prime Minister for the first time.

This shows the stark difference between what people actually wanted through their votes and what happened.

Politics and Media in Pakistan

Social media has spearheaded the communication of information extremely faster and more feasible throughout the globe. People use various platforms such as Instagram, Linkedin, TikTok, YouTube, Snapchat, etc to give and take their political

views. Social media has risen as a crucial and influential tool in political affairs given its power of free and fast speech. (Muzaffar, et. al., 2019).The very recent events in Pakistan perfectly epitomize this situation. Increased use of social media platforms like TikTok and Face specifically has extended political deliberation.

The increasing use of social media threatens the conventional mode of politics as one of the important communication venues. It promotes disseminating information and pushes for political debates. The people of Pakistan are anticipating that social media will play a very significant role in promoting change (Muzaffar, et. al.,2020)

Furthermore, social media is a way for Pakistani people to get involved in Politics. It has been observed that social media can have a serious impact on young people's political opinions. Similarly, the media has a significant impact on how political opinions are spread.

In more recent times it has been observed that people in Pakistan are always looking out for new ways to use social media (mainly Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Whatsapp, Youtube, etc.) for political representation and expression that has reasons beyond gossip and mere entertainment. These people are the ones who have been staying away from Politics for long enough. However, as reported by many organizations and institutions, social media platforms appear to represent a new precursor of political expression for them. It also promotes independence and interpersonal interactions, leading to political engagements. Compared to the traditional forms of media such as print and electronic publications, social networking sites are regarded as more efficacious and victorious in disseminating unfiltered information.

By utilizing social media users can know more about current events and their perspectives on different political on goings. It is not surprising that mainstream media in Pakistan, which acts in the wider interest of the political parties that align with them, suppresses, manipulates, or otherwise controls public opinion on important political matters. Social media has allowed young people to express themselves politically on a freeway. Nevertheless, the shift to social media for replicating political material, general knowledge, and information has become increasingly controversial over the past few years.

Since the emergence of social media, specifically in the lives of approximately 50 percent of Pakistan's youth, there has been a growing trend amongst young people to express themselves without any political constraints even on very contentious political issues. One example of how fast information can spread on social media is the case of Mian Muhammad Nawaz Shareef. He, as well as his family, were accused of taking part in money laundering through the use of overseas businesses in the Panama Papers. The news spread like wildfire on social media applications like

Facebook, X, Youtube, Instagram, etc. Using primarily social media it was then requested by the public to Nawaz Sharif that he steps down as the Prime minister of Pakistan. People also requested an investigation into the corruption allegations against Nawaz Sharif. PTI was the party that filed the case in the Supreme Court. PTI used social media effectively to increase awareness about the scandal.

However, with all facilities, social media brings some problems to political grounds as well. Social media has a lot of fake news, misinformation, and false propaganda which keeps on spreading just like any other vicious cycle. Such false

information poses a serious threat to the pillars of democracy and trust in public institutions. Consequently, this makes it difficult to extract facts from figures.

Social media has become a sharp knife for political parties and institutions who may exploit social media platforms to plan out assassinations, engage in structured misinformation, or maybe just manipulate public opinion. These wrong uses of social media can have dire consequences in the real world, especially during times of elections. Politicians and political activists can influence election outcomes and undermine the integrity of the democratic process. Due to advanced scientific technology, there is a serious threat from foreign parties with personal interests and the use of bots and mocking armies to exploit and manipulate the online chaos which further worsens the risks.

Other literature also points towards the indication of a connection between the use of social media and political participation. Still, there is a scarcity in Pakistan in regards to studies related to the use of social media and political sovereignty. Our research is an addition to this scarcity.

The 2018 general elections were full of controversy. The election was declared as "dirtiest, most micromanaged" by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (Shah& Sareen, 2018). The pre-poll manipulation and political engineering hurt equality and tainted the electoral process as a whole. Unsurprisingly, it raised questions about how fair the elections were. The massive disorganization on the voting day, specifically during the voting process, and the unexplained delays in counting simply led to people believing that the election had been rigged. Eventually unfair practices - forcing the smaller parties towards PTI so that it could form a Government in Islamabad and Lahore - strengthened the belief that the whole system including the establishment was working towards the victory of PTI.

In the times running up to the election social media and mainstream media which includes TV stations as well as Newspapers experienced prohibitions and restrictions. For example, Dawn, a leading media brand, was threatened and harassed and its sales were banned in certain areas when it reported meetings with the Civilian Government and army and talked about the rift between the two authorities. Cable operators were forced to take Dawn's TV channels off the air. Consequently, the paper suffered a huge cut down in its revenue after advertisers were forced to stop their marketing. Popular media people were threatened, picked, questioned, and then released. TV outlets that spoke or had spoken against either Imran Khan or the Military Establishment facedrepercussions in certain parts of the country. Jang and Geo News faced financial pressures and intimidation from external authorities due to which they weren't able to pay their staff for 3 months. This stopped until senior journalists reached compromises with the establishment.The more disturbing thing was that the country's legal system was indifferent. It added fuel to the fire by not taking appropriate action against the right people (Muzaffar, et. al., 2018).

Even though the polls lacked integrity, the voting preferences showed some trends that needed to be analyzed. It clearly shows, at least, that the 'deep state' has the power to put one party into the first position which goes to show the continuing power and influence of the establishment. The consequences of Pakistan's politics, democracy, and civilian supremacy are not all that bright. Other than the establishment-driven vote changes, the poll results show significant changes in voter preference, patterns of which were already anticipated on polling day.

Unsurprisingly PTI emerged as the single largest party. However, it was short of seats in the National Assembly. The thing that surprised PTI was the number that ultimately it gained and the locations from where these seats came. When the polling was ending most commentators were saying that PTI would win some 100 seats. But it needed 110-115 seats to form the government. What eventually happened was that independent candidates and smaller parties like PML Q, BNP-M, BAP, and MQM PTI were able to cross the half-mark spot and were able to form their Government.

What was more interesting was the provincial and subregional breakdown of results and what it held for Pakistan years ahead. The PTI won by a big majority in North, KPK, and Southern Punjab.

Moreover, the 2013 Pakistani elections is another example that epitomizes the use of social media, and the awareness it spread generally and in regards to political rigging. In Pakistan, social media has emerged as a relatively young but widely used tool for political campaigning. As a natural outcome of this growth Pakistanis have seen an increase in freedom of opinion and choice, they can express themselves online (Siddiqui, 2021).

Furthermore, social media has promoted hate speech which simply means that the negative points of view related to politicians and parties are increasing online and that includes comments, tweets, and posts made on different social media platforms regarding electoral rigging. During the time frame of 2014-2015, major studies highlighted the fact that at this point the political scene was really at its peak. It was during this period that a campaign regarding poll-rigging was taking place on social media and most political parties were busy spreading hate messages against each other then known as Twitter and now known as X. The 2013 elections set horrendous examples of trolling as well. Videos appeared on social media claiming that voters carrying 'slips' marked with PML-N symbols were being sent back from the polling stations.

Material and Methods

The argument of this paper is based on a quantitative analysis of the findings of survey research conducted for the doctoral thesis of the author. The target population for this study was the registered voters who use social media and reside in the Punjab province of Pakistan. The survey was conducted during March-July 2015 in various areas of Punjab to investigate the role of social media in voting behavior. The sample was stratified by age, gender, qualification, profession, and territory. The sample was designed in such a way as to make it more representative of the Punjab electorate as a whole. The voters were from different areas of Punjab (south, north, and central Punjab). A total of 891 interviews took place from all over Punjab province in Urdu as well as English. In addition to face-to-face interviews, sizable voters were interviewed electronically. As data was collected, the analysis of the data was done through SPSS. The questionnaire was composed of the sections. The first section was reserved to gather the demographic information of the respondents such as age group, gender, qualification, profession, and region. The second section of the questionnaire was made up of a set of close-ended questions to get to the bottom of the argument. Owing to its relatively narrower scope in comparison to the doctoral thesis, this paper does not cover the findings of the whole questionnaire, but we limited the ten most relevant questions to the study. The question interrogates how often people use social media, and to what extent the electoral campaigns launched by political parties through social media influence voting behavior. Moreover, the questionnaire also gathers the opinions of the respondents about the usage of social media, the level of interest, and its impact on the

voting behavior of the respondents. It also gauges the frequency of discussion surrounding determinants of voting behavior on social media and the distribution of information retrieved from social media with family and friends. Then the paper examines whether social media is more imperative than electronic media and if the General Elections 2013 could be considered as the election of 'social media'. Finally, it looks at how social media was used by major Political Parties during electoral campaigns.

Results and Discussion

Table 1
Social Media and Election Campaigns-I

How often do you use Social Media?			To what extent Electoral Campaigns on Social Media influence voting behavior?		
Options	Frequency	Percentage	Options	Frequency	Percentage
Very Often	350	39.3	To great extent	212	23.8
Often	327	36.7	To some extent	439	49.3
Sometimes	156	17.5	Neutral	104	11.7
Rarely	48	5.4	To little extent	98	11.0
Never	10	1.1	Not at all	38	4.3

(Source Ghani, 2018)

Firstly the respondents were asked, how often they use social media. Approximately three-fourths of the respondents said and confirmed that they often used social media. It was not that the rest of the participants did not use social media, it was just that they used social media infrequently. Moreover, to another question that asked the extent electoral campaigns on social media influence voter behaviors, almost one-fourth of the respondents opined that it influences their behavior greatly. Another, almost 50% agreed that social media affects voting behavior but slightly. The rest of the respondents (around one-fourth of the total) remained neutral and suggested that the impact was extremely slight or simply negligible. The findings of these questions were verified by further questions that interrogated the power of social media.

Table 2
Social Media and Election Campaigns-II

Options	Do you agree that Social Media should be used for Election Campaigns?		Do you agree that Social Media plays more vital role than the electronic media for Election Campaigns?		Do you agree that General Elections 2013 were the elections of Social Media?	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	197	22.1	194	21.8	129	14.5
Agree	442	49.6	390	43.8	338	37.9
Neutral	143	16.0	165	18.5	171	19.2
Disagree	76	8.5	107	12.0	191	21.4
Strongly disagree	33	3.7	35	3.9	62	7.0

(Source Ghani, 2018)

The findings presented in Table 2 demonstrate the relevance of social media for the electoral campaign more strongly. The survey now puts forward the question to respondents of whether social media should or should not be used for election campaigns. More than seventy percent of the respondents acknowledge the relevance of social media regarding election campaigns. Sixteen percent remained neutral and approximately twelve percent did not approve of the usage of social media in electoral

campaigns. Then the survey asked whether social media plays a more vital role than electronic or print media for election campaigns. The response to these questions showed that almost two-thirds of the total respondents agreed that social media is more vital than electronic and print media in attracting voters. Then, the survey asked the respondents whether it was appropriate to argue that the General Elections of 2013 were the so-called elections of social media. While responding, more than half of the respondents agreed with this assertion. However, a huge number of respondents didn't agree with this argument. Once the survey approved that social media plays at least some role in election campaigning, the analysis then turns to assess how much voters are keen to learn the political content dispensed by the political parties through social media and how this content may influence voters' choice. Now, Table 3 presents a summary of the results in this regard.

Table 3
Political Contents of the Social Media and Voting Behavior

Category of Social Media	How much interest do you take in the political contents of social media?					How much the information acquired from does social media influence your voting decision?				
	Very Much %	Much %	Somewhat %	Rarely %	Not at all %	Very Much %	Much %	Somewhat %	Rarely %	Not at all %
Facebook	38.3	24.1	16.9	13.4	7.3	41.3	25.0	12.5	7.1	14.1
WhatsApp	24.8	22.6	18.5	13.1	21.0	15.4	19.1	19.5	15.8	30.2
YouTube	25.0	24.8	18.3	13.9	18.0	18.7	18.6	20.2	15.2	27.3
Twitter	15.6	19.8	15.7	16.7	32.2	20.1	22.6	19.1	10.5	27.7
LinkedIn	8.1	12.7	17.3	15.3	46.7	8.5	14.4	24.0	14.3	38.8
Imo	8.2	9.9	16.5	17.1	48.9	5.6	12.1	18.0	17.3	47.0
Viber	15.3	16.5	12.6	17.6	38.0	4.5	11.2	18.1	18.5	47.7
Others	11.1	13.4	18.9	14.1	42.5	6.5	13.0	18.1	18.5	43.9

(Source Ghani, 2018)

Now I was asked to respondents about how much interest they take in political content available to them on certain social media platforms. Clearly, the results show that Facebook is the most popular device used for electoral campaigns on social media. Then, WhatsApp and Youtube were used more frequently for the promotion of different political content on social media. Moreover, Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube appeared as the most used social media platforms when it was asked from respondents that how much usage of social media influenced their voting decision. Approximately two-thirds said that political content shared on Facebook contributed to their voting decisions significantly. Almost similar to Facebook, forty-two percent of respondents agreed that political content shared through Twitter influenced their voting behavior significantly. In addition, nearly forty percent of interviewees stated that the political content shared through the social media platform Whatsapp contributed to their final voting decision given an election. Now, the following section will reveal the frequency of social media related to the 2013 general election and how these debates were extended to family and social meetings. Table 4 provided some crucial data to grasp the spectrum of such debates discussed later.

Table 4
Debating Elections and Social Media

How often the factors involved in voting behavior were discussed on social media in the general elections 2013?	Very often %	Often %	Sometimes %	Rarely %	Never %	To what extent you shared political information acquired from social media with others?	Very often %	Often %	Sometimes %	Rarely %	Never %
Ethnicity	22.2	33.7	21.0	13.6	9.5	Friends/Collea gues	35.7	28.1	15.6	11.2	9.4
Beradrisim	21.9	34.2	23.1	11.7	9.1	Family	25.1	29.7	21.9	16.3	13.0
Personality	30.1	28.2	21.4	12.2	8.1	Peer groups	19.3	20.4	24.4	15.9	20.0
Party affiliation	28.2	32.7	20.7	10.4	8.1	Neighbors	11.9	15.0	22.0	22.7	28.4
Others	24.8	28.3	22.8	14.1	9.9	Others	11.2	12.2	24.0	23.5	29.1

(Source Ghani, 2018)

The findings of this survey clearly show that issues related to electoral politics and voting behavior get massive coverage by social media. Also, the candidates said that they were in debates as well related to voting behavior. More than 50% of respondents also said that they often discussed the role of ethnicity, the candidate's personality, Beradrisim, and party affiliation in voting behavior in Punjab Province. Most respondents said that they discussed the content of political campaigns on social media with their family and friends as well. Not only was the information discussed with family but also with peer groups, neighbors, etc. Moving on, now the paper presents an analysis of social media usage by three major contenders in the Punjab province. Results in Table 5 show that parties profoundly relied on social media to advertise their agendas and programs. They disseminated party slogans and party songs on social media to mesmerize and appeal to the masses. Party candidates also used this platform to convince voters at the local level to strengthen their electoral support at the constituency level.

Table-5
Electoral Campaigns and Social Media: 2013 General Elections

How much information related to political campaigns you acquired from social media for various parties?															
	Pakistan Muslim League-N					Pakistan People's Party					Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf				
	Very Much %	Much %	Somewhat %	Rarely %	Not at all %	Very Much %	Much %	Somewhat %	Rarely %	Not at all %	Very Much %	Much %	Somewhat %	Rarely %	Not at all %
Party Leader	29.2	33.2	16.0	11.1	10.4	29.9	25.5	13.4	16.4	14.9	24.9	16.0	15.4	21.4	22.2
Manifesto	17.6	19.8	20.4	24.5	17.7	28.5	26.6	16.2	16.4	12.3	21.4	18.5	18.1	18.4	23.5
Party Slogans	24.2	21.2	21.5	16.4	16.6	33.8	26.0	14.6	12.5	13.1	21.7	19.0	17.1	18.9	23.2
PartySongs	21.5	21.2	20.2	17.4	19.6	15.5	21.4	15.8	22.4	24.8	20.0	13.0	18.9	20.3	27.8
Candidate	23.9	23.9	21.9	17.4	13.2	31	26.7	16.6	13.1	12.9	20.3	15.9	16.0	20.5	27.0
Others	33.0	29.4	12.9	10	14.7	15.5	11.1	16.3	25.5	31.6	15.9	13.4	20.9	22.2	27.6

(Source Ghani, 2018)

It was also interesting to explore the extent to which the three major parties of Punjab namely, PML-N, PTI,and PP used social media for election campaigns during the 2013 General Elections in Punjab. Information related to political parties' manifesto and their leaders were shared on social media. The results show that the respondents found much information related to party leadership on different social media websites. Majority of respondents stated that they found much more information about Pakistan

Muslim League-N leadership as compared to other parties. However, alot of respondents also gathered information about Pakistan Muslim League-N leadership about PPP and PTI. Political parties present their programs and publish manifestos to attract the electorate and share the party policy position on certain issues important during the elections. Now, parties use social media to promulgate their programs. Whilst the 2013 General Elections, major parties used social media sites extensively to disseminate information related to the party and gather more votes. Decent number of respondents argued that they found much information about party manifestos of PML-N(37%), PPP(42%),and PTI(40%). Major parties in Punjab used party slogans and party songs to attract voters. PPP(65%) continued its lead and proliferated the party slogans more vigorously than either PML-N or PTI. That said, PML-N(43%) distributed more party songs on social media than PPP(37%) and PTI(33%). Different party candidates of different parties also launched election campaigns on social media to convince the voters of their constituencies for support. Specifically, candidates of PPP(58%) appeared more alert to interact with the masses through modern tools related to election campaigns than the candidates of PML-N (48%) and PTI(36%). All in all, the reliance of major parties on social media for election campaigns just goes to show the shift in the election campaign strategies and process. Social media is no doubt used widely in political and social events.

Significant correlations were found among different variables, including age,profession,gender and locality of participants. The surveys results postulates that social media has had the most profound impact on younger population in Pakistan, specifically those in urban areas, who actively engage with digital platforms for political information. These digital media platforms have not only reshaped political awareness but also influenced voter behavior through providing space for open debate, fact-checking, and exposure to diverse viewpoints. Notably, young professionals were found to be the most politically active on social media using it as a freedom tool. In contrast, older age groups and rural populations demonstrated lower levels of engagement with these advanced platforms also highlighting a digital divide in political participation. The data suggests that social media has empowered previously disengaged voters and youth leading to reshapement of electoral dynamics in Pakistan.

Conclusion

The survey involved a close-ended questionnaire to gather the opinion from a carefully designed representative sample. The findings of the survey suggest that social media has accomplished great importance in the field of political campaigning and electoral strategies. The growing relevance of social media around the world has serious implications for the electoral fate of political parties. The findings revealed the immense usage of social media for electoral and political purposes. The survey suggests that Facebook, Whatsapp, YouTube, and Twitter are used commonly for the dissemination of party manifestos, party policy positions, and party slogans. Social media is also often used for the elevation of the image of the Party Leadership and equally for stressing the faults of rival parties. The majority of the respondents who use social media confirmed that they often access the political content available on social media and are seriously influenced by the messages through these contents. These people believe that the debates concerning the voter choice preference are useful and they stretch these debates to the family and their social circles. In doing so, we can say that social media not only contributed to the voting choice decision of users but also non-users. It is worth mentioning that many respondents to the survey argued that social media is more effective than electronic campaigning.

Recommendations

To truly harness the power of social media in combating electoral rigging and strengthening Pakistan's democratic process, important measures need to be taken.

The government and electoral bodies should believe in the fact that social media does play a crucial role in ensuring electoral fairness and transparency. To this end, they should provide smooth access to internet network, especially throughout elections. Suspension of the services does not only disrupt communication but also limits peoples' ability to report irregularities and hold people accountable. Laws and regulation should be introduced which guarantee the right to media platforms during key democratic processes.

Also, civil society organization and independent watchdogs should be bolstered to utilize social media in a efficacious way. The organization should pool in a digital literacy program to educate voters,especially in rural areas, on how to use platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter to report electoral malpractices. By forming a more digitally aware electorate, the public can become active participants in safeguarding their own democratic rights. Additionally, partnerships with tech companies could help in the development of tools and algorithms specifically designed for real-time reporting and verification of electoral issues, ensuring that false reports are minimized while genuine incidents or rigging are addressed promptly and accurately.

Political parties should continue to leverage social media in their campaigns, but with focusing on integrity as well as transparency. The use of AI and data analytics to mobilize support, as seen with past innovative campaigns, should be encouraged, but under a strong framework that ensures transparent conduct. Political parties should sign digital codes of conduct which imply healthy use of media rather than misinformation or digital manipulation.

In all, voter behavior and education remain central to the success of social media in the long run while combating electoral rigging. Digital platforms like Facebook, Instagram have created tons of opportunities for voters to be more informed. To capitalize on this, educational institutions and media outlets should collaborate to provide holistic education through social media. The campaigns should inform voters about their rights while also encouraging them to critically assess information and avoid being swayed by misinformation and propaganda.

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