

## **Electoral Politics in the Era of Digital Media and Political Transformation in Uttar Pradesh**

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### **Abstract**

The swift growth in the realm of digital media has brought about a great deal of change in terms of electoral politics in India, especially for those states which play a major role in influencing the political scenario. Social media, digital campaigning, and political communication have changed the dynamics of the interaction between political parties, their leaders and people who participate in the voting process. This article attempts to analyse the impact of digital media on the electoral politics of Uttar Pradesh, including how digital media has played a part in political communication, campaigning, voter behaviour and political participation. It further analyses the impact of social media platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter) on electoral politics in Uttar Pradesh. The research has been carried out using secondary sources and electoral data to identify how digital politics presents both opportunities and challenges to politicians.

**Keywords:** Digitalisation, Elections, Communication, Social-Media, Behaviour, Participation

### **Introduction**

A rise in the rate of internet connectivity and usage of smartphones has affected socio-political dynamics in India during the last ten years. In today's world, the country is considered to be the most prominent digital society as many citizens can afford smartphones and other devices for connecting to the internet. The deployment of 4G technology facilitated the process (TRAI, 2023). Besides, the implementation of the "Digital India" project boosted digital inclusion and participation even more (Government of India, 2022). Therefore, the digital transformation process has influenced modern Indian politics.

Facebook, X, WhatsApp, Instagram, and YouTube are widely used social media platforms that facilitate the political mobilisation of supporters. Today, many political parties prefer to use digital communication to communicate with citizens (Chadwick, 2017). As a result, digital campaigning, online speeches, digital advertisements, and online messaging changed traditional electoral communication patterns in India.

The replacement of traditional forms of campaign conduct (rallies, poster distribution, and going from house to house) by the digital campaign pattern became noticeable at the elections held recently. Political leaders apply such modern practices as the creation of online narratives, branding, and digital analytics to mobilise people (Manor, 2021). It should be stated that digital communication has become an integral component of modern democracy in India.

It is worth mentioning that the province of Uttar Pradesh holds a key place in Indian electoral politics as it is highly populated and plays a leading role in the Parliament. With 80 Lok Sabha seats, this region's political patterns have a major impact on the outcome of Indian general elections (Election Commission of India, 2024). Moreover, rapid digital growth makes Uttar Pradesh an ideal example of analysing the connection between digital media and electoral transformation in India.

The expansion of internet communication in India took place owing to the development of various online channels and social networks. Facebook, WhatsApp, X, Instagram, and YouTube are frequently used social platforms where political debates take place and where political campaigns are promoted (Banaji & Bhat, 2019). Especially, WhatsApp is popular as it has a wide audience consisting of urban and rural people alike.

Political parties extensively use various digital communication tools to organise and manage campaigns as well as mobilise supporters and communicate with people. In particular, the Bharatiya Janata Party is widely known for utilising digital technologies in campaigns. In addition to that, regional political parties such as the Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party increased their online presence to attract young urban voters (Pal, 2015). Digital platforms have provided political parties with an ability to create narratives and engage in constant communication with supporters.

Another essential factor is that many political strategists use voter databases, analytics, online advertising and social media algorithms to shape political narratives and motivate people. The application of technologies has made it possible for politicians to use voter databases, online analytics, and targeting tools to deliver customised messages to certain communities (Vaidhyanathan, 2018). Thus, elections and campaign conduct in India have changed greatly due to such developments.

## Significance of the Study

The rising role of digital media in electoral politics is becoming a significant area of interest both academically and politically. The advent of digital media has changed the nature of democracy by giving people access to political information, the means to engage in discussions about politics, and the opportunity to communicate directly with their political representatives. The rising importance of digital media in elections necessitates a study into its impact on democracy and political change (Castells, 2012).

Simultaneously, election politics has been heavily relying on narratives online and in social media campaigns. The political parties not only promote their campaign agendas using online mediums but also set political agendas, build images, and appeal emotionally to voters. As a result, the issue of manipulation, deception, and commercialization in online political communication has been brought up (Sunstein, 2018).

Uttar Pradesh serves an ideal case study for researching these phenomena due to its demographic and electoral importance, as well as its rapid rise in the digital space. The political culture prevailing in the region represents larger trends within Indian politics in the digital age. Analysing the political situation in Uttar Pradesh helps better understand the impact of digital media on political engagement and democracy.

## Research Problem

The adoption of digital media in electoral politics has had a positive impact on democratic institutions. It has increased voter turnout by allowing easier access to information. However, social media platforms can be used for propagandizing electoral democracy via emotionality and strategic communication (Tufekci, 2015). In addition, as society relies more heavily on social media channels for political purposes, there is an increasing concern about transparency and democratic accountability.

One of the significant issues that emerge in the use of digital politics is the prevalence of political misinformation and fake news on the internet. With the help of social media websites, any type of unverified information regarding elections and parties gets widely distributed in a matter of minutes, affecting voter decisions. This issue is especially relevant in a politically delicate state like Uttar Pradesh, where elections are heavily impacted by identity politics.

A further important problem of digital politics is the development of a trend of political polarisation on the Internet and ethics in digital electoral campaigns. Cyberbullying, hate speech, unethical gathering of voter data, and misuse of private information are just some of the emerging problems related to the ethical use of online digital platforms in politics (Zuboff, 2019).

### **Research Objectives**

1. To examine the emergence and expansion of digital media in the electoral politics of Uttar Pradesh.
2. To analyse the role of digital platforms in shaping political communication and electoral campaigning.
3. To study the impact of digital media on voter behaviour and political participation in Uttar Pradesh.
4. To identify the challenges associated with digital media in electoral politics, including misinformation, political polarisation, and ethical concerns.

### **Research Methodology**

This study is based on a qualitative and descriptive research methodology using secondary sources of data. The research examines the role of digital media in the electoral politics of Uttar Pradesh through the analysis of books, journal articles, government reports, Election Commission data, newspapers, digital media reports, and academic publications. Statistical data related to internet penetration, social media usage, and electoral performance from 2014–2024 have also been used. The study adopts an analytical approach to understand the relationship between digital media, political communication, voter behaviour, and democratic participation. Relevant theories such as Political Communication Theory and Network Society Theory support the conceptual analysis of the research.

### **Review of Literature**

Castells (2012) discussed the effects of networked communication technologies on the relation between the population, political institutions and democratic participation. According to the author, networked communication tools allowed political activists to engage in various types of political actions, such as quick communication and decentralised information exchanges. This research proved that internet communication was the backbone of modern politics and political elections.

Chadwick (2017) described the "hybrid media system" and showed the way the traditional media and the digital platforms worked together while providing information to the audience. In their work, the authors explained the way social media helped political actors shape their image and win the election campaign together with television channels and newspapers.

Tufekci (2015) provided a detailed analysis of the algorithms' impact on the political dialogue and the democratic process. The research showed that algorithms could intensify emotions and misinformation in the context of politics, as well as the political polarisation. Therefore, the algorithms influenced the public discourse and elections significantly.

Sunstein (2018) considered the issue of ideological echo chambers and fragmentation that occurred due to the presence of social media platforms. According to the author, more and more people got involved into an online environment where certain views were reinforced repeatedly. As a result, people tended to get polarised regarding the democratic system.

Howard and Hussain (2013) discussed the role of the digital communication technologies in mobilizing people to participate in politics. The main focus of this work was made on the potential of social media as a tool that allows protesters and politicians to reach people easily and encourage them to participate actively in political events.

Pal (2015) examined the role of Twitter in political campaigns in India. The author paid much attention to Narendra Modi's political communication and marketing. Social media platforms and political branding played a significant part in motivating young and urban audiences to vote for Narendra Modi.

Udupa (2018) provided a detailed analysis of the way online communities mobilized people for political actions in India. The author considered the case of online activists who promoted their views among other social media users through social media platforms.

Banaji and Bhat (2019) discussed the spread of misinformation and rumours related to politics in India. The researchers showed that unverified information about political figures was shared on WhatsApp platforms frequently.

### **Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

**Theory of Political Communication:** This theory studies the effects of media on political behaviour, public opinion, and democracy. In today's digital world, social media applications like Facebook, WhatsApp, X (Twitter), Instagram, and YouTube have emerged as effective means of political communication as these applications help politicians interact with voters (McNair, 2017). Digital campaigning plays an integral role in promoting political communication in India's most populated state, Uttar Pradesh. Political campaigns in Uttar Pradesh rely heavily on online campaigning for spreading political messages and influencing voter behaviour.

Agenda Setting Theory is one of the major approaches proposed under this theory by McCombs and Shaw (1972). According to this perspective, while the media does not necessarily determine what people think about, it plays a critical role in determining what people think about. Political campaigns use trending hashtags, online video messages, and other means to engage citizens in discussion about different topics of importance during election periods. Campaigns conducted through digital networks in Uttar Pradesh cover different themes ranging from development, religion, caste, nationalism, and welfare programs.

**Network Society Theory:** Network Society Theory is proposed by Manuel Castells to explain how digital networking impacts societies. According to Castells (2010), information spreads rapidly in interconnected networks, affecting the functioning of political institutions and participation of citizens in different forms. The theory applies to the current scenario where political communication in Uttar Pradesh takes place via WhatsApp, social media pages, and volunteer networks of political parties.

Citizens are also active participants in political communication in this digital era where people participate in the political discussion through different types of political information and communication on these networks. However, political communication in digital networks faces several challenges in the form of misinformation, fake news, and polarisation.

The research examines the association between digital communication, political communication, and voter behaviour in the state of Uttar Pradesh. On one hand, digital media positively affects political awareness and voter participation through political communication while online campaigns and political communication contribute to misinformation and polarisation.

### **Emergence and Expansion of Digital Media in Uttar Pradesh Politics**

In recent years, there has been a significant rise in internet connectivity and smartphone utilization among the people of Uttar Pradesh. The affordable availability of smartphones and low-cost mobile internet data, as well as the expansion of 4G networks, have made internet usage much easier for both urban and rural communities of the state. As per the latest estimates of the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI, 2023), Uttar Pradesh ranks at the top for having one of the highest internet users in India. Millions of active mobile internet users engage in digital interactions and social networking in the state.

Digital India scheme and expansion of telecom services played an essential role in increasing internet usage throughout rural and semi-urban areas of the state. As per the data of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI, 2023), internet connections across India surpassed 900 million, which was a significant contribution from Uttar Pradesh owing to its huge population size. With rising digital literacy rates, along with cheaper

internet packs introduced by Reliance Jio, many more individuals could access social media in the lower socio-economic classes and amongst youth groups.

Although, despite fast expansion, a huge gap still exists between rural and urban areas regarding internet infrastructure, availability of smartphones, and digital literacy in Uttar Pradesh. But political communication in rural areas is also gradually shifting towards online media platforms such as WhatsApp groups, YouTube video, and political campaigns via mobile phones. Thus, the gradual inclusion of digital technology has increased the scope of online political communication among various social groups in the state (Nielsen, 2022).

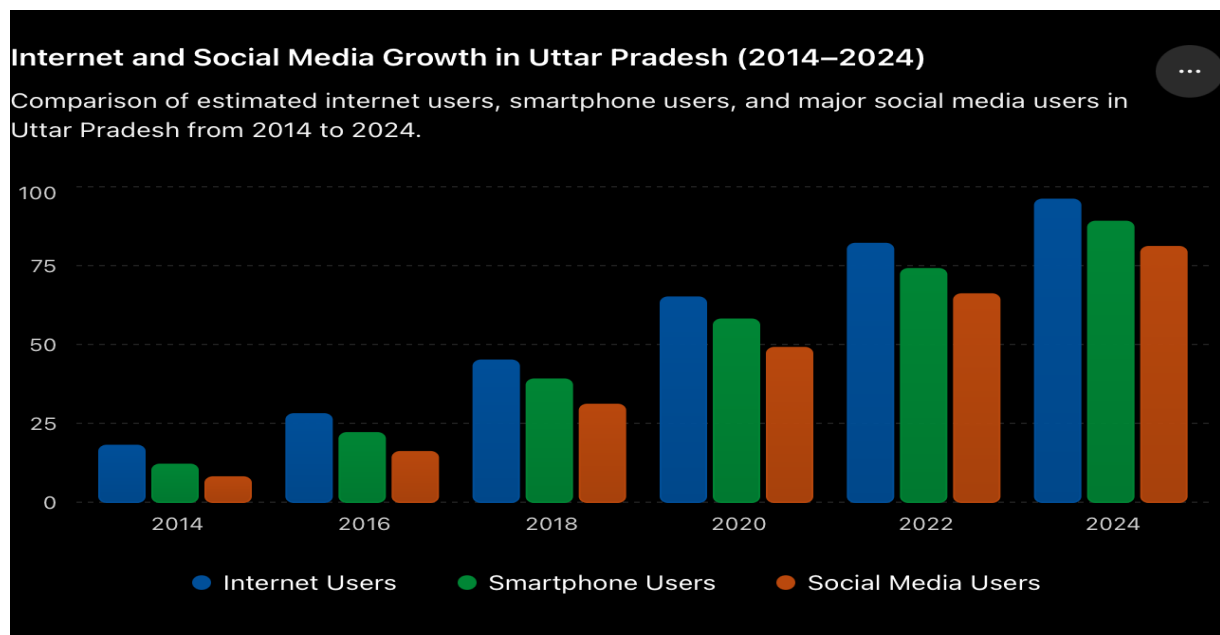
The below table 1 and Figure 1 shows a significant increase in internet, smartphone, and social media users in Uttar Pradesh between 2014 and 2024, reflecting rapid digitalisation across the state. This expansion has created a larger online audience, enabling digital media to become an increasingly important tool for political communication, electoral campaigning, and voter engagement.

Table 1: Growth of Internet and Social Media Usage in Uttar Pradesh (2014–2024)

Year	Estimated Internet Users (Million)	Smartphone Users (Million)	Major Social Media Users (Million)
2014	18	12	8
2016	28	22	16
2018	45	39	31
2020	65	58	49
2022	82	74	66
2024	96	89	81

Source: IMAI Reports (2023), TRAI Performance Indicators (2023), Statista Digital Reports (2024).

Figure 1: Expansion of Digital Media Users in Uttar Pradesh (2014–2024)



(Generated by Chatgpt)

With the emergence of digital media, social media has become a vital medium of political communication in Uttar Pradesh. Among various social media platforms, WhatsApp remains an immensely powerful platform for political mobilization due to its widespread reach in rural areas. WhatsApp group channels created for political parties allow the circulation of election-related content such as speech clips, campaign messages, posters, and videos (Banaji & Bhat, 2019).

Alongside, Facebook is another social media platform utilized as a major tool for political campaigning. Political parties conduct Facebook Live sessions and political campaign videos to address their supporters. Also, they use political posts and sponsored advertisements to reach out to potential voters. Various digital campaigns run on Facebook during recent elections in Uttar Pradesh have focused heavily on visual messaging.

YouTube can also be considered a highly influential social media channel for political communication. Political speeches, interviews, debates, campaign songs, and election advertisements gather massive traction among YouTube viewers. Political vloggers as well as independent YouTube channels play a key role in opinion building by covering election events and government decisions (Mohan, 2021).

Amongst newer social media platforms Instagram and short-video sharing platforms such as TikTok have gained immense popularity, particularly among younger voters. Young political leaders use reels, short videos, and memes to connect with young voters, as well as collaborate with political influencers.

**Digitalisation of Political Parties:** There has been an increased utilisation of information technology (IT) and social media strategies on the part of the political parties in UP. The BJP is well known for establishing a very systematic digital infrastructure encompassing IT wings, social media activists, online influence persons, and campaigning through data analysis. The party has extensively employed digital reach in the 2014, 2019, and 2024 elections, whereby promoting various leadership discourses, welfare schemes, and nationalist campaigns.

The SP party also enhanced its online presence, especially among youth and urban populations. Akhilesh Yadav's social media activities involved heavy use of social media such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and Instagram in communicating with his voters. This was an effective way of enhancing the online presence of the party among young and educated voters.

The BSP, which had been less digitalised compared to other political parties in previous elections, started utilising digital networks through social media presence and online campaigning in the last elections. The Congress Party and a number of other regional political entities in UP started using digital methods such as virtual rallies, advertisements, and social media activities for the elections.

### **Digital Platforms and Electoral Campaigning**

The usage of digital platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram, and X has transformed the process of election campaigning in Uttar Pradesh as it allows political parties to engage with voters without depending solely on the physical aspects such as rallies, putting up posters and door-to-door campaigning. It is fast, cheap and personalized (Chadwick, 2017).

Hash-tags, memes, short clips, reels and content generated through influencers have become part and parcel of election campaigns. Meme culture in politics helps politicians to communicate their message emotionally to people and make it easily understandable even by the youth. Narratives that center on welfare programs, leadership, caste, nationalism, development and similar issues take center stage during election campaigns (Pal, 2015).

WhatsApp has played an important role in election campaign for political parties in Uttar Pradesh because it is popular amongst rural and semi-urban populace. Political parties use group chats on WhatsApp to communicate speeches, videos, posters and vote reminders at booth level. Community campaigning and targeting particular castes, religion, youth and local voters are now common practice (Banaji & Bhat, 2019).

Voter data analysis and digital advertisement have become crucial aspects of political campaigning. In addition, the political parties utilize the voter database, online trends and online advertising to find out voter preferences.

Usage of artificial intelligence, social media monitoring and dashboard campaigning is becoming common practice (Kreiss, 2016).

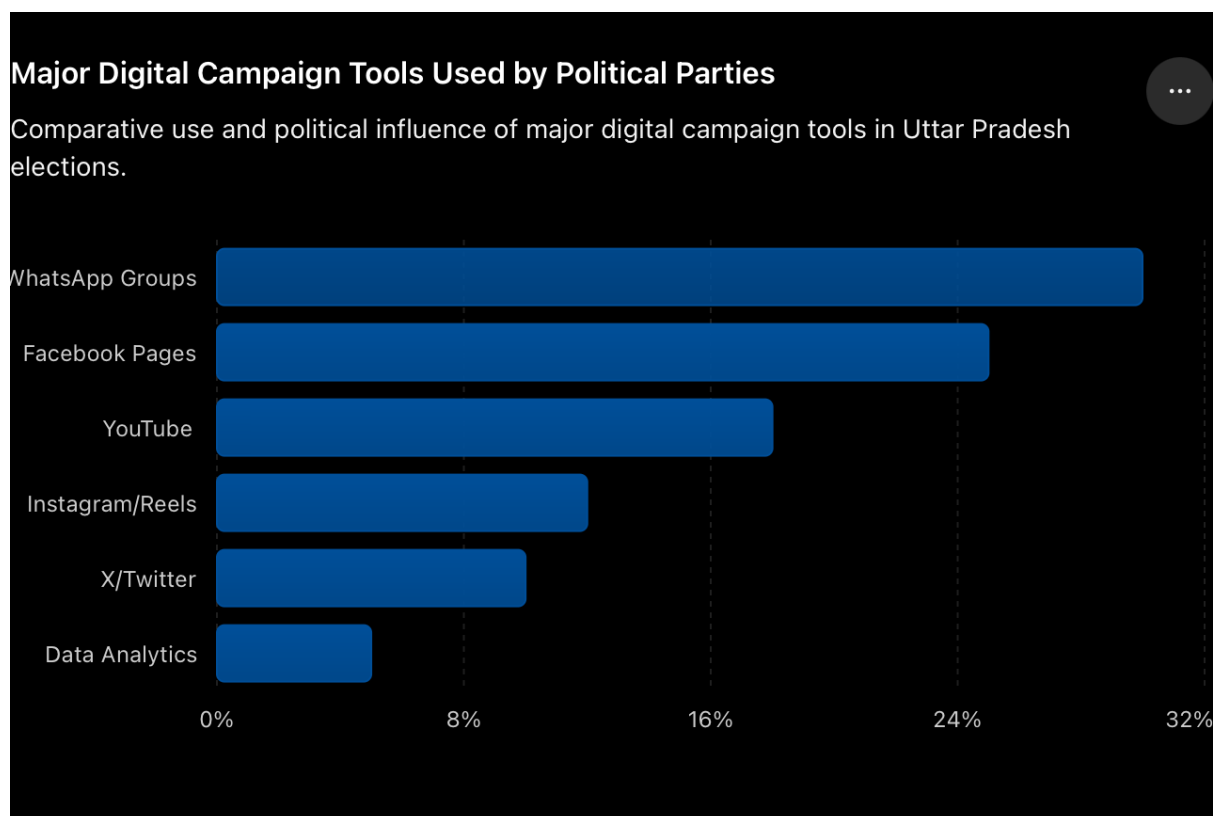
The political leaders are the driving force behind the digital campaigning. Digital leadership style of Narendra Modi has been critical for BJP, while Akhilesh Yadav uses his social media accounts for youth and urban voters. The regional political leaders also use digital platforms for increased outreach and quick reaction to political events (Jaffrelot, 2021).

The table 2 and Figure 2 highlights that political parties increasingly rely on diverse digital tools to communicate with voters, mobilise support, and shape political narratives. Platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and YouTube have become essential for voter outreach, while data analytics enables targeted and more effective electoral campaigning.

**Table 2: Major Digital Campaign Tools Used by Political Parties**

Digital Tool	Use in Campaigning	Political Impact
WhatsApp Groups	Booth-level mobilisation and message sharing	Direct voter contact
Facebook Pages	Live speeches, campaign posts, advertisements	Wider public outreach
YouTube	Speeches, interviews, campaign songs	Visual political persuasion
Instagram/Reels	Short videos and youth engagement	Youth mobilisation
X/Twitter	Hashtags and rapid political response	Agenda-setting
Data Analytics	Voter profiling and strategy planning	Targeted campaigning

**Figure 2. Major Digital Campaign Tools Used by Political Parties**



**Impact of Digital Media on Voter Behaviour and Political Participation**

Digital media has made voters in Uttar Pradesh politically aware because it provides quick access to political addresses, manifestoes of political parties, debates on political policies, and election news. The use of digital media means that voters do not solely rely on traditional media like newspapers and television; rather, they get political content from digital platforms including social media feeds, WhatsApp forwards, YouTube channels, and online political discussion forums (Nielsen, 2022).

The youth and new voters make up the biggest users of digital political content. They participate in politics in digital media through posting political content, commenting, following political figures, viewing political videos, and joining political debates. Through such forms of digital participation, political opinion formation happens even before voters get to the polling booths (DataReportal, 2025).

Voter mobilization is enhanced through digital media in that there are election awareness campaigns, online appeals for participation in elections, voting reminders, and party-driven digital mobilization drives. However, such involvement is not always objective since the digital political content relies on emotions, identity, caste, religion, and other socio-political factors (Sunstein, 2018).

Digital media influences voter behavior through shaping perception and political emotions. Consistent viewing of videos, reading of messages, and exposure to political advertisement leads to voter loyalty or preference changes. Political perceptions around political leadership, welfare schemes, unemployment, law and order, caste identity, and nationalism determine voters' decisions in Uttar Pradesh (Reuters, 2024).

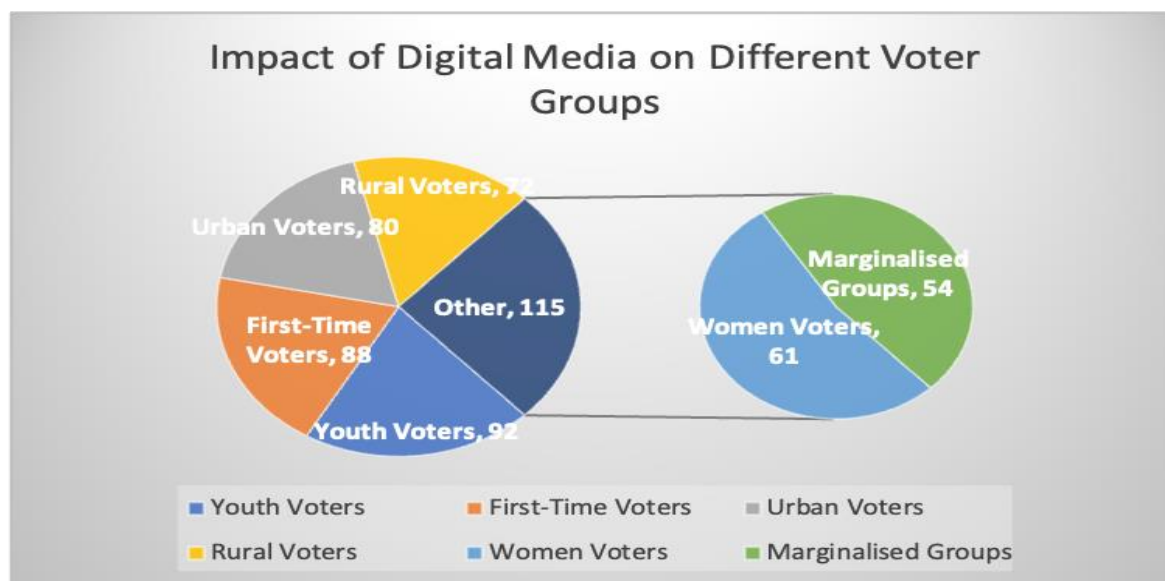
Women and minority groups have found their way into digital politics mainly via smartphones and political discussion groups. Yet, not all people are equally connected to digital media based on literacy, gender, economic class, and limited internet coverage in rural areas. In that regard, digital media enhances participation in politics but reveals socio-economic disparities (TRAI, 2023).

The table 3 and Figure 3 indicates that digital media influences different voter groups in distinct ways, with youth and first-time voters being the most actively engaged through online political content and social media interactions. It also demonstrates that digital platforms have expanded political participation among women, rural communities, and marginalised groups, although disparities in digital access continue to exist.

**Table 3: Impact of Digital Media on Different Voter Groups**

<b>Voter Group</b>	<b>Digital Media Impact</b>
Youth Voters	Higher online engagement, reels, memes, and political debates
First-Time Voters	Exposure to leaders, campaigns, and election information
Women Voters	Access to welfare-related information and political messaging
Rural Voters	WhatsApp-based mobilisation and local campaign communication
Marginalised Groups	Increased visibility but limited by digital access barriers
Urban Voters	Greater exposure to digital advertisements and issue-based debates

Figure 3. Impact of Digital Media on Different Voter Groups



(Made by Author)

### Challenges and Ethical Concerns in Digital Electoral Politics

Misinformation is one of the most common challenges that digital political elections pose. The spread of fake news, modified videos, misleading posts, and rumours increases dramatically during the election period. Fake information spreads in the form of messages via social media platforms, such as WhatsApp (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017).

Another problem of digital political elections is polarisation. Algorithms tend to expose users to content similar to what they have already viewed. Caste-based, communal, and religious discourse in Uttar Pradesh may increase due to repeated exposure to such content (Sunstein, 2018).

Data privacy is another significant problem that emerges during digital political elections. The collection, analysis, and use of voter data by different political campaigns are common. Data privacy involves many ethical considerations such as consent, misuse, monitoring, and manipulation in the election process (Zuboff, 2019).

Trolling, hate speech, and harassment in general are issues that affect the quality of political debates. Opponents, journalists, activists, and regular citizens who are involved in political discussions may suffer from such activities and feel intimidated by the other side (Udupa, 2018).

In response to such problems, the Election Commission of India has set certain rules for using social media, making political advertisements, and following the Model Code of Conduct. However, such attempts at controlling the situation meet several challenges, including rapid distribution of content across different sources and platforms (Election Commission of India, 2024).

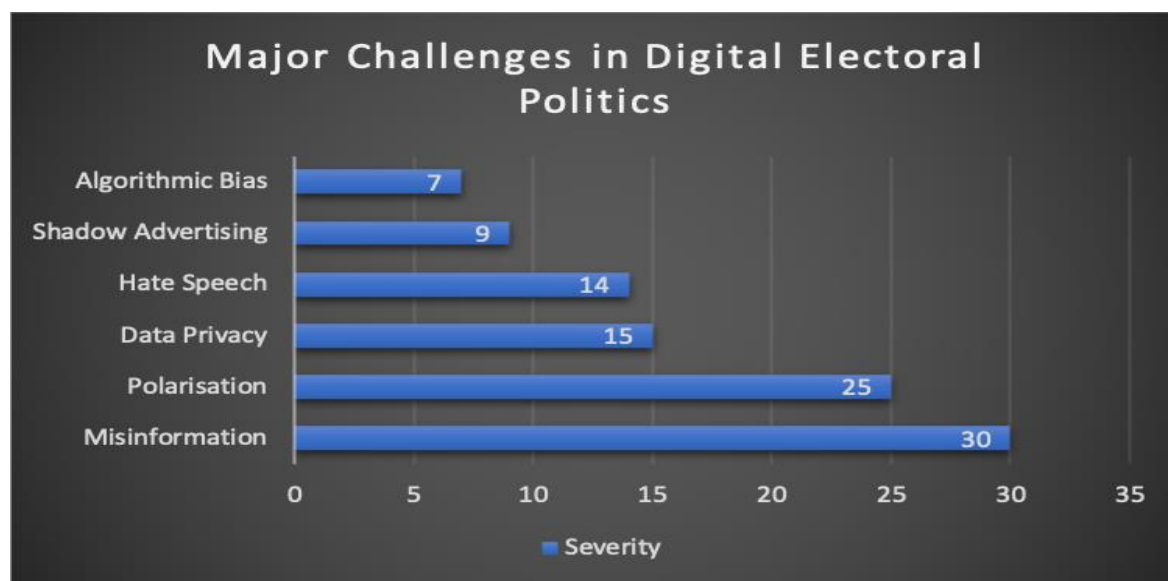
The table 4 and figure 4 highlights that while digital media has enhanced political communication, it has also created significant challenges for democratic processes. Issues such as misinformation, political polarisation, data privacy concerns, and hate speech can influence voter perceptions, reduce transparency, and undermine informed democratic participation.

**Table 4: Major Challenges in Digital Electoral Politics**

Challenge	Description	Democratic Concern
Misinformation	Fake news and manipulated content	Misleading voters
Polarisation	Caste, religious, and ideological division	Weakens social harmony

Challenge	Description	Democratic Concern
Data Privacy	Use of voter data and profiling	Ethical concerns
Hate Speech	Online abuse and trolling	Reduces democratic debate
Shadow Advertising	Unofficial political promotion	Lack of transparency
Algorithmic Bias	Selective visibility of content	Distorted public opinion

**Figure 4: Types of Digital Electoral Challenges in Uttar Pradesh**



**(Made by Author)**

**Electoral Data and Political Transformation in Uttar Pradesh**

The Indian state with the greatest electoral weightage is Uttar Pradesh, since it is composed of 80 members of Lok Sabha. The BJP has done extremely well in these two general elections due to organisation, leadership, welfare communication, and digital campaigning. However, the 2024 Lok Sabha elections indicate that the INDIA coalition has made considerable progress and proved that digital hegemony does not always translate into an electoral win (Election Commission of India, 2024).

In assembly elections as well, political transformation can be witnessed. The BJP won 312 seats in Uttar Pradesh Assembly in 2017 elections, the Samajwadi Party won 47 seats, BSP 19, and Congress won 7 seats. In the year 2022, BJP managed to remain the party in power winning 255 seats, however the Samajwadi Party increased their seats to 111 (Election Commission of India, 2022).

Digital campaigning seems to aid in making successful electoral campaigns since they help increase communication, visibility, and voter turnout. The BJP has had an extremely organised digital machinery. But even in the case of opposition parties, digital campaigning is expanding as the Samajwadi Party's digital campaigns focusing on youth issues, caste politics, unemployment, and PDA politics gained prominence post 2022 elections and pre 2024 elections (Reuters, 2024).

Digital discourses in Uttar Pradesh politics revolve around identity politics and developmental politics. BJP uses nationalist discourse in elections and speaks about welfare delivery, law and order, and leadership in its digital campaigns. The opposition parties speak about caste justice, unemployment, constitutional rights, and social representation in their digital media campaign strategies (Jaffrelot, 2021).

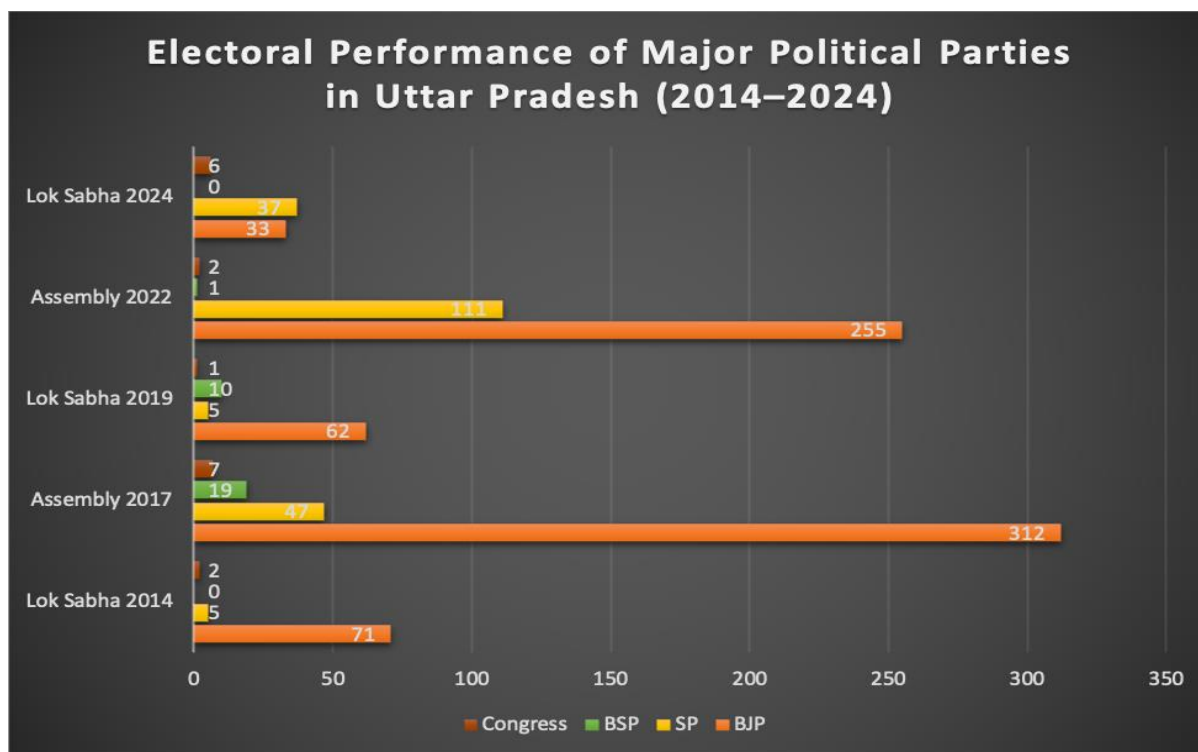
The below table 5 and figure 5 shows that the BJP remained the dominant political force in Uttar Pradesh from 2014 to 2022, achieving significant victories in both Lok Sabha and Assembly elections. However, the 2024 Lok

Sabha election reflects a more competitive political environment, with the Samajwadi Party and its allies improving their performance and challenging BJP's electoral dominance.

Table 5: Electoral Performance of Major Political Parties in Uttar Pradesh

Election	BJP	SP	BSP	Congress	Notes
Lok Sabha 2014	71	5	0	2	BJP dominance
Assembly 2017	312	47	19	7	BJP formed government
Lok Sabha 2019	62	5	10	1	BJP retained dominance
Assembly 2022	255	111	1	2	BJP returned to power
Lok Sabha 2024	33	37	0	6	INDIA alliance improved

Figure 5. Electoral Performance of Major Political Parties in Uttar Pradesh



(Made by Author)

### Findings and Analysis

Based on the conducted research, it can be said that digital media has drastically changed the electoral politics in Uttar Pradesh by changing political communication, campaign techniques, voter mobilisation, and democratic participation. The development of internet connectivity, increased number of smartphones, and social networking sites have allowed political parties to communicate with their electorate both in cities and villages. In addition, digital campaigning has become less dependent on conventional political means and has provided political actors with a more constant and technologically-oriented process.

The most significant finding obtained during the research is the increased connection between digital media and political transformation in Uttar Pradesh. Modern political parties actively use various internet sites such as Facebook, WhatsApp, X (Twitter), YouTube, and Instagram to create political discourses, to promote political

leadership, and to mobilise the electorate. Furthermore, digital communication has become an important part of the electoral process since it allows political actors to set the agenda and persuades citizens. Moreover, the increased amount of online political activity has been noticed due to easier access to political information.

In addition, the study revealed that digital media has positively influenced democratic participation. Through increased political awareness and active communication, digital media provides a platform for citizens to discuss, engage in various campaigns, and perform different types of online political activities. Young population takes a special role since they are actively using social media to participate in political discussions. Political leaders and political parties communicate with electorate through social media platforms thus providing higher involvement of the latter in electoral politics.

Furthermore, digital media has created certain risks for democracy. Such issues as misinformation, fake news, hate speeches in social media, algorithm-driven polarisation, online political trolling pose serious threats during the election process. Besides, such features as communal violence, caste politics, and ideological polarisation have increased in the context of social media due to emotional content posted on such websites. The issue of misuse of voter data, targeted political advertisements, and inadequate regulation poses certain risks for ethics of democratic participation.

Finally, the study showed that the presence of a certain digital influence is not enough for electoral success. Although successful digital outreach increases political mobilisation and visibility, electoral victories still depend on social alliances, caste relations, welfare politics, leadership, and party organisation. Therefore, digital media represents an influential political device rather than a substitute for conventional political processes.

## Conclusion

To conclude, it is necessary to note that digital media has become a revolutionary power in the electoral politics of Uttar Pradesh. Increased connectivity, usage of smartphones, and availability of social networking sites have transformed political communication, campaign approaches, and voter mobilisation. Digital media plays an important role for political parties as they actively use these resources to form political discourses and mobilise electorate. Thus, electoral politics in Uttar Pradesh becomes more interactive and technology-dependent.

The study has shown that digital platforms allow strengthening democratic participation as they provide easy access to political information and contribute to higher participation in online activities. Moreover, the development of social media provides a wide range of opportunities for people to become more politically aware and engage in discussions and campaigns. Social media allows direct communication between political leaders and electorate.

Nevertheless, the future of electoral politics in Uttar Pradesh is connected with certain risks. First of all, the rapid growth of misinformation, fake news, online hate speeches, algorithm-driven polarisation represents challenges to democratic values and election process itself. Secondly, digital surveillance and misuse of voter data raises issues of privacy and transparency. These issues demonstrate that although digital media promotes democratic participation, it may threaten its ethics and principles. Thus, the role of digital media in electoral politics in Uttar Pradesh will continue to increase in the future. Political parties will continue to use advanced artificial intelligence, social media platforms, and data-driven campaign techniques. It is necessary to ensure the promotion of ethical behaviour of political actors, development of appropriate legislation, and implementation of fact-checking policies to ensure the integrity of democratic participation.

## Author Contributions

Akhil Yadav contributed to the conceptualization of the study, review of literature, collection and analysis of data, interpretation of findings, and preparation of the manuscript. Dr. Showkat Ahmad Dar, as the Corresponding Author and Research Supervisor, provided academic supervision, methodological guidance, critical evaluation of the research design, interpretation of results, and substantive revisions to the manuscript. Both authors contributed to the overall development of the study, reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript, and accept responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, and scholarly quality of the research.

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