MS Research Thesis

ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND WOMEN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION: A CASE STUDY OF DISTRICT DIR LOWER

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Dedication

For the women of Dir Lower and everywhere, who prove that change begins with courageous women

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful,*I begin with gratitude to the Almighty Allah for His boundless blessings that have guided and sustained me throughout my journey. It is through His divine providence* that I encountered pivotal moments that shaped my academic success. At every juncture, it is Allah who bestowed upon me patience and confidence to pursue my Master of Science degree in my chosen field.

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ABSTRACT

This research discusses the pivotal role of social media in enhancing the awareness of women regarding their political rights, focusing on a case study conducted in District Lower Dir. In recent years, social media platforms have emerged as powerful tools for disseminating information and facilitating dialogue on various societal issues, including gender equality and political participation. This case study delves into the specific context of District Lower Dir, where traditionally, women have faced substantial barriers to engaging in political processes due to cultural norms and limited access to information. The study explores how the proliferation of social media platforms has bridged some of these gaps, enabling women to access information about their political rights, engage in political discourse, and connect with like-minded individuals and organizations advocating for gender-inclusive political participation. Through surveys, interviews, and content analysis, this research examines the impact of social media on the awareness levels, political engagement, and empowerment of women in District Lower Dir. The findings shed light on the transformative potential of social media in advancing women's political rights and contribute valuable insights for policymakers, activists, and researchers working to promote gender equity in political arenas.

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1.   INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of the Study

Women are regarded as having the same spiritual value and moral obligations as males in Islamic beliefs. Islam promotes the values of justice, equality, and respect while emphasizing the dignity, rights, and well-being of women. Islamic doctrines support women's participation in school, the workforce, and civic life. Women have the right to pursue employment, manage property, and participate in decision-making.

The status of women in Pakistani society has been influenced by a variety of variables, including cultural traditions, traditional conventions, and socioeconomic difficulties, despite the existence of these principles. Women's access to education, healthcare, career prospects, and involvement in public life has frequently been hampered by patriarchal structures, deeply ingrained customs, and discriminatory behaviours. Gender disparities, societal injustices, and a low representation of women in leadership positions are the results of this.

In Pakistan, initiatives have been taken to solve these issues and raise the status of women. Enhancing women's protection and advancing gender equality are the goals of legal reforms including the Protection of Women's Rights Act, which was passed in 2006, and the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, which was passed in 2016. In addition, government programs, civil society groups, and grassroots movements have made substantial contributions to advancing women's rights, helping, and advancing gender mainstreaming in a variety of fields.

Pakistani society has placed a greater emphasis on the inclusion and participation of women in a variety of fields as a result of its growing awareness of the significance of gender equality and women's empowerment. The education and literacy rates for women have increased, and more women are joining the workforce and starting their own businesses. With designated seats for women in legislative bodies at the national and provincial levels, women have made progress in political representation as well.

Gender inequality and restricted political participation of women have long been issues of global concern, particularly in conservative and patriarchal societies. District Lower Dir in Pakistan is emblematic of such challenges, where traditional norms, cultural barriers, and limited access to information have historically constrained women's involvement in

political processes. In such contexts, the emergence and widespread use of social media platforms have provided a unique avenue for information dissemination and political engagement, potentially bridging some of these gaps and fostering greater awareness among women regarding their political rights.

The district of Lower Dir is found in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Situated in the Malakand Division, the district has borders with Upper Dir to the north, Chitral to the west, and Swat to the east. The town of Timergara is home to the district office. Lower Dir spans 1,582 square kilometers and is a hilly area. The elevation of the area varies between 200 and 5,000 meters above sea level. According to the area Profile - Lower Dir. (2018), the area is renowned for its breathtaking scenery, verdant woods, and picturesque mountains.

District Lower Dir, located in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan, has been known for its conservative societal norms, where gender roles have traditionally been highly differentiated. Historically, women in this region have faced substantial obstacles in accessing education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, let alone actively participating in the political arena. Patriarchal structures, coupled with limited mobility and economic independence, have created a substantial gender divide, making it challenging for women to exercise their political rights or even be aware of them.

Political rights, including the right to vote and stand for election, are fundamental pillars of democracy. However, in many parts of the world, including District Lower Dir, women's political participation remains disproportionately low. Cultural norms and societal expectations often limit women's involvement in politics, perpetuating a gender bias in political representation and decision-making processes. Addressing this imbalance is not only a matter of justice but also essential for effective governance and the realization of gender equality.

The 21st century has witnessed an unprecedented proliferation of social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp, which have become integral to modern communication. These platforms enable individuals to connect, share information, and engage in public discourse on a global scale. For women in conservative and remote areas like District Lower Dir, social media can serve as a window to the world, offering opportunities to access information, express their views, and connect with like-minded individuals and organizations advocating for gender equity and political rights.

Studies conducted in various parts of the world have highlighted the transformative potential of social media in advancing women's rights and political participation. Social media platforms can provide a safe and accessible space for women to discuss and learn about political issues, mobilize support, and challenge traditional gender norms. They offer a platform for raising awareness about women's political rights, disseminating information about elections and candidates, and organizing campaigns to promote gender-inclusive political processes. However, the impact of social media in conservative and patriarchal regions like District Lower Dir remains an understudied area

Despite the increasing importance of social media in shaping political awareness and participation, there is a paucity of research specifically focused on its role in advancing women's political rights in regions marked by gender disparities and conservative values. This research aims to address this critical gap by conducting a comprehensive case study in District Lower Dir, Pakistan

1.2   Problem Statement

In District Lower Dir, women have historically faced significant obstacles when it comes to actively participating in the political processes, largely attributed to cultural norms, limited access to information, and prevailing gender disparties. Despite ongoing efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, there remains a critical gap in understanding the potential impact of social media in augmenting awareness among women regarding their political rights within this specific geographic context. The problem statement thus revolves around the need to investigate the extent to which social media platforms are serving as catalysts for increasing awareness and engagement among women with respect to their political rights in District Lower Dir. This research seeks to identify the challenges and opportunities presented by social media, ultimately aiming to inform strategies and policies that can enhance women's political participation and gender inclusivity in this region.

1.3   Significance of the Study

The significance of researching the "Role of Social Media and Women Political Participation: A Case Study of District Lower Dir" is multi-faceted and crucial. Firstly, District Lower Dir, like many other regions, grapples with entrenched gender inequalities and limited women's participation in politics, making it emblematic of broader challenges faced by women in political spheres. Secondly, the advent of social media has ushered in a transformative era of information dissemination and communication, potentially Role of

Social Media and Women Political Participation: A case study of District Lower Dir the playing field for women who have historically been marginalized. Understanding how social media impacts awareness and engagement regarding political rights for women in this context can offer insights applicable to other similar regions. Additionally, such research is vital for policymakers and activists aiming to craft tailored strategies for gender-inclusive political participation, harnessing the power of social media as a tool for empowerment. Ultimately, this study has the potential to contribute not only to academic discourse but also to the practical advancement of gender equity and democratic participation in District Lower Dir and beyond.

1.4   Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the research:

1. To identify the extent to which women in Lower Dir use social media for political purpose.
2. To explore the challenges and barriers that women in Lower Dir face in accessing and using social media for political participation.
3. To understand how women in Lower Dir use social media for political participation.

1.5   Research Questions

This dissertation intends to seek answers of following research questions:

Questions:

1. What is the level of social media use among women in Lower Dir for political purpose?
2. How do different elements affect women's use of social media for political involvement in Lower Dir?
3. How do women use social media in promoting their political participation?

1.6.   Literature Review

The rise of social media in recent years has completely changed the way that people engage in politics by giving them a vibrant platform on which to express their thoughts, organize groups, and take part in democratic processes. For women, whose political participation has historically been impacted by a variety of societal, cultural, and institutional barriers, this paradigm shift is especially important. With a particular focus on District Dir

Lower, this literature review investigates the relationship between women's political involvement and social media. Comprehending the impact of social media on women's participation in this particular area is essential to deciphering the complex relationships that shape political conversation and behaviour in the area.

The global conversation over social media's influence on political engagement highlights how revolutionary these platforms can be in promoting inclusivity and elevating the voices of those who are disadvantaged. Previous research has examined the ways in which social media serves as a trigger for political activism, awareness-raising, and mobilization, thereby upending established power hierarchies. Nonetheless, the scholarly literature also concedes the presence of digital differences and the possibility of online environments perpetuating offline disparities. In light of women's political participation in District Dir Lower, this review will critically analyze these issues and provide insights into how social media may either strengthen or weaken current barriers to women's active participation in politics.

Furthermore, gender differences in political engagement are regularly brought up in the literature, highlighting how critical it is to address women's underrepresentation in political processes. Women's political participation is frequently hampered by institutional barriers, cultural expectations, and traditional conventions. Specifically focusing on District Dir Lower, this review aims to dissect the regional obstacles that women encounter and investigate how social media might act as a catalyst for change in order to surmount these obstacles. The utilization of a case study technique guarantees a comprehensive comprehension of the distinct sociocultural and political milieu of District Dir Lower, providing significant perspectives that can influence scholarly discussions and pragmatic measures intended to promote women's political engagement in this particular area.

The mixed cultural backgrounds of Pakistani women in all four provinces—which are further separated into rural and urban areas—mean that there is no uniformity in their legal position. But as time went on and society evolved to embrace contemporary ideals, women started to recognize their place in the community. But women continued to live in a tense social context in both rural and urban places. (Zafar, 1991).

KPK has a unique social structure because pukhtoons follow strange ancient customs. Women behave in this way according to tradition. Due to the unique laws and codes of honor

that this culture upholds, women are viewed as the embodiment of family honor and are even expected to give their lives in order to preserve that honor. (Bokawee,M.A .S, 2006).

Pukhtoon consider it their primary responsibility to protect their ladies since they are sensitive individuals who value the family name and poise of their women. Something as little as a suspicious glance in that way might spark tremendous violence and carnage. Pukhtoon society has very high moral standards, and there are relatively few instances of moral turpitude. Furthermore, the pukhtoon are so protective of their women's modesty and virginity that they cannot stand it when a stranger compliments them on their attractiveness. They view this kind of appreciation as an affront to their sense of honor. (Baig ,M.A, 2009).

An insult to his mother, wife, sister, or daughter will not be tolerated by any pukhtoon. The male pukhtoon is definitely always extremely fiercely possessive of his woman, which is why he takes additional care to preserve her family's reputation and standing. (Bokawee,M.A .S, 2006)

Adultery, elopement, amorous approaches, infidelity, and illegal relationships between men and women are among the immoral activities that are heavily penalized.No one dares cast an evil glance on a Pukhtoon woman without risking his life because of the severe penalty that results from it. (Baig ,M.A, 2009).

According to Baig, another indication of respect for women is the fact that they are not intervened in conflicts between tribes, blood feuds, village skirmishes, or fights. Women are protected from retaliation when feuds are being prosecuted. According to tribal conventions, pukhtoons are free to provide supplies, water, and ammo to their men who are firing from a hilltop or entrenchment outside of the hamlet. It is also considered beneath them to fire at women. Pukhtoon women are not as socially low as some have suggested, despite the fact that others have characterized them as hewers of wood, draws of water, or just an economic asset.Indeed, they put in a lot of effort, but it's really a division of labor between men and women.

In pukhtoon society, a husband's position is dominating and his wife's submissive, yet this does not imply that women are not respected. The appropriately wield power and sway within their domains. She is adored as a daughter, revered as a mother, and respected as a wife. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) is credited with saying that paradise is beneath mother's feet, which is a highly esteemed statement. She has complete financial authority over the family and tremendous power on her son, daughters, and daughter-in-laws. In addition to taking care

of the home and watching after the kids, the Pukhtoon code of ethics forbids women from coming, speaking, or laughing aloud in front of strangers or people they do not know.

However, none of this is true now. Over the past 50 years, women's standing has changed dramatically, mostly as a result of increased economic affluence and educational opportunities. Significant progress has been made in the sphere of education because of the efforts of the Pakistani government. There are thousands of active educational institutes. Education's dissemination has greatly boosted branding. According to their perspective, women are no longer viewed as inferior and are free to exercise their loving, healthy influence in the home. They are not very hardworking, loyal, or reliable. They assist their husbands in the fields and do all home chores. In good times and bad, they devotedly support their spouses and withstand all enticements.

In Pukhtoon civilization, women folk have a shared ritual known as pardah. According to pardah, a woman should conduct and dress in a way that prevents her from attracting attention from people of the other gender. It is expected of a Muslim lady to wear pardah. A highly educated lady who converted to Islam stated, "The hijab, which Muslim women wear outside of their homes, appealed the most to me, but I was also drawn to the discipline of Islam's strict moral code." While Pukhtoon women do not follow the traditional pardah, they do wear burqas while traveling to distant cities or locations outside of their community. Nonetheless, they cover their faces and bodies with chadars (sheets) or dopattas (scarves) during their outdoor events.

To put it simply, rural women do not wear burqas or follow the pardah trend that is popular in metropolitan areas (Baig, M.A., 2009). The sort of pardah that is used differs depending on the region or tribe (Bokawee, M.A.S, 2006). Throughout the Muslim world, interpretations of the Holy Quran and Sunnah have been made in this regard. But pukhtoon was the only Muslim who adhered to it more strictly (Bokawee, M.A.S, 2006). Our manner of life is greatly influenced by customs. Although customs are quite distinct from laws in nature, individuals still abide by them as social norms. The tribal society of Pakistan is governed by a set of customs (Khalil, M.A.B. (n.d)).

Many academics have studied the pukhtoon social system, which is primarily regulated by customs, traditions, and the Pukhtoonwali code of honor. The foundation of the pukhtoon's social structure is this unwritten rule. It has been revered by generations after generations and has a significant impact on their behavior.

From birth until death, all actions are included. One of the most sublime and noble aspects of pukhtoon society is Melmastya, or open-hearted hospitality. It imposes four main obligations on its members: Badl, or the duty to seek revenge through retaliation; Nanawaty, or repentance over past hostility; and Teega, or a truce declared by a Jirga to avoid bloodshed between the rival factions. The fundamental characteristics of pukhtoonwali are, in general, hospitality, magnanimity, chivalry, honesty, uprightness, patriotism, love, and dedication for the nation. (Baig ,M.A, 2009)

Pakistan is a developing nation with high rates of illiteracy and poverty. People don't know anything about religion. In their daily lives, they adhere more to culture, which is a synthesis of many civilizations, traditions, and behaviors that are incompatible with Islam. The rules and customs of the N.W.F.P. have an impact on the lives of women. There is clear prejudice against Pukhtoon in NWFP because of some rigid practices. Pukhtoons are very sensitive to their honor, which places a premium on women. As a result, unique traditions have emerged. These consist of the negative social norms that specifically affect women. (Bokawee,M.A .S, 2006), Because of these norms, some of the greatest crimes against women are committed, forcing women to go for safety or refuge outside of the family. (commision, 2007).

Utilizing social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter has a big influence on how people receive politics, claims Strandberg (2013). Politics-focused and politically aware social media users are more likely to intentionally get the relevant political information. The use of social media for political actions and activities, especially to include the public in the system and influence voter turnout, is one of the predictions and predictors of political involvement in the context of general elections.

A clear and positive relationship has been found, according to Vitak (2011), between the political participation of college students and their "intensity of use of Facebook for political purposes." Facebook gives young people and college students the ability to assemble and compile political data, which helps them become more effective voters. He enumerated many political activities that utilize Facebook's standard features and functions. Political actions encompass a range of activities such as publishing and displaying political status updates, circulating political messages to the public, crafting and distributing political notes within their networks, such as party employees; responding to public comments on their

posts; exchanging political viewpoints; participating in live streaming political events; following rivals; and downloading political applications (Vitak, 2011).

After that, friends may view these political posts as they appear on individuals' walls in news feeds.Social media users have access to what their followers and worried pals are posting and saying. They may find out about relevant party events and updates from other party members by visiting the News Feed on their homepage. All of these activities are similar to this and occur in Pakistan. Because Facebook is being updated and modernized, political events such as concerned citizens clicking like on the candidate's page have replaced the practice of following the candidate for their constituency.

Internet and social media use is "gradual, relevant, and intensifying" in its impact on Pakistan's political evolution. (Ejaz (2013). According to Facebook insights from 2013, this data indicated that 8,055,680 people are Facebook users in Pakistan. In Pakistan, this number was utilized by 70% of male and 30% of female consumers, and social networking sites on the internet are also a major source of information gathering. There are several different ideological organizations that are active in Pakistan, such as the PML-N, PTI, and PPP. Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Skype are widely used by these organizations to communicate and find new members to engage in political processes (Khan, 2015).

In the 21st century, social media has transformed information sharing and communication, empowering people globally. Many significant milestones were achieved with the help of the internet which is very beneficial for the future. The 20th century is considered the country of computers but the 21st century is considered the century of social media and connectivity. Whenever we talk about persistency and change, social media technologies revalorized society. Social media is very useful as it is a tool where people are able to discuss and show their opinion and discuss the national issue and raise voices for their rights. Social media networks, YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, and others are not only innovative but rapidly increasing their effects on the opinion of people. In Pakistan, young people including women, are using social platforms to acquire knowledge and enhance political awareness. People actively take parts in social media campaigns to spread their ideas and opinion to get support and influence people. Digital technologies have increased the participation of people even women in social media. In Pakistan, the use of social media is growing like the other states and has attracted a large number of people including women

which can play a vital role in maximizing the level of political participation in Pakistan (Muzaffar, 2019,). A survey conducted In which the university students agreed that online media platforms has been used for political discussion and information which show a high level of political awareness. The positive relationship between online activities and political efficacy shows high level engagement in political activities that contribute to the political awareness in women. People including women sharing political content, participates in political activities and interacting with the political parties' members. These finding were limitation to the university students which actually not represent the divers experience of women throughout Pakistan (Ahmad, T., Alvi, A., & Ittefaq, M. , 2019,) .

Social media empower women in Pakistan by providing them a space to use social media platforms against major issues such as domestic violence gender-based violence and women's rights. The study finds that active women empowerment is higher among social media users it shows that social media can play an important role in promoting women's empowerment but there is also a perception that social media present a negative picture of women's empowerment (Hassaan, 2023) .

Women play a crucial role in the development of a state. In Pakistan many efforts have been made to empower women in almost every department and field of life but women in rural areas are still facing a lot of challenges. Freedom of mobility and decision-making were the major factors that can create an impact on the ruler areas. The researcher argues that education and job opportunities can empower women and make them able to stand for their rights. Moreover, access to media and social media can also be significant in this regard (Baig, 2018).

Anjuman Behbood-e-Khawateen (ABKT) is a non-governmental organization operating in the marginalized areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) Dir (Lower), with a specific focus on women's and child rights and community development. Initially established as a women's wing of another organization in 1994, it emerged in response to the dire situation of women's rights and development in the region, marked by cultural norms, customs, and the dominance of male and religious groups. ABKT's primary goals are to empower women economically, socially, and politically, with a special emphasis on involving marginalized communities in decision-making processes.

ABKT's services for women empowerment encompass political advocacy, where they played a crucial role in pressuring political parties to allow women's participation in local

government elections. They have also organized seminars and workshops on various women's rights issues, including challenging bans on women's electoral participation. In terms of social and economic services, ABKT has worked on social mobilization, skill development, and economic support for women through various programs and training initiatives. They have also established non-formal basic education schools for girls in areas where government schools are lacking. The achievements of ABKT are attributed to the dedicated efforts of Mrs. Shad Begum, the organization's director, who has received national and international recognition for her contributions to women's empowerment and community development.

In summary, our assessment of the literature sheds light on the complex interaction between women's political involvement and social media, especially within the unique setting of District Dir Lower. This study stands at the nexus of technology, culture, and political empowerment because it synthesizes international views on social media's transformative potential in political spheres and examines gender inequities and obstacles unique to the region. The stories told by the research that is currently available highlight the potential and drawbacks of social media platforms, calling for a critical analysis of how these online environments can either reinforce established barriers or act as catalysts to remove structural barriers that prevent women from actively participating in politics. The research endeavours to integrate theoretical underpinnings with actual observations from District Dir Lower, with the ultimate goal of offering a regional viewpoint to the wider conversation on augmenting women's autonomy and involvement in the political sphere.

1.7 Delimitation(s) of the Study

This study will explore the role of social media in raising the political participation of women in Dir. It will analyze it through the angle of Political Communication Theory. The temporal domain of this research will 2013-2023.

CHAPTER 2

2. Literature Review

Women's political engagement is essential to the growth and governance of democracies. Women continue to be disproportionately underrepresented in positions of political decision-making worldwide, despite their enormous contributions to society. Economic and sociocultural barriers restrict women's political participation in Pakistan. The purpose of this study is to investigate how social media in District Dir Lower, a rural area in the Pakistani province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, promotes women's political participation.

District Dir Lower is a rural, impoverished area with little access to political, medical, and educational possibilities. Significant obstacles to women's political engagement exist in this region, including sociocultural norms, lack of education, and discrimination based on gender. Women in District Dir Lower have persevered and remained committed to taking part in political processes in spite of these obstacles.

Social media has completely changed how people interact with politics by giving individuals the chance to organize support, take part in political debates, and obtain information. Globally, social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have played a significant role in encouraging women to participate in politics.

Social media has been utilized in Pakistan to encourage women's political empowerment and to rally support for female candidates. Nonetheless, little research has been done on how social media affects women's political engagement in rural places like District Dir Lower.

According to the literature, social media can boost women's political engagement and efficacy. However, a number of variables, including societal standards, income, and education, have an impact on this association. Women's engagement in politics is crucial to democratic growth and governance. More inclusive and egalitarian policies may result from the representation of women in political decision-making roles. Economic and sociocultural barriers restrict women's political participation in Pakistan. There are major obstacles that prevent women from obtaining political, medical, and educational possibilities.

Social media has become an essential tool for political participation, giving people the chance to gather support, engage in political discourse, and obtain information. Social media

can boost political engagement, according to research, especially among underrepresented groups like women. Social media platforms give women a forum to participate in political discourse and rally support.

The literature emphasizes the role that social media has in encouraging women to participate in politics, but additional study is needed to fully understand this issue in the context of rural communities like District Dir Lower. The purpose of this study is to investigate how social media in District Dir Lower contributes to women's political participation. The study will look into the potential and difficulties that social media presents in advancing women's political empowerment in the area.

The research will add to the body of knowledge already available on social media and women's political engagement, with a particular emphasis on the District Dir Lower setting. The study's conclusions will shed light on how social media functions to encourage women to participate in politics in rural areas. Additionally, the study will offer suggestions on how practitioners and politicians may encourage women to participate in politics in rural places like District Dir Lower. In addition to highlighting the value of social media in advancing women's political empowerment, the study will shed light on the potential and problems associated with social media use in rural areas.

2.1. Women Political Participation across the Globe

Studies show that when there are more women in parliament, issues related to women are usually given more attention. True democracy and gender equality are inextricably linked to women's political participation. It guarantees that women are held to greater levels of responsibility and facilitates their active participation in public decision-making. (Batool S. S., 2019).

In terms of political accountability to women, increasing the number of women in positions of decision-making is an excellent place to start, but it doesn't stop there. To improve the efficacy of elected officials in promoting and ensuring the implementation of gender equality in public policy, gender-sensitive governance changes are required. (vSchuster, 2013).

One of UN Women's primary objectives is to ensure that decision-making processes are inclusive, equitable, responsive, and participatory by promoting women's political involvement and good governance. The emphasis of the activities is on tactical entry points

that might elevate women's status by causing broad, enduring consequences. (Karamat, 2020).

With the majority of nations having ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), women are equipped with the means to transform the convention into legislation that upholds gender equality. Working with a range of stakeholders, such as governments, UN agencies, women's organizations, and the private sector, is another strategy to raise the proportion of women in leadership positions, strengthen their ability to vote and run for office, and raise the political literacy of women. (Rentschler, 2014).

The global population is becoming more aware of women's historical omission from power structures, there is a worldwide commitment to address the gender gap in politics. The increased involvement of women in governing bodies is seen to be essential to addressing gender disparities in society. Arguments based on both instrumentalist and intrinsic motivations have dominated the global discussion on advancing women's political representation and involvement. The former makes the case for women's equal involvement in politics from the standpoint of human rights. Since women make up half of the world's population, it is only right that they participate in and are represented equally in all democracies across the globe. Women's increased participation was advocated for by instrumentalists on the essentialist pretext that men and women are distinct from one another (Trottier, 2015).

Women view and understand politics differently according to their sex and gender responsibilities as moms. As a result, it is believed that having feminine values and a particular caring orientation will benefit women in politics. The many arguments for or theoreticalperspectives on women's participation in politics are well-supported by a substantial body of research. But rather than discussing the benefits and drawbacks of different strategies, this study is based on the general consensus reached by proponents of diverse strategies: women need to be involved in politics (Dolan, 2021).

The stark contrast between the shared ideals reflected in national and international practices and regulations poses a challenge to all current advocates of gender parity in politics. Before determining the crucial strategies for advancing women's political participation and the crucial elements of the supportive environment for women's political

empowerment, we must strive toward a deeper understanding of the structural imperatives of a society in which women's political participation is instituted. (Kruse, 2018).

Historically, women have been excluded from political processes and institutions due to a variety of structural, functional, and individual variables that differ depending on the social context in which they are found. Beyond these particularities of national and local contexts, there is a basic issue with women's political involvement that links to the greater context of national and international politics, liberal democracy, and development.

Because of this, it is crucial to evaluate these conceptions critically and understand how gender influences both development and democracy, which places barriers on women's ability to participate in politics effectively. It is impossible to discuss and identify the components of an environment that supports women's involvement in politics and development without also critically examining the existing political and development paradigms (Bruns, 2016).

According to Rounaq Jahan (1999), development has greatly benefited people worldwide, who have benefited in terms of money, health, and education. However, development also leaves 2.5 billion people behind who make less than $2 every day. There are obvious differences between and within nations. Ten percent of the world's population makes up 5% of global income, while the richest 10% make up 54% (UNDP, 2005). These days, gender relations give prospects for power and profit for the mainstream development paradigms based on capitalist relations of production (Connell, 1987:104). The domestic labor performed by women and the creation of capital are inextricably linked. Leacock expounded on the same idea, saying that "...the polarizing tendencies of the capitalist mode of production, which places the 'peripheral' countries of the Third World in a relationship of dependency with the metropolitan centers of the First World, could not be understood in isolation from the inequalities between men and women." So-called development just creates "new conditions of constraints"; it is unable to free women from repressive social, economic, and political institutions within an egalitarian world order (Bari, 2005).

In addition to challenging the capitalist paradigm of international development that perpetuates gender disparities, proponents of gender equality must concentrate on the gendered nature of development and seek to create an environment that supports women's participation in it. Gender equality and women's advancement cannot result from women's participation in mainstream development alone until the practice is stopped and the

development demand for equality and justice is reconciled. When determining whether or not women may share development gains, both the degree and type of engagement matter (Ross, 2009).

Contextual factors pertaining to women's political participation also include the character of liberal democracy in particular and politics in general. Historically, men have benefited more from democracy than women. From ancient Greece until the twenty-first century, there has been a political system that has barred women from citizenship and been based on the public-private divide. Due to the belief held by many political philosophers and thinkers, including Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, John Lock, Thomas Hobbes, and Hegel, that women belong only in domestic roles in the private sphere and that they have no place in politics because they are better suited for caring roles as mothers and wives, women have been kept out of the public sphere of politics (Kwak, 2018).

This is one of the reasons the normative political theory assumed the private sphere to be non-political and neglected to look at the political components of private life.

Women were not acknowledged as citizens in either the ancient or modern democracies. As a result, in both theory and practice, they ignored them and their concerns. The idea of a "free and rational" individual was only advanced by liberal political thought during the 19th century, and suffragists utilized this idea to demand the right to vote. But according to Rai (2002), the conceptual underpinnings of liberal philosophy are intrinsically gendered, perpetuating patriarchal tendencies and ignoring gender subordination in both politics and society (Hayes, 2016).

Feminist theorists have challenged the idea of the abstract individual in liberal theory, arguing that it is not a phrase that is gender-neutral. This explains why women were unable to change public policy or bring the private sphere into the public eye despite having the right to vote. Even the democracies of the West severely unsettled them. Rather than having the power to fundamentally change sexual politics, women who run for political office in today's patriarchal democracies typically take on roles that are mostly defined by males. In order to genuinely provide women with a position in politics, liberal democracies need to reconsider their fundamental beliefs. (Harris, 2008).

2.2 Factors Precluding Women from Entering Politics:

Countries differ in how many women participate in politics and have access to formal power systems. Women's representation and participation in politics are steadily rising in developed nations, especially in the Nordic region. Nine of the twelve nations with over thirty percent of their parliaments made up of women are classified as having high human development. But there hasn't been much of an improvement in medium- and low-developed nations (Lovenduski, 2005).

The structural and functional constraints that women face is influenced by social and political processes within a culture. Political and social discourses, political structures and institutions, and socio-cultural and functional constraints that limit women's capacity to act both individually and collectively are the three main causes of women's political marginalization.

2.3 Ideological Factors

The patriarchal structure of male dominance influences how women interact with one another in politics. It creates a hierarchy of gender relations in which men are privileged and changes males and females into men and women (Eisenstein 1984).

Patriarchy uses the notion of gender roles as an ideological tool to place males in the public sphere and women in the private sphere of the home as spouses and mothers. This is one of the key elements influencing women's political participation across the globe(Connell, 1987).

However, this ideological division is not a true reflection of reality. The boundaries between public and private life often become hazy in women's daily lives. Nonetheless, the public sphere is still seen as the domain of men, and both the North and the South continue to believe that women belong in the home. Women have to negotiate access to and usage of public spaces in line with the discursive and material possibilities provided by a certain culture. Women are still seen as private in all of these circumstances, despite the fact that the idea of gender roles is dynamic and ever-changing and interacts with the political, social, and economic institutions of a particular community. nations that contributed to their political seclusion(Eisenstein, 1984).

2.3.1 Political Factors

If or if women participate in politics is greatly influenced by the manner in which politics is carried out. Politics is traditionally defined as an action, a purposeful, intentional

engagement in the process that distributes resources among citizens. The definition of politics according to Vicky Randall, this interpretation of politics makes the private sector of family life apolitical and restricts political participation to the public domain. Women are kept out of public politics by the conventional conception of politics, which employs the public-private split; when they do enter, it is as mothers and spouses.

(Ann, 1998).

The predominance of men in politics, political parties, and official political organizations is another barrier that keeps women out of politics. Male-dominated political parties usually have a male perspective on important national issues, which depresses women because their perspective is often ignored and underrepresented in the parties' programs. Due to gender prejudice in male leadership, women are generally not elected to positions of responsibility in party systems. Meetings of the council and legislature are arranged at odd hours that conflict with women's domestic responsibilities.(Shirin, 2000).

The degree of democratization and the larger democratic framework have an effect on women's political activity. Secular democracies in Europe and several developing countries have allowed women to participate in politics relatively more than those where religious dogma has affected politics and democracy.(Dolan, 2021).

2.3.2 Socio-Cultural Factors

Women's subjugation to men is a worldwide occurrence, however the type and degree of subordination vary from nation to nation. In addition to creating a binary distinction between femininity and masculinity, gender role ideology arranges these concepts in a hierarchical manner, with women's sex generally regarded lower than men's due to socially assigned roles in the reproductive domain. The gender status quo is upheld by the state, society, and family all making minimal contributions to women's human development. This is also reflected in the social indices, which display varying degrees of gender disparities in employment, health, education, and ownership of productive resources across all nations. Class, caste, and ethnicity all have a role in mediating gender by establishing barriers to opportunities and resources. The primary obstacle preventing women from engaging in public politics is their societal reliance.(A, 1997).

Women's limited time resulting from their dual duties in the reproductive and producing realms makes it difficult for them to engage in politics. They don't have much time

for politics because their main roles are that of mothers and wives, with conflicting household duties and caregiving.

Cultural traditions also impose restrictions on women's freedom of movement in several countries, particularly in South Asia. The sex segregation and purdah systems restrict their movement. In order for women to interact with voters of both genders and give speeches at public events, they need to be introduced to the political process. (Batool S. S., 2019).

2.3.3 Economic Factors

Politics is become more and more commercialized. The cost of being involved in politics is rising. Women's political activism is limited because they are deprived of both ownership and access to productive resources.

2.3.4 Absence of Political and Social Capital

Women usually lack social capital since they do not always have positions of leadership in their communities, tribes, or kinship groups. They could thus lack a base of supporters or access to tools that would allow them to engage in politics, such political knowledge, funding, education, training, or information availability. (Ross, 2009).

2.3.5 Women political Participation in Pakistan:

Based on several indicators, such as life expectancy, school enrollment, literacy rate, and access to basic healthcare, there seems to be a gender disparity in Pakistan. Still, throughout the previous 16 years, women's involvement in politics has made significant strides. The surge in female political participation in legislative bodies is the most noteworthy change. This change in political participation can be attributed to a number of things, including Pakistan's legal obligations to the international community under the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). These accords have had an impact on Pakistan ever since the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. (Rubab, 2020).

Furthermore, the rise of women in politics was greatly aided by the 1973 Pakistani Constitution. The Election Commission's The framework of 2002, the Political Parties Request of 2002, the National Assembly as well as Provincial Assemblies Allocation of reserved Spaces for Women and Non-Muslims Regulations of 2002, and other factors have all contributed to the advancement of women's political participation and empowerment within the political structure.

The legislative and presidential administrations are both reflected in parts of Pakistan's contemporary political structure. The shift in political systems was caused by earlier changes to the political structure. (Awan M. A., 2016).In the past, the political system in use determined how many women participated in and how many seats were held by women in local and national legislatures. For example, in the first Pakistani legislative assembly, which met from August 10, 1947, to October 24, 1954, women constituted 3% of the total seats (two of the thirty seats were occupied by women). There was no president's office from 1947 until 1956. The head of state was the governor general.

This second parliamentary session, which ran from May 02, 1955, to October 07, 1958, had 0% of women represented in the legislature (there were 80 members altogether, and women acquired 0 seats). There was one more change in the political system from 1956 and 1958. Iskander Mirza, the governor general, assumed the presidency after the governor general post was abolished. Following it, the military ruled the nation for the next thirteen years, from 1958 to 1971. (Abdullah, 2015).

There was additionally one more political reform that came after the Zia administration of 1978–1988 and had an impact on the proportion of women in politics. By 1988, women had 5% of the seats in provincial legislatures, 22 seats within the National Assembly 21 of them belonged from among the reserved seats, and 1 seat was elected directly), and 10% of the 3% allocated quota that had existed since the start of the political assembly. But between 1990 and 1997, women's reserved seats were no longer available. Consequently, in 1990, 1993, and 1997, neither the national nor the province elected legislatures assigned any seats to women.

As a result, women's representation declined; in 1990, for example, it was just 0.9% (two of which are out of 217 women were elected directly). In 1993, female participation in legislative bodies selected by voters was 1.8% (four out of 217 women were directly elected), and in the 1997 national parliament, it barely increased to 2.8% (six total of 217 women were directly elected)(Syed N. T., 2014).

In 2000, during the first period of military control, the in municipal government, the quota for women's political involvement was increased to 33 percent. This quota was applicable at the district level, union council level, and tehsil level of local government.

Similarly, before the 2002 election, there were 17% more women than men serving in national and local legislatures (61 out of 342 members of the national assembly were women). A significant increase in the quota for the 2002 election also resulted in an increase in the percentage of women participating in politics generally. Consequently, a record number of women ran for and won general seats. In the 2002 election, 188 women filed to run for general seats; 101 of these candidates were nominated by their parties, and 39 of them were successful in securing their seats. In contrast to the election of 1997,(Begum, 2023).

Nevertheless, if we examine the presidential elections of 2008 and 2013, we may observe some distinct differences in patterns. In the 2013 election, women gained 70 out of the 342 seats in the lower house of the national legislature, or more than 20.5% of the total number of members. 17 out of the 100 vacancies in the upper house, or 17% from the total, were won by women. We can see that a somewhat higher number of women voted in the 2013 election than in the 2008 one.

In the 2008 election, 34 women were nominated by political parties to run for public office. Political parties submitted nominations for 36 women for the 2013 election. 108 women campaigned for the 272 members in the National Assembly in 2013 in a similar manner. This figure is greater than it was in the 2008 election, where 76 women applied to run for office. Following the 2013 election, women's participation on party tickets has grown for a number of political parties, notably the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) and the Mutahida Qaumi Movement, as compared to the 2008 election. Comparing the 2013 election to the 2008 one, however, shows a decline in the presence of women in other major groups, including the Pakistan People Party and the Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid-e-Azam.(Syed F. Z., 2017).

The following are the current patterns of women's political participation:

We can assess the present patterns in women's political engagement by focusing on three key questions: 1) How many women received party tickets in an election? 2) The number of women elected to national and provincial assemblies' general seats? 3) In terms of reserved seats, how many women were elected? How many women were present at these gatherings overall? The material that is now accessible indicates that women did not receive the recognition they deserved in the form of nominations from their respective political parties, despite their active engagement in the 13th National Assembly. 96.5 percent of the

candidates were male, however only 3.5% of female candidates were nominated by political parties overall. (Saiyid, 2001).

According to Yusuf (2013), in this particular context, the low representation of women in the election signifies a lack of confidence on the part of political parties towards them, which stands in sharp contrast to the degree of political activism exhibited by women.

In a similar vein, the UNDP (2005) reported that fewer women are now holding positions of decision-making within political parties. Political parties have historically used women as a passive vote bank, primarily using them for representative roles during meetings, public events, and campaigns.16 Additionally, while women's wings exist inside political parties, they typically serve representative purposes and have no bearing on internal party decision-making. Thus, women's representation in political contests has been impacted by systemic prejudice inside party organizations. (Awan S. Z., 2023).

Furthermore, women's participation in elections from a variety of regions, such as FATA18 and Dir19, was encouraging evidence of a rise in women's political engagement. A few women from economically disadvantaged who belonged to marginalized and economically disadvantaged groups, aimed to raise awareness of topics like women's rights, health, and education that male politicians were ignoring by entering the mainstream political system.20 Political parties' lack of interest in topics specifically impacting women suggests that they are not very committed to giving women more political clout. However, at the same time, women are becoming more vocal in their support of more political participation.The primary reason for this is that Pakistan has ratified international treaties and conventions on human rights. (Ghani, 2024).

Despite having a slightly mixed record of advancing women's political representation, especially in reference to women's roles in political parties, Pakistan has set a positive example for other Muslim countries regarding women's political involvement. For instance, Benazir Bhutto was the very initial female prime leader of a Muslim country when she took office in 1988. In a similar vein, the very initial Muslim woman to address a national parliament was Fahmida Mirza. Moreover, over hundred women have been elected to the lower and upper chambers of the Pakistani national legislature in 2013(Ali, 2012).

Following the 2008 election, women were included in the cabinet by the coalition headed by the Pakistan People Party (PPP). Several women had significant posts as ministers, including social welfare, while Samina Khalid Ghurki oversaw the ministry of special

education. Similarly, the ministers of foreign affairs, health, and media and entertainment were Sherry Rehman, Ashiq Firdous Awan, and Hina Rabbani Khar. Some of these female lawmakers thereafter transferred to different ministries.(Batool S. S., 2019).

There are, however, fewer women minister in the present cabinet—just two of them hold this position. Saira Afzal Tarar is the state minister for National Health Services, while Anusha Rehman Ahmed Khan is in charge of the Ministry of Information and Technology. (Rahman, 2022).

Though there are still barriers to the quick growth of women's empowerment in politics due to gender discrimination, the numerical representation of women in legislation has shown improving tendencies. Studies illustrates that women make up nearly 20% of all members of legislative bodies. But this degree of female representation in legislative bodies also considers the impact of the women's quota, which was implemented in 2002 (Hussain).

Thus, putting women into positions of decision-making at the local, provincial, and federal levels has been made possible in large part by the quota for women's political participation. On the other hand, powerful political families are the source of the women who have entered politics as a result of the quota and the distribution of reserved seats.24 Because they do not share the socioeconomic and political backgrounds of the majority of Pakistani women, the women who are entering politics through reserved seats pose a fundamental limitation on true representation. (Mangi, 2019).

In addition, one must consider the female population, female voter registration rates, and female turnout while attempting to comprehend the obstacles that women's empowerment has encountered. According to Yusuf (2013), women in Pakistan account for about half of the country's population. Of the registered voters in the 2013 election, there were approximately 37.6 million women and approximately 48.6 million men. This shows that there was a nearly 11 million voter registration disparity among women.

Additional figures illustrating the gender disparity in voter registration are shown in above. The lowest rates of female voter registration are seen in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), Baluchistan, and Khyber Pakhtunwa (KPK), whilst Sindh and Islamabad have somewhat less gender disparities in comparison to other areas.

Gender-specific voter turnout data was not previously recorded. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), on the other hand, aimed to compile data on voter turnout by

gender.28 The Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) assessed 264 Statements pertaining to the Count from 26 constituencies and found that there was a risk that up to two-thirds of polling stations' Presiding Officers did not accurately fill out certain sections of the form, which could have resulted in erroneous sex-segregated turnout data being provided by ECP. Additionally, counting based on sex segregation did not occur, according to the European Union Election Observation Mission (Imran, 2020).

Additionally, FAFEN early data analysis showed that female voter turnout remained at 48.79% of female polling stations, while male voter turnout stayed at 56.03% of male polling stations. This study was based on a sample of 3,070 polling stations in 92 National Assembly seats. In fact, the turnout of female voters in this category—that is, female polling stations—was higher than it was in the 2008 election. (Weiss, 1999).

2.4 Social Media's Impact on Pakistani Women's Political Participation

Social media has been used in Pakistan for the past few decades to inform the populace about their rights to political democracy. The rural populace of Pakistan is unclearly aware of democracy due to the uncertain economy and low literacy rate. In addition to Twitter, social media can mobilize individuals for social movements and enable everyday people to participate in protests (Prokhorov, 2012). In Pakistan, social media encourages young people to participate in politics. Most people have access to all political information regarding current state issues. Social media is a brand-new, indispensable channel for communicating political and social concerns to a global audience (Ahmad, 2019).

2.4.1 Social networks

provides a vital forum for communication, opinion sharing, political ideology expression, and issue-based discussion for student activists and their organizations (Ali & Ali, 2014; Enjolras, Steen Johnsen, & Wollebaek, 2012; Scherman, Valenzuela, and Arriagada, 2012). It's true that social media these days has a distinct identity in Pakistani society. Pakistanis found it difficult at first to use social media for political purposes, but today, most young people use it to participate in politics, which helps to strengthen the democratic process (Zaheer, 2016; Haq, 2010). In Pakistan, the burgeoning new media landscape is extensively utilized to raise political consciousness. Shaheen (2008), Muzafar, Choudhry, and Afzal (2019), and Karamat & Farooq (2016). Compared to other applications

like Twitter, blogs, and MySpace, Facebook is the most popular socializing app and encourages users to engage in both online and offline political activities (Eijaz, 2013, Zaheer, 2016; Michaelsen, 2011).

Even so, Pakistan's current political structure includes democratic principles as well. Pakistanis actively participate in politics, actively become aware of current affairs, and possess a considerable amount of political clout about their country's democratic system. Social media apps are without a doubt the best way to obtain information (Abbott, 2014; Auger, 2013; Bulovsky, 2018; Ellison & Hardey, 2014; Prokhorov, 2012; Schulz, 2005). Social media is fostering democratic discourse and enabling citizens to participate in democracy (Barber, 1998b; also see Buchstein, 1997; Dahlgren, 2013). It is seen as a social network that enables all members to participate in group activities, learn new things, and become more informed (Shirky, 2008,2011). Social media is a perfect instrument. Because social media enables citizens to engage, contribute, and further democratization, it is a perfect instrument for the democratic process (Price, 2013).

2.5 Social Media, Internet, and Political Consciousness

It is seen as a process that distributes the current political events among those involved in and a part of a specific political system. The biggest forums for the instant global dissemination of political information are social media platforms. Google and Facebook have a significant impact on politics, including elections and the formation of political opinions. (Mosco, 2018) The most well-known politicians and political figures in the world are quite active on Twitter, where they impart their political wisdom to their followers. Individuals are increasingly using new media innovations to communicate political information and express their own political ideologies (Glynn, Huge, & Hoffman, 2012; Weeks & Holbert, 2013). According to Andı, Aytaç, and Çarkoğlu (2019), Doris (2014), Emruli & Bača (2011), and other scholars, the new media has a significant and powerful influence on citizens' party-political education and serves as a crucial tool for political education regarding political movements. People may learn about politics and get high-quality content on the internet. Similarly, more people are becoming politically aware thanks to the internet (Bimber & Davis, 2003; Jennings & Zeitner, 2003; Xenos & Moy, 2007). Politicians of all stripes utilize Facebook and Twitter for their purposes. The best place to debate various political events is on Twitter, in particular. Similar to this, digital media companies act as participants in political processes (Kretsch & Mcgregor, 2017; Jungherr, Schoen & Jürgens, 2015; Stier, Bleier, Lietz & Strohmaier, 2018).

2.6 Modern Technology and Political Efficacy

Media and technology are both related to improving society. Because social media encourages people to participate in a variety of activities, such as socializing and contact sharing, it is seen as a moderate type of media. Computer technology today makes it easier for people to connect with one another (Karamat & Farooq, 2016). The degree to which citizens participate in politics and how they view the government and its policies are two factors that are related to the feeling of efficacy. The ideologies, mindsets, and ways that people believe have a huge impact on developing internal efficacy. The ability to examine oneself, analyze the political system, and engage oneself in various political activities is seen as internal efficacy (Campbell, Gurin, & Miller, 1954; Holbert, Lambe, Dudo, & Carlton, 2007). Political efforts require external efficacy (Gil de Zúñiga, Diehl & Ardévol-Abreu, 2017; Zaheer, 2016). It increases people's political efficacy for improved interpersonal relationships and increases the answerability of officials (Kenski & Stroud, 2006). Social media tends to be more progressive and prioritizes political discourse. Politicians are getting more and more involved on social media (Biswas, Ingle, & Roy, 2014). Social media is increasing political engagement and efficacy and giving citizens access to the most important information (Mc Nair, 2011; Ahmad, Alvi & Ittefaq, 2019; Jiang, 2016).

People who are involved in politics are more likely to participate in politics. Global democracies such as Sweden, Norway, Iceland, New Zealand, Canada, USA, Pakistan, and India permit equitable political engagement for its citizens. Pakistani citizens can easily communicate with political participants using social media (Khan & Shahbaz, 2015). Politicians were under pressure to respond to voters instantly as a result of their active participation on social media (Doris, 2014). Different communication and educational materials are being consumed on Facebook and Twitter (Velasquez, Wash, Lampe, & Bjornrud, 2014). Technology allows citizens to act as a group and strengthens the role of social media in society (Michaelsen, 2011).

Social media use is contributing to an increase in online political participation (Papagiannidis & Manika, 2016). In addition to being a valuable tool for political involvement, social media is an advanced innovation in public communication (Karamat & Farooq, 2016). Citizens are being inspired to actively participate in politics and are being mobilized as a result (Siluveru,2015). Media experts such as (Abdulrauf 2016; Abdu, Mohamad & Muda, 2017; Bimber & Copeland, 2011) identify the relationship between

politics and social media and elucidate the role that social media plays in various forms of political engagement.

2.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, there has been a noticeable shift in the global landscape of women's political participation, characterized by a rise in activism and representation. The intricate interactions between cultural, social, political, and economic elements that affect women's participation in politics have been emphasized in this chapter. Women have made incredible progress in politics around the world by questioning gender norms and pushing for laws that advance gender equality. However, because women function in a variety of socio-political circumstances, the rate and scope of progress varies greatly throughout various locations.

The path of women's political participation in Pakistan is paved with particular difficulties and noteworthy successes. Pakistani women have historically encountered numerous obstacles, such as patriarchal traditions, limited mobility, and restricted access to resources and education. Notwithstanding these obstacles, Pakistani women have persisted in their fight for political rights, attaining significant victories including the election of female leaders like Benazir Bhutto and the allocation of seats in legislative bodies. However, the fight goes on since systematic discrimination and ingrained cultural views prevent women from reaching their full political potential.

One important aspect of this conversation is how social media may help women participate in politics more. Social media platforms have become effective instruments for political participation, providing women with a forum to express their views, rally support, and confront systems of oppression. Social media has given rise to female political leaders and activists in Pakistan and many other parts of the world by giving them attention and a platform to push for change. Additionally, grassroots movements have been made possible by the digital world, which has connected women across geographic and socioeconomic divisions and amplified their collective voices

Social media does not always have a favorable effect on women's political participation, either. It exposes women to online abuse, harassment, and misinformation, but it also provides chances for empowerment and engagement. The digital divide makes inequality worse since many women still have limited access to technology, especially in underdeveloped nations like Pakistan. To tackle these issues, all-encompassing approaches

that uphold online safety, encourage digital literacy, and guarantee fair access to technology are needed.

The experiences of women in Pakistani politics and around the world highlight the significance of frameworks and policies that support them. In order to foster an atmosphere that supports women in politics, legal reforms, gender quotas, and programs that advance women's economic empowerment and education are essential. Furthermore, maintaining women's political engagement requires cultivating an inclusive and respectful society both offline and online.

Globally, there has been a positive shift toward gender parity in political representation; successful instances of women's inclusion in governance can be seen in nations like Rwanda, Sweden, and New Zealand. These instances demonstrate the potency of focused legislation and the political determination to accomplish gender parity. Strategies in Pakistan and other areas where women's political engagement is still low can benefit from learning from these nations.

In Pakistan, structural and attitude hurdles must be addressed in order to further improve women's political participation. It is essential to empower women through economic opportunity, education, and leadership development. Furthermore, gender-sensitive policies and the meaningful participation of women at all levels of decision-making are demands that political parties and institutions meet.

It is impossible to overestimate the contribution that international organizations, the media, and civil society have made to the advancement of women in politics. These players are essential to the advocacy, capacity-building, and advancement of gender equality in politics. Women can only succeed as political leaders and advocates in an environment that supports them, and this can only be achieved via cooperative efforts and partnerships.

Notwithstanding its difficulties, social media continues to revolutionize the political environment. Strategic interventions are necessary to reduce risks and maximize rewards in order to fully realize its potential. Crucial first steps in this path include protecting women's safety online, squelching digital disinformation, and advancing positive narratives about women in politics.

In conclusion, there have been a lot of noteworthy advancements made along the way toward women's inclusive political participation, but there are still many obstacles to

overcome. Important lessons and insights from the global context can be used to national plans, especially Pakistani initiatives. Through tackling systemic obstacles, harnessing the potential of social media, and cultivating a climate of fairness and dignity, we can create a political environment that is more comprehensive and just, with women at the forefront of determining the course of events.

In the end, women's political participation is ultimately a struggle for democracy, equality, and justice. It necessitates teamwork, unshakable dedication, and an understanding that women's emancipation is essential to the advancement and success of all communities. Let's work to build a society in which every woman has equal access to and full participation in the political processes that impact her life and her community as we go forward.

2.8 Theoretical Framework

Several theoretical frameworks might be taken into consideration for a study on the "Role of Social Media and Women Political Participation: A Case Study of District Dir Lower." The Political Communication Theory, which focuses on the ideas of the Spiral of Silence and the Networked Public Sphere, is one especially pertinent and thorough theoretical framework for this subject.

2.8.1 Political Communication Theory:

The study of political communication theory covers a wide range of topics, including the transmission, receipt, and processing of political messages. It looks into how information moves within the political arena. Within the framework of "Role of Social Media and Women Political Participation: A Case Study of District Dir Lower," Political Communication Theory is especially pertinent to comprehending the ways in which social media platforms function as conduits for political dialogue and impact women's involvement in the political sphere.

The Spiral of Silence is a key component of Political Communication Theory that applies to the research. According to Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann's notion, people are more inclined to voice their thoughts when they feel that their opinions are shared by the perceived majority. On the other hand, people who have minority views typically keep quiet out of concern for social rejection. The Spiral of Silence can provide insight into whether an inclusive climate prevails online or if dominant political narratives have the ability to silence opposing viewpoints in relation to women's political participation on social media. Analysing

women's perceptions of the acceptance and popularity of their political beliefs on social media can shed light on the processes influencing their online engagement.

Furthermore, Political Communication Theory recognizes how public discourse has changed in the digital age when viewed through the lens of the Networked Public Sphere. Social media sites serve as online forums where people may discuss politics, exchange information, and voice their opinions. This approach aids in the investigation of how social media shapes the development of a networked public sphere, impacting women's access to and visibility of political information, as seen in the study conducted in District Dir Lower. It also makes it easier to analyze the structural elements of online discourse, taking into account things like online communities, algorithmic curation, and social media's ability to be a welcoming environment for women's political voices.

A more nuanced understanding of how social media platforms in District Dir Lower may influence women's propensity to participate in political conversations is possible by analyzing political communication through the lens of these theoretical frameworks. Researchers can examine the socio-psychological and structural elements that impact the dynamics of online political participation among women in the particular cultural and geographic context of District Dir Lower, in addition to the content of political communication, by taking into account the Spiral of Silence and the Networked Public Sphere. This method adds to a thorough investigation of how social media influences women's political participation in both local and global contexts.

2.9   . Research Methodology

The positivist or behavioralist approach and the post-positivist or interpretative approach are the two main methodological stances that scholars in international relations and political science follow (McNabb, 2015). The positivist method is often known as quantitative research, while the post-positivist method is called qualitative research. Other names for the post-positivist method include realist, hermeneutic, and narrative research (Oakley, 2002). Political scientists mostly use the positivist and post-positivist methodological techniques to learn about the political realm (Devine et al., 2002).

This research employs a mixed-methods approach to comprehensively investigate the role of social media in raising awareness among women about their political particpation in District Lower Dir. The study begins with a quantitative phase, involving a structured survey administered to a randomly selected sample of women from various areas within the district. The survey is designed to assess the level of awareness among women regarding their political rights and their patterns of social media usage for political engagement. It also includes questions aimed at gauging their attitudes towards gender equality in politics. The quantitative data collected from the survey will be subjected to statistical analysis, enabling us to identify correlations, trends, and patterns that exist within the dataset. This quantitative phase provides a broad overview of the research landscape and allows us to quantify the extent of social media's impact on women's political awareness.

2.9.1 Research Design

A research design is a blueprint outlining the steps you will take to complete your project and, in particular, how you will utilize the data you collect to address your research question. Any research project's primary design or broad framework is known as the research design (Gschwend & Schimmelfennig, 2007).

With a particular focus on District Dir Lower, the research design for the topic "Role of Social Media and Women Political Participation: A Case Study of District Dir Lower" employs a mixed-methods approach. The present study employs a mixed-methods methodology that incorporates both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies to offer a full understanding of the complex relationship between women's political participation in the designated area and social media usage.

District Dir Lower is the specific focus of the case study design, which offers a contextualized lens through which to look at the dynamics of social media and women's

political participation. This narrow focus makes it possible to examine in-depth the particular elements, difficulties, and chances that might affect how social media and political participation interact in this particular region. A greater knowledge of the socio-cultural, political, and economic context in which women negotiate their political engagement through social media platforms is made possible by the case study design.

2.9.2 Procedure (data collection)

A representative sample of women in District Dir Lower will be given standardized surveys and questionnaires as part of the quantitative component. These tools will collect quantitative information on a number of topics, such as the kind and frequency of social media use, the kinds of political content one encounters, and the degree of political participation. To gather pertinent background data, demographic questions will also be asked. The study will utilize statistical software, such as SPSS, to analyze quantitative data and identify patterns and relationships between women's political participation and social media engagement.

The qualitative component of the research design will comprise in-depth interviews with important stakeholders, such as social media specialists, women leaders, and other local politicians, to complement the quantitative approach. Additionally, focus groups will be held to investigate various viewpoints and get information on the subtle ways that social media affects women's political participation in the particular sociopolitical environment of District Dir Lower. The qualitative data will be analyzed using thematic analysis, which will identify significant themes and patterns in the participant narratives.

2.9.3 Data Analysis

Analyzing data is a crucial component of every study. Data analysis compiles and assesses the gathered information. This is analyzing the gathered data to identify patterns, correlations, or trends using logical and analytical reasoning (Bazeley, 2013). Secondary data analysis is an adaptable strategy with several applications (Doolan & Froelicher, 2009).

The overall goal of this research design is to strengthen the study's validity and robustness by triangulating results from quantitative and qualitative data sources. The study guarantees a comprehensive investigation of the research inquiries within the distinct geographic and cultural milieu of District Dir Lower. It offers significant contributions to the scholarly corpus and pragmatic policy deliberations concerning women's political engagement and the influence of social media on political environments**.**

CHAPTER-3

3. Women's Role in the Political Landscape of Dir Lower and Role of Social Media:

Two seats in the national assembly and five lawmakers in the provincial legislature serve as the region's political representation. But males have the majority of political power and women are underrepresented in it. Women are not permitted to participate in politics in the socially controlled area since politics is seen as a man's realm. There have been 10 elections since the district's formal admission to Pakistan, but women weren't allowed to take part in any of them actively. Women started to actively engage in the 2013 general election after being granted the opportunity to vote by all political and religious groups. The ratio has recently improved somewhat following the 2018 election.

There are still discernible disparities in the political environment despite the region receiving representation by a pair of seats in the national parliament and five legislators in the province legislature. But men have the majority of political power and women are underrepresented in it. Women are not permitted to participate in politics in the socially controlled area since politics is seen as a man's realm. There have been ten elections since the district's formal admission to Pakistan, but women have never been allowed to take part in any of them actively. Women started to actively engage in the 2013 general election after being granted the right to vote by all political and religious organizations.

The 1956 Constitution gave women the ability to vote twice. In the parliament, one is for reserved seats and the other is for public seats (Shouket, 2018).But when the constitution was repealed in 1958, these initiatives lost some of their potency. Subsequently, women's rights protection did not seem to be of great importance to the writers of the Constitution. When the 1962 constitution was adopted, women's rights were revoked. They were humiliated and disheartened by the martial law regime. Fatima Jinnah, a leader of the Pakistani independence movement, was dissuaded from running in the general electionsof 1965.She experienced brand sabotage and a flimsy defense of dictator Ayub Khan's intentions by a well-known preacher, who sought to prevent women from managing the nation.

Women who came to her aid were accused of harassing her. This cost Pakistan the leadership of someone more knowledgeable, patient, and patriotic to manage this young nation (Ayesha A. Z., 2020). Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto gained popularity during the 1970 election campaign and became the hope of a significant portion of the populace. Women voted for

their own candidates in the 1973 election for the first time, defying their husbands' wishes, which marked a significant advancement in women's political empowerment) (Gul, 2022). General Zia ul Haq's military takeover occurred again in 1977. In the pretext of Islamizing society, such extreme regulations were passed during this time that women are still paying for now.

The essential rights of human beings were eliminated. The female demographic was targeted by qanun e shahadat and hudood legislation. Their political, social, and economic circumstances get more established. The Karachi Women's Action Forum organized a public demonstration and campaign against the Hudood Ordinance and martial law in 1981 due to their detrimental effects on the lives of women. Benazir began holding public rallies upon her return from exile to Pakistan in 1986, and Zia found her to be an eyesore. Once more, a dictator initiated the public character assassination of a political figure and a lady. Benazir Bhutto was unable to change the Hudood Ordinance upon taking office in 1988 as the country's first female prime minister due to Article 58 2(b).

President Ghulam Ishaq mandated that voters show identification cards prior to the election through an ordinance. A third of men and more than half of women lost their right to vote as a result of this ordinance. When Benazir and Nawaz Sharif attempted to change this discriminatory law during their respective administrations, they encountered difficulties and resistance from the conservative religious community. Another military coup occurred in 1998. Through a coup, General Pervez Musharraf, the then-chief of army staff, took over. Inspired by Turkey's Ataturk, he was regarded as the most progressive and contemporary despot (Batool S. , 2020). He tended to get Hudood ordinances changed and passed the Protection of Women Bill in 2006 in order to provide women more social, economic, and political independence. Nonetheless, the ruling Pakistan People's Party stated in 2009 that the bill was badly written and that legislation will be completed soon (Ahmed, 2021).A deal reached in 2013 by political parties, local elders, and clerics prevented millions of women from voting on the spurious grounds that their way of life prevented them from doing so.

In particular, in certain areas of Baluchistan, North Waziristan, Dir, and District Kohistan. The Pakistani Election Commission has acted to safeguard women's voting rights and participation by combating patriarchal pressures on women (Gul, 2022).According to the Election Act of 2017, results shall be deemed void if the electoral commission is dissatisfied with any constituency's outcome or if the percentage of female voters in that constituency is

less than 10%. (2021) The constituency will cast votes once more, with polling being conducted by the election commission. The 2018 general elections clearly demonstrate the effects of the Representation of the People Act change. Merely three constituencies exhibited a female turnout of less than 10%.

3.1 WomeninthePoliticsofKhyberPakhtunkhwa

The exchange of ideas and opinions among citizens is the cornerstone of democracy. Women have places for preparing bread (Tanu'r: Place) and drinking water (Gu'dar-Ghara: Place), whereas men have hujra for conversation between themselves. The more conservative and patriarchal Pukhtun society forbids women from taking part in political activities. Due to their very low or nonexistent political engagement, they face a variety of difficulties in Pukhtun society. (Bank, 2000).

Men and women in Pakistani society, particularly Pukhtun society, differ greatly in practically every aspect of day-to-day existence. Women are more frequently bereft of their basic liberty than males, despite being entirely neglected in matters of politics. Not even they have access to or the ability to vote. Women are not permitted to participate on numerous political activities in Pukhtun society. Like the family, the feudalistic institution of Pukhtun society is a danger to women's political engagement. the source of all troubles in our society; the three most well-known Pukhtun phrases for "money, women, and land."

Local terms in the Pukhtun language include Often employed against women in order to boost men's status, which promotes discrimination and gender inequality in society (Ali and Gavino, 2008). In Pukhtun society, women are expected to stay within the house and have limited freedom of movement due to social and cultural norms and a fear of social disgrace. When a woman leaves the house, she faces obstacles from the community and even family, and it's critical to keep in mind that participating in politics is an activity that occurs in public space. In a similar vein, norms, a strict and oppressive culture, and male domination drive women out of leadership roles (Isran). The entrenched male dominance and feudal system of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pukhtun society seriously jeopardize women's political participation. It is even forbidden for women to vote. In Sawabi, Swat, and most importantly, Dir, among other districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, women face major social constraints. Their cultural beliefs, habits, and traditions preclude them from participating in politics, which is why it is outlawed.

Similar to this, Pukhtun society—especially in the Malakand division—firmly limits women to the walls of their homes due to its feudal leaning. For example, voting by women is strictly prohibited in the Swabi, Swat, Dir, and Malakand divisions. In the Malakand division, women are likewise prohibited from engaging in politics due to religious beliefs. Regarding this, religious intellectuals participate in a social boycott of female candidates for public office or voting (Bano, 2009).

3.2   Women's Election Participation in General and Reserved Seats in theKhyberPakhtunkhwa ProvincialAssembly

In 31 distinct constituencies, 38 KP women ran for seats on reserved lists for the general election. Thirty-two women received party tickets from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's political parties, while seven women independently ran for office. There were three female third-place finishers, no female runners-up, and no elected women in the 2018 provincial assembly general elections. In the 2013 general elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 29 women ran for office, but none were selected. Political parties in Pakistan nominated 22 women to compete for the reserved seats. (Gul, 2022).5.3 Social and Cultural Barriers to Women in Political participation in Politics

In this sense, the main obstacles to their empowerment are ignorance and illiteracy. Women experience gender sensitivity, sex seclusion, illiteracy, and a lack of political understanding. According to field research, women's low self-esteem and social marginalization in the setting of power politics impede their ability to become politically empowered. The figures show that purdah limits women's mobility and visibility, which negatively affects female political participation across the board, from voting to running for office. Moreover, the Pakhtun way of life views women's political empowerment as a social disgrace and is culturally undesirable (Ullah, 2018).

Everyone should have an equal opportunity to cast a ballot in free and fair elections. However, this is usually not the case. It is well recognized that both historical and contemporary policies in developed industrial democracies such as the US suppress the votes of racial and ethnic minorities (Hajnal, 2017). Voting by religious minorities is frequently suppressed in developing nations like Pakistan due to discriminatory practices(Uddin, 2017). In the instance of Pakistan, the sixth-most populous nation in the world. Even with top-down measures like gender quotas in political parties and gender-neutral polling places, the nation nevertheless has one of the biggest gender gaps in voter turnout. Academic studies on

women's participation in politics in South Asia highlight the influence of networks, norms, family autonomy, and descriptive representation on women.

Pakistan has conducted elections every five years since 2008. In these elections, voters cast ballots for both the Provincial Assembly and the National Assembly. The status of women in Pakistani politics has generated a lot of discussion and controversy in recent years. Although women have come a long way in the political sphere, there are still many obstacles standing in their way of full and equal participation. The administration of Pakistan has traditionally been governed by men. In spite of these barriers, Pakistani women are increasingly engaged in politics and even holding high-ranking positions (UNDP). Social justice, human rights, and gender equality have all been regarded impossible to achieve without women's political engagement. Since it offers a distinct viewpoint on issues, women's involvement in political institutions is essential to the development of a more inclusive and representative democracy.

Women in Pakistan still confront major obstacles to full and equal political involvement, despite advancements in a number of sectors. establishments and procedures for making decisions. In both society and culture, conventions have evolved. Women have always been underrepresented in politics, especially in rural areas. Women's participation in politics is also impeded by significant economic constraints. Women in Pakistan have limited access to resources, work opportunities, and educational opportunities. Women find it challenging to enter the male-dominated political arena and compete because of this barrier to entrance (Khan, 2012).Apart from facing cultural, sociological, and financial limitations, women in Pakistan also face discrimination, harassment, and violence based on their gender when they engage in political activities. At political rallies and campaigns, women are subjected to verbal abuse, physical assault, and threats. Women are not allowed to vote and are frequently left out of positions of decision-making inside political parties. Recognizing that more women must participate in political institutions is essential to achieving social justice, democracy, and gender equality. WomenarecurrentlyunderrepresentedinPakistani politics.Obstacles thataresocietal,economic, cultural,andWomen's participation will be ensured by addressing gender-based violence and discrimination (Alam-e-Niswan, 2022). Even with these encouraging advancements, Pakistani women still encounter major barriers to entering politics.

Women's access to education is limited and education, which influences their capacity to participate effectively in politics. Furthermore, women frequently encounter harassment and prejudice in the political sphere, which may deter them from going into the field. These issues need to be resolved if Pakistan is to attain social justice, democracy, and gender equality as well as full realization of women's political rights and possibilities. Women in Pakistan are much lower than men. In Pakistan's National Assembly, Senate,and provincial assemblies, women have just 23%, 20%, and 8% of the seats, respectively(Zakar, 2013).

3.3 Incidentsof Womenbeing DeniedtheRighttoVoteinKP

In Pakistan, community leaders and family elders either restrict women from leaving their houses to vote in general elections, or an agreement is negotiated between the competing candidates (Sherazi, 2013). There have been cases where political organizations, rival candidates, and election officials prevented women from casting ballots (Ayesha A. Z., 2020). Here are a few instances of laws that restrict women's ability to vote: Pashtun areas in KP province:

- Hundreds of women weren't given the ability to vote in the March 2001 local government elections in the majority of union boards in Swabi's KP region. Local Jirga members, heads of religious political groups, representatives of different significant political organizations, and candidates signed a document prohibiting women from casting ballots.
- In a supplementary election for the National Assembly held on December 28, 2008, women were totally prohibited from casting ballots in the Buner district at over 25% of the polling places. 18 939 women had been registered to vote in 35 polling places, according to the ECP statistics, but none of them cast ballots (Ayesha A. Z., 2020).

I)Women Barred from Voting in District Dir Lower

Women's rights advocates and social activists, such the Aurat Foundation, have voiced opposition to the ban on women voting in a number of Dir Lower districts. Because of these threats, no one applied for the reserved seats for the district (Shah, 2015).

During the election, a number of religious statements were made that forbade women from voting, citing Islamic prohibitions and the sinfulness of doing so. In certain regions, people were warned not to go to the funerals of female candidates and the family members of those candidates who cast ballots in local elections (Shah, 2015).

Not a single woman cast a ballot in the Regional Assembly by-election in constituency Dir Lower PK-95, out of fifty thousand eligible registered voters (Aurat Foundation 2013). Prior to the election, every contender pledged that women would not be able to cast ballots for security reasons and that, should a candidate deviate from this agreement, Pact would be obligated to pay a maximum of 5 million rs (Aurat Foundation, 2013).

This deterred some Lower Dir women so much that they petitioned the Peshawar High Court for re-election. But the judge was unsure about whether women were truly barred from voting by force, thus the court dismissed the lawsuit (Khan, 2009).

II)Electoral Politics in District Dir Lower

Nawab Shah Jehan Khan ruled the kingdom of Dir in 1947. It was established a district in 1970 after it was incorporated to Pakistan in 1969. The district was split into Upper Dir and Lower Dir, two distinct districts, in 1996. The Lower Dir district, which spans 1583 square kilometers, is situated in the northwest of the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. With a few remote regions in the southwest, the terrain is primarily hilly. The district shares borders with Swat District on the east, Afghanistan on the west, Upper Dir and Chitral on the north and northwest, and Malakand and Bajaur Agency on the south. The district is represented in the Provincial Assembly by four elected MPAs.

In Dir Lower, women practically never participate in politics, even though many of them exercise their rights and obligations within the context of Islam. In one of the most socially conservative regions in the nation, politics is perceived as a vocation dominated by men. Relationship. Women have never been able to vote in national elections or take an active role in politics since the princely states of Dir and Pakistan united in 1969. Unexpectedly, though, all Khyber Pakhtunkhwa political and religious groups declared their support for women being able to cast ballots in the province's May 2013 local government elections. Pakistan's cultural norms uphold women's rights.

There are situations when religion justifies seclusion and isolation. For example, gender discrimination and female seclusion (Purdah) often hinder the expression of Islamic views that promote women's access to resources. They also prohibit women from exercising their fundamental right to vote and from standing for office (Shaheed et al, 2009). Compared to women in other regions of the nation, women in Dir Lower have greater societal obstacles. Women's mobility is restricted by social standards. (Shah and others, 2015). Women's limited

visibility and mobility negatively impact their ability to participate in politics at all levels, including voting and office-seeking.

Purdah, in that negatively affects women's political empowerment, as do worries over their safety in rural places. In Kalam (2014). In the cultural environment of Dir Lower, men are the majority. This limits women's access to political and educational opportunities. In Naz (2011). The harsh rules of society are often blamed for the precarious situation that women in Dir Lower face. The state's discrimination against women on numerous grounds has made this worse (Baloch, 2012). Due to a lack of resources and a lack of knowledge about their rights, women are denied their rights in many spheres of life. The kind of independence that women in metropolitan Pakistan have is restricted by the traditional customs and conventions of the people living in Dir Lower (Aamir, 2015).

Significant obstacles to women's political empowerment exist in Dir Lower due to cultural customs and beliefs. Affirmative action and women's empowerment are particularly threatened by early, forced, and/or planned marriages. These customs prevent women from pursuing higher education, which could lead to more opportunities for them to enter the political sphere. Social stereotypes are deeply ingrained, antiquated views that have long held that women belong only to the home and that men should handle politics. Thomas (1994). In the case of Dir Lower, women's participation in politics and the public spheres is still very low and their status in these fields is relatively recent.

They continue to be glaringly underrepresented in leadership roles at all levels. Women's political empowerment in Dir Lower is influenced by a number of factors, including low socioeconomic position, a lack of strong role models, low educational and skill levels, and negative social opinions of women's leadership abilities, even if women's political representation and engagement are improving with time. The amount of work that women have at home and the barriers that prevent them from pursuing higher education prevent women from participating in politics and reaping the same opportunities and benefits as men. The majority of persons and families in Dir Lower have very little decision-making autonomy when it comes to women. Because women are discriminated against simply for being women, almost every aspect of girls' and women's life is characterized by low status. Pakhtun culture, particularly in Dir Lower, is influenced by the traditional norms and values instilled in women during their upbringing. The prevalent cultural worldview and

discriminatory social structure have a substantial impact on their social life, position, and role (Ullah, 2018).

Elections are the primary means of political representation and public participation in democratic processes. As societies change, the importance of electoral dynamics also changes, thus it's critical to examine and understand the shifting trends. Through a fascinating comparative analysis, this chapter explores the essential elements of women's engagement, candidacies, and voter turnout by focusing on the critical years of 2013 and 2018. The Chapter seeks to shed light on how women's roles in politics have changed over time and identify any potential advancements or adjustments by thoroughly evaluating the two different election cycles.

This study aims to shed light on the intricate relationship between gender and politics by carefully analyzing empirical data and thoroughly examining contextual elements. The results will be important in understanding the trajectory of women's participation in the democratic process.

3.4 Overview of 2013 Election in District Dir Lower

Pakistan's historic 2013 general election represented a major advancement in the nation's democratic process. May 11, 2013, was the date of the election (DAWN, 2013). For the first time in Pakistan's history, a civilian administration ended its entire term and peacefully handed over power to another elected civilian government, making it a historic moment. Several prominent political parties, such as the PML-N, PPP, and PTI, together with smaller religious and regional groups, took part in the elections gatherings. The PML-N was able to create the federal government after the elections, emerging as the largest party in the National Assembly.

In his political career, PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif has held the position of prime minister three times (Craig, 2023). The general elections of 2013 marked a sea change in Pakistani politics. It illustrated the Pakistani people's increasing political consciousness and engagement and showed promise for the country's democratic consolidation. District Dir Lower had a diversified voter base in the 2013 general elections, with a sizable proportion of voters from various political parties and ethnic backgrounds, as well as voters from both rural and urban regions. In Dir Lower, there is one member in the National Assembly (NA 34) and four provincial seats (PK 94, 95, 96, and 97). The candidates are listed in the tables below.

S.No	CandidateName	PoliticalParty	Votes
1	ShahibZadaMuhammadYaqub	JI	46968
2	MuhammadBashir Khan	PTI	45503
3	Fazlullah	JUI-F	22535
4	MuhammadAzamKhan	ANP	8861
5	HajiMuhammadUmar	QWP	7230
6	MalakAzmatKhan	PPP-P	6197
7	FaridKhanYousafzai	PML-N	5796
8	AlamKhan	HDP	2207
9	**MstNasratBegum**	Independent	185
10	Sayed NasarShah	Independent	168
11	HayatullahKhanSadat	Independent	164
12	ShafiurRahman	APML	156
13	MalakRahmatullah	Independent	118

Table2All CandidateandVotes ofGeneral Election2013of PK94DirLowerSource:General Election2013 Report

S.No	CandidateName	PoliticalParty	Votes
1	MuzafarSaid	JI	14456
2	MehmoodZebKhan	PPP-P	9691
3	MuhammadAyoubKhan	ANP	7010
4	MuhammadInamKhan	PTI	6977
5	AayazUdDin	JUI-F	1996
6	FarooqIqbalBadshah	PML-N	1074
7	MuhammadNabiShah	Independent	121
8	BahadarKhan	Independent	71
9	ShahKhizarKhan	Independent	52
10	Habibullah	APML	44

Table3All CandidateVotes Election2013 ofPK95 DirLower Sources:GeneralElection2013Report

S.No	CandidateName	Party	Votes
1	SirajUlHaq	JI	23030

2	HidayatUllahKhan	ANP	11130
3	UbeduallahSajid	PTI	1917
4	RehmatUllahKhan	PPP-P	676
5	AbdulRehmanKhan	JUI-F	614
6	DoctorDidarMuhammad	PML-N	190
7	ZiaUlHaq	MDM	154
8	DoctorNoorAliJan	Independent	29
9	IkramUlHaq	Independent	17

Table 4 All Candidate Votes Election 2013 of PK96 Dir LowerSource:General Election2013 Report

S.No	CandidateName	Party	Votes
1	SaeedGul	JI	14193
2	mmadZaminKhanAdvocate	PPP-P	7391
3	MubarakJanAliasKhanSherin	PTI	5085
4	NaeemJan	ANP	1295
5	MuhammadShakirUllahKhan	JUI-F	625
6	AnwarSyed	PML-N	229
7	RaheemUllah	Independent	58
8	MuhammadKhan	Independent	56
9	SayedNasirShah	Independent	19

Table 5 All Candidate Votes Election 2013 of PK97 Dir LowerSource:General Election2013Report

S.N0	CandidateName	Party	Votes
1	BakhtBaidar	QWP	10965
2	SultanatYar	JI	7628
3	ZakirullahKhan	PPP-P	6200
4	GulNasibKhan	JUI-F	4710
5	MalakFakhru ZamanKhan	PTI	4396
6	HussainShah	ANP	4279
7	SaidGhani	PML-N	2259
8	ZainulArifin	PST	394
9	SalimKhan	Independent	309
10	KhwajaFaizulAkram	TTP	205

11	Sartaj	PKMAP	170
12	FazalGhafar	Independent	106
13	MumtazMahmood	Independent	87

Table6Womenregistered VoterandTurnoutof NA-6&7 DistrictDirLowerin theGeneralelection2013

Source:DistrictElectionCommissionofPakistan2013

Shahib Zada Muhammad Yaqub of JI won the National Assembly seat NA 34 after a fierce contest against Muhammad Bashir Khan of PTI. Siraj Ul Haq, Saeed Gul, and Muzafar Said, the JI candidates, also win the three provincial seats (PK 94, 95, and 96). In contrast, Bakht Baidar of the QWP won Pk 97. The only female candidate, Ms. Nasrat Begum, who ran independently for the National Assembly seat NA-34 and received 185 votes, was the most intriguing aspect of the 2013 general election (ECP Report, 2013).

S.No	Name of theConstituency	AllRegiste redVoters	WomenRe gisteredV oters	Totalvo tepolled	Women Votepol led	TotalT urnouti n %	Women Turn in%
1	NA34	504694	227112	146088	00	28.94	00%

Table7WomenregisteredVoter andTurnoutofProvincial SeatsofDistrictDir LowerintheGeneralelection 2013

DistrictElectionCommissionerDirLower

S.No	Name of theConstituency	AllRegiste redVoters	WomenR egistered Voters	Total votep olled	Women Votepol led	TotalTu rn-out in %	Women Turnin %
1	PK94	137191	61684	41492	00	30.24	00%
2	PK95	120813	54760	37757	00	31.25	00%
3	PK96	109211	49022	28951	00	27.45	00%
4	PK97	137479	61646	48010	00	34.92	00%
	Total	504694	227112	156210	00	30.95	00%

3.5 Women Participation and Representation in 2013 Election in DistrictDir Lower

In the country's 2013 general elections, women's participation as candidates and voters increased, including in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Women in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa turned out in large numbers to cast ballots and speak out in favor of political participation (Anwar & Ahmed, 2017). In comparison to 48.6 million active male voters, there were only 37.6 million eligible female voters in the nation for the 2013 general elections. This resulted in a male voter percentage of 56.4% and a female voter percentage of 43.6% across the country. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has 42.9% of qualified female voters (ECP, 2013).

In the 2013 general election, there were 227112 female registered voters in District Dir Lower, out of a total of 504694 registered voters. The tables below provide the information:

The District Dir Lower national and provincial assembly constituency details for the 2013 general election were provided in the tables above. The data displays the total number of votes cast, the number of women cast, the overall turnout, and the turnout of women in the general elections.The data makes this evidentthat there was no female participation in the 2013 general election. In the general election of 2013, women were prohibited from casting ballots. Prior to the election, women would exercise their right to vote, as agreed upon by local authorities and representatives of all political parties in a jirga. In actuality, Dir Lower's female residents were denied the opportunity to vote. This is the reason why there were no female voters in the 2013 general election.

3.5.1 Female Candidates in General Election 2013

In Pakistan, District Dir Lower is regarded as one of the more conservative neighborhoods. Local women were not permitted to cast ballots or even run for office. The first female candidate for district Dir Lower's general election was General Mst Nasrat Begum in 2013. She received 185 votes when she ran independently from NA-34 in the election (ECP, 2013). District Dir Lower saw the sole female contender in the region's election history. Not a single political party, not even the liberal and progressive ones, denied a female candidate a ticket to run in the general election

3.5.2 Women from District Dir Lower on Reserved Seat

Sobia Shahid from Rabat Dir Lower was chosen by the PMLN to be on the women's reserve for the KP provincial legislature following the 2013 general election (Majid, 2020).

In the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, Sobia Shahid became the first woman to be chosen for a reserved seat from Dir lower. In fact, it was a huge turning point for women's representation and involvement in politics in the Dir region. In Pakistan, women's political representation and involvement have been vital concerns for advancing gender equality and addressing the underrepresentation of women in many regions' decision-making processes.

3.5.3 Females Voter turnout in General Election 2013

During the 2013 general election, every political party in District Dir lower made the decision to forbid women from voting. Although several women voted, their ballots were not considered for the election's outcome. (Personal communication with S. Shamsi, July 25, 2023). Despite casting a small number of female votes, Dir Lower's female turnout in the 2013 general election is regarded as zero.

3.6 Overviewof2018Electionin DistrictDirLower

Because Pakistan saw a transition of power through a general election for the second time in a row, the 2018 election marked a key milestone in the nation's democratic history. July 25, 2018, was the date of the election (Dawn.com, 2018). The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI), the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), the PML-N, and other minor religious and regional groups including JUI, JI, ANP, MQM, BAP, etc. were some of the major political parties that took part in the elections. With the support of several minor political parties and independent candidates, the PTI, which had won the most seats in the National Assembly following the elections, was able to establish a coalition government at the federal level.

PTI Chairman When Imran Khan founded the PTI in 1994, he began a 22-year battle to become prime minister. The increased voter turnout, political awareness, and public participation in state activities during the 2018 general elections marked a turning point in Pakistan's political history and showed the state's democratic process' potential. The fact that the 2018 election saw the ascent of a third political force, aside from the PPP and PML-N, for the first time made it noteworthy (Rais, 2018). The number of seats in the National Assembly and provincial assemblies has increased as compared to the general election of 2013.

In the number of seats in the National Assembly has increased, going from one to two seats, or NA 6 and NA 7. The fact that each district now has two representatives makes it possible for the interests and concerns of the people to be more inclusively represented at the federal level from Dir Lower. In a similar vein, there are now five seats instead of four in the provincial assembly (PK 13–17). A greater variety of views and viewpoints will have the

chance to be heard during the decision-making processes in each province thanks to the increase in the number of seats.

In fact, PTI formed a provincial government and became the third political force to emerge from the 2013 election. PTI did not win a single seat from district Dir lower in the 2013 general election, however in the 2018 election, PTI nearly won every province and national seat. The tables below provide a general summary of every district Dir Lower constituency.

Table 8 All Candidate and Votes of General Election 2018, NA 6 Dir LowerSource:Election Commission of Pakistan 2018

S.No	CandidateName	PartyName	Votes
1	MehboobShah	PTI	63717
2	AsadUllah	MMA	37687
3	MuhammadZahidKhan	ANP	31482
4	AhmadHassan	PPP	28268
5	JavedAkhtar	PML-N	3613
6	EhsanUllah	TLP	3169
7	AmjadAli	AAT	819
8	Habib Ullah	APML	678

Table 9 All Candidate and Votes of General Election 2018, NA 7 Dir LowerSource:Election Commission of Pakistan 2018

S.No	CandidateName	Politicalparty	Votes
1	MuhammadBashir Khan	PTI	63071
2	SirajulHaq	MMA	46927
3	NazirKhan	ANP	19743
4	SyedShahidAhmadJan	PPP	10074
5	MuhammadKhalid	AAT	1316
6	**SobiaShahid**	PML-N	1256
7	AbdulGhaffarKhan	APML	305
8	MubarakJaan	Independent	185

Table10AllCandidateandVotesof GeneralElection2018,PK 13DirLowerSource:Election Commission of Pakistan, 2018

S.No	CandidateName	PoliticalParty	Votes
1	MuhammadAzamKhan	PTI	21683
2	ShadNawazKhan	MMA	18832
3	MalakMuhammad ZaibKhan	ANP	11516
4	MuhammadZaminKhan	PPP	10121
5	AzharTaqweem	PML-N	2862
6	ShahSaood	Independent	111
7	HidayatUllahKhan	Independent	68

Table11AllCandidateandVotesof GeneralElection2018,PK 14DirLowerSources:Election Commission of Pakistan, 2018

S.No	CandidateName	PoliticalParty	Votes
1	HamayunKhan	PTI	19619
2	BakhtBaidar	PPP	18598
3	ZahirUllahKhan	MMA	14646
4	HussainShah	ANP	9365
5	MuhammadIbrahim	TLP	3845
6	SaidGhani	PML-N	2943
7	HaiderAli	Independent	2709
8	MianSaidNabiBakhsh	QWP	1677
9	UbaidUllahAnwar	PRP	956
10	ZiaudDin	AAT	461
11	Jamil Ahmad	Independent	324

Table12AllCandidateandVotesof GeneralElection2018,PK 15DirLowerSource:Election Commission of Pakistan, 2018

S.No	CandidateName	PoliticalParty	Votes
1	ShafiUllah	PTI	21338
2	MahmoodZaibKhan	PPP	17564
3	MuzaffarSaid	MMA	16743
4	SajjadAhmad	ANP	7628
5	SayedInyaturRehman	PML-N	631
6	AbdurRauf	Independent	186
7	**Sumera**	Independent	100

8	MuhabatSaid	APML	85
9	NoorMuhammmad	Independent	67
10	KhalidMehmood	Independent	44
11	ShahKhizer	PML-Z	19

Table13All CandidateandVotes ofGeneralElection 2018,PK 16DirLower
Source:ElectionCommissionofPakistan,2018

S.No	CandidateName	Party	Votes
1	BahadarKhan	ANP	19021
2	IzazulMulk	MMA	16301
3	SarBilandKhan	PTI	11988
4	MuhammadIqbal	PPP	1257
5	MohammadHuzaifa	Independent	804
6	AbdulRahmanKhan	PML-N	516
7	ZiaulHaq	PRP	395

Table14AllCandidateandVotesof   GeneralElection2018,PK
17DirLowerSource:Election   Commission   of   Pakistan,
2018

S.No	CandidateName	PoliticalParty	Votes
1	LiaqatAliKhan	PTI	22886
2	SaeedGull	MMA	18850
3	MuhammadMuzaffarKhan	PPP	6308
4	NaeemJan	ANP	5056
5	Aziz ul Haq	Independent	2200
6	Said IftikharShah	AAT	1427
7	ShaukatAliKhan	PML-N	327
8	ShafiurRahman	APML	138
9	MubarakJan	Independent	60

PTI won two National Assembly seats from district Dir Lower in the 2018 general election. Mehboob Shah won NA 6 with 63717 votes, while Muhammad Bashir Khan won NA 7 with 63071 votes. However, the PTI won five of the provincial seats, while the ANP won one. PTI candidate from PK 13 Muhammad Azam Khan received 21683 votes, PTI candidate from PK 14 Hamayun Khan received 19619 votes, PTI candidate from PK 15 Shafi Ullah received 21338 votes, ANP candidate from PK 16 Bahadar Khan received 19021 votes, and PTI candidate from PK-17 Liaqat Ali Khan won in the election with a total of 22,886

votes in his favor. In the general election, PTI achieved an impressive victory, securing almost a clean sweep in Dir Lower. The PTI candidates successfully managed to mobilize the people, galvanizing them to come out and cast their votes.

3.7 Women Participation and Representation in 2018 General Election inDistrictDir Lower

Compared to 2013, there was a 23% increase in the number of male and female voters in the 2018 general elections. In 2018, there were 105.96 million registered voters. Of them, 46.73 million voters nationwide are women and 59.22 million voters are men (Chaudhry, 2018). The total number of voters registered for the 2018 general election was 681837; in district Dir Lower, there were 403754 registered male voters and 278083 registered female voters. (Downs, 2019 Election Commissioner).

3.7.1 Female candidate in the General election 2018 in District Dir Lowe

The underrepresentation of female candidates in general elections is a persistent source of concern. The underrepresentation of women in politics continues to be a critical issue that necessitates attention and action, notwithstanding the steps taken toward gender equality and women's empowerment in different domains. This election's low number of female candidates serves as a clear reminder of the gender disparity in political leadership that still exists. Nonetheless, the 2018 general election saw the greatest number of female candidates in the nation's election history, with 171 of them running against 272 general seats of the National Assembly nationwide (Khan, 2018).

When it comes to running for public office, women still face several obstacles and hurdles, such as systemic prejudices that impede their advancement, lack of access to resources and networks, and social stereotypes that impede their advancement particularly in places like District Dir Lower. District Dir Lower saw the candidacies of two female candidates in the 2013 general election. The first political party to offer a female candidate a party ticket to run in the election was the Pakistan Muslim League. As the candidate for Dir Lower's NA 7 constituency, Sobia Shahid received 1256 votes (ECP, 2018). Sumera, an independent running for the PK-15 provincial seat, received 100 votes, making her the second female candidate (ECP, 2018).

Women's involvement as candidates increased by 50% in the 2018 general election compared to the 2013 election, when there was just one female contender in Dir Lower. In 2018, the pressing need to close the gender gap in Dir Lower politics was highlighted by two

female candidates seeking general office. We can pave the way for a more just and representative democracy where all citizens' opinions, regardless of gender, are respected and heard by encouraging an environment that is welcoming and inclusive, encouraging women to take on leadership roles, and questioning established conventions.

3.7.2 Women from District Dir Lower on reserved seat

As we previously stated in 2013, Sobia Shahid from district Dir Lower was chosen by the PMLN to fill the woman-reserved seat WR-16 in the Kp provincial parliament. She was re-selected by the party in 2018 to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Assembly's women's reserve seat, WR-21 (KP Assembly, 2018). Furthermore, the PTI selected Sumera Shams on the women reserved Seat WR-5 to represent District Dir Lower in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Assembly, following the party's historic victory in the district and overall majority in the federal and provincial assemblies (Dagia, 2018). As the newest member of the Assembly, Sumera Shams' vote in favor of a women's reserved sea would have a favorable effect on women's representation and political engagement in District Dir Lower of the women-reserved seats of the 2018 KP legislature, the proportion of women rose by 50% compared to the 2013 legislature. It's critical to remember that more women need to be represented. To establish an atmosphere where women's engagement and representation in politics may grow and have a lasting influence, policies that support gender equality, women's political empowerment, and changing societal views are essential.

3.7.3 WomenTurnoutin2018General electioninDistrictDirLower

Women were prohibited from voting in numerous areas during the 2013 general election, especially in District Dir Lower. In order to guarantee women's election participation, the government inserted a clause in the Election Act 2017 that gives the ECP the authority to declare the poll invalid in the event that it discovers any limitations on women's voting rights in any constituency. In accordance with Election Act of 2017, Section 9, The Commission may determine that a contract has prevented female voters from casting a ballot and declare voting at-large. If the percentage of women voting is less than 10% of the total votes cast in the constituency, polling stations or an election in the entire constituency will be deemed illegitimate. The 2017 Election Act. Compared to 2013, female voter turnout in Dir Lower increased dramatically with enthusiastic involvement in the 2018 general election. Voting was conducted by a huge number of diverse women who showed a strong desire to influence the direction of their country. There were 278083 female voters registered

in 2018 (Election Commissioner Dir, 2019). The tables below list the female turnout in each of Dir Lower's constituencies.

Table15Womenregistered Voterand Turnoutof NA-6&7 DistrictDir Lowerin theGeneralelection2018Source:DistrictElection CommissionerDirLower

S. No	Name of theConstituency	AllRegisteredVoters	Women RegisteredVoters	Total votepolled	Women Votepolled	TotalTurnoutin %	Women Turnin %
1	NA6	351245	145576	171775	51636	48.90	35.47
2	NA7	330592	132507	146178	41400	44.21	31.24
	Total	681837	278083	312953	93036	46.53	33.45

Table 16 Women registered Voter and Turnout of Provincial Seats of District Dir LowerintheGeneral election 2018Source:Form45,DistrictElectionCommissionerDirLower

S. No	Name of Constituency	AllRegisteredVoters	WomenRegistered Voters	Totalvotepolled	Women Votepolled	TotalTurnout in %	Women Turnin %
1	PK13	140941	55637	66494	19569	47.18	35.17
2	PK14	160377	68253	77239	22430	48.16	32.86
3	PK15	123813	51749	64167	21268	51.83	41.09
4	PK16	112215	43645	51214	13501	45.64	30.93
5	PK17	144491	58799	58894	16389	40.76	27.87
	Total	681837	278083	318008	93157	46.63	33.49

The percentage of women who voted in all of District Dir Lower's provincial constituencies was 33.49%, compared to 33.45% in the national constituencies. Out of all the national and provincial constituencies in district Dir Lower, PK 15 had the largest percentage of female voters (41.09%), while PK 17 had the lowest percentage of female voters (26.78%). In 2018, female voter turnout was the highest in District Dir Lower's electoral history. The female turnout in the general election of 2018 was especially noteworthy because, in that election, the female poll was prohibited. Unprecedented difficulties during the previous general election impeded the democratic process and raised questions about the fair representation and involvement of women in politics.

CHAPTER 4

# 4. Data Analysis and Discussion:

4.1 Data Analysis

The survey results on social media's influence on political engagement are presented in this chapter, with a particular emphasis on women in District Dir Lower. The demographic profile of the respondents, their social media usage habits, their involvement in politics, and their opinions on the place of women in politics are all determined by analyzing the data gathered from the questionnaire. The results are interpreted in the discussion section in the perspective of the distinct socio-cultural setting of the area as well as the body of current literature.

4.1.1 Age

The 228 respondents' age distribution study shows a significant concentration in the younger age categories, with the majority (56.58%) falling between 25 and 34 years old and 20.61% falling between 18 and 24 years old. This suggests that the majority of respondents to the poll were young to middle-aged adults, who are probably more involved in the themes the survey covers and more active on social media. On the other hand, just 7.89% of respondents fall into the 45–54 age group, and 3.51% go into the 55 and above category. This means that older age groups are underrepresented.

This distribution implies that the views and behaviors of younger adults, specifically those between the ages of 18 and 34, will be most represented in the study's findings. The underrepresentation of older persons may be a sign of decreased social media use or a need for more study to fully comprehend their viewpoints. Overall, the age distribution emphasizes how crucial it is to take demographic variables into account when analysing survey data because these variables may have an impact on how broadly the conclusions may be applied to other age groups.

Age:
228 responses

Under 18
18-24
25-34
35-44
45-54
55 and above

56.6%

20.6%
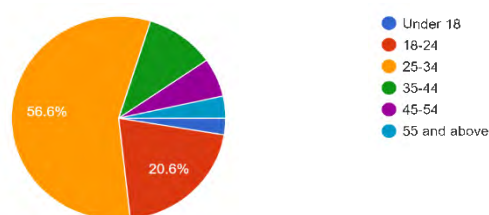
4.1.2 Education:

A wide range of educational backgrounds are evident in the study of the 228 respondents' educational attainment, with a notable concentration in higher secondary and university education levels. 33.77% of the respondents were the largest group, having completed higher secondary school. A bachelor's degree was held by 30.26% of the respondents. This suggests that most participants have attained a comparatively high level of education, which may have an impact on how they use social media and participate in politics. Significantly, 22.37% of respondents had finished secondary school, indicating that a sizable portion of respondents have at least a basic degree of formal education.

On the other hand, the low percentage of respondents with only a primary education (0.88%) or no formal education (3.07%) highlights the sample's overall high level of educational achievement. Furthermore, the fact that 7.46% of respondents had a master's degree and 1.75% had a Ph.D. or above indicates that the survey drew a knowledgeable audience. Given the variety of educational attainment, it is possible that the study's conclusions underrepresent the opinions of those with less education, which may have an impact on how they use social media and engage in politics. Instead, the perspectives of those with greater education may be more prevalent.

Education Level:
227 responses
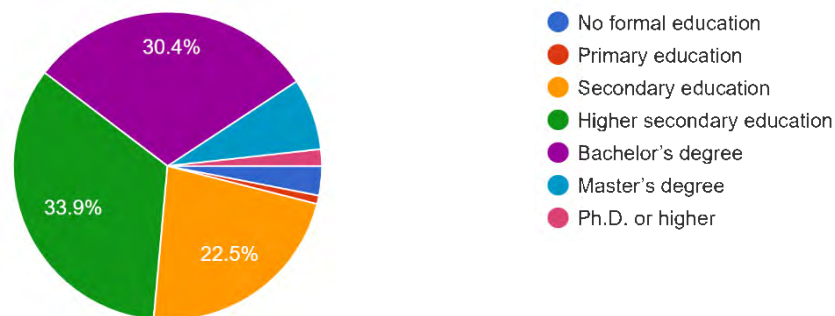
4.1.3 Occupation

Students make up the largest category, accounting for 56.58% of the sample as a whole, according to an examination of the respondents' jobs. This substantial student presence suggests that the attitudes and behaviors of younger people who are still pursuing their education will be strongly reflected in the survey results. Since this demographic is

probably more engaged in the digital sphere and more active on social media, their views are especially pertinent to understanding how social media affects youth political engagement.

With 24.56% of the respondents, those in the workforce make up the second-largest group. This suggests that working professionals contribute significantly to the study as well, providing information into how employed individuals manage their professional obligations and participate in social media and political activities. This group's diversity of employment may offer a range of viewpoints on how various job positions affect the amount of time and energy spent on social media use and political involvement.

Homemakers (6.58%), jobless people (11.40%), and retirees (0.44%) are smaller categories. In comparison to students and working adults, homemakers and retirees may have different priorities or use social media for political activity less frequently. Though they make up a bigger portion of the population than housewives and retirees, the unemployed may also have unique insights, especially when it comes to how socioeconomic status affects political and social media participation. The respondents' diverse social backgrounds are highlighted by the general occupational distribution, underscoring the need of considering the ways in which various living situations and obligations affect social media usage and political activity.

Occupation:
227 responses
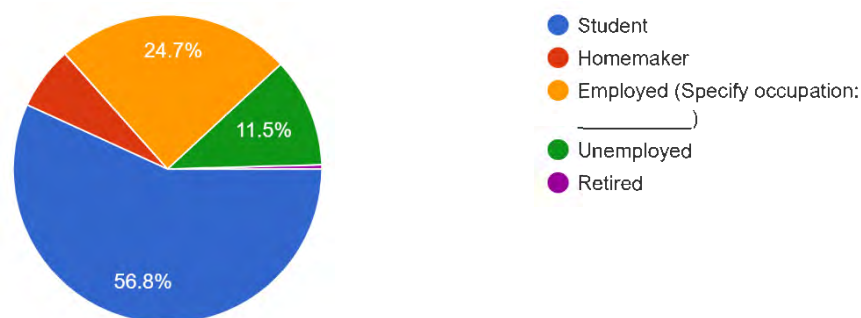
4.1.4Marital Status

The majority of the 228 respondents, or 64.47%, are single, according to an examination of their marital status. This suggests that the poll was predominantly completed by people who could have fewer responsibilities to their families and more free time for social media and political engagement. It is expected that the results will largely reflect the

attitudes and actions of this demographic group because of the substantial representation of single respondents, who are probably younger and may still be in the early phases of their employment or schooling.

The second-largest group of respondents, comprising 27.63% of the total, are married. This suggests that a sizable percentage of poll respondents are juggling social media use, political involvement, and family life. Married respondents' viewpoints might offer important insights into how one's capacity to participate in political activities online and keep informed via social media platforms may be impacted by marital duties.

Divorced (4.82%) and widowed (2.19%) respondents make up a smaller share of the remaining respondents and the sample. These groups might provide distinctive viewpoints, especially when it comes to how life transitions like divorce or the death of a spouse affect social media use and political engagement. The respondents' diverse life situations are emphasized by the overall distribution of marital status, which also emphasizes the significance of considering the ways in which different life phases impact political involvement and social media usage.

Marital Status:

226 responses
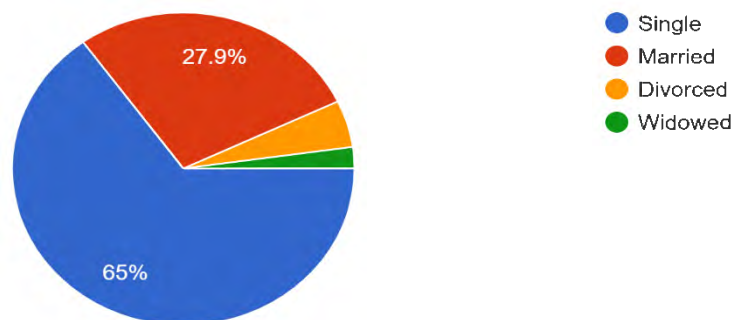
4.1.5 Social media usage

The vast majority of respondents, or 96.49%, utilize social media, according to an examination of their usage, demonstrating the platform's pervasiveness and significance in participants' everyday lives. Social media is a major tool for communication, information sharing, and maybe political activity among the responders, based on this almost universal usage. Given the high user rate, the survey's results could be quite helpful in figuring out how social media influences people's political beliefs and activities.

A tiny percentage of respondents—2.63%—said they did not use social media. This suggests that a large majority of those polled are active users of social media, which qualifies them to offer insights about the impact of social media on political engagement. The study's findings will mostly be based on the experiences of social media users because of the small percentage of non-users, who may represent people who are either disengaged from digital platforms by choice, accessibility problems, or generational differences.

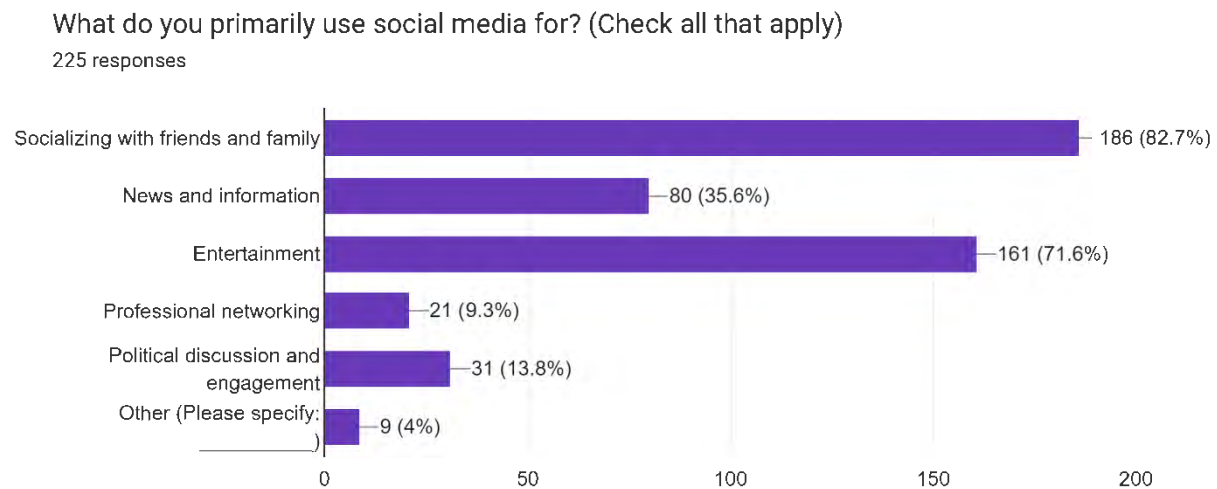Do you use social media?
226 responses
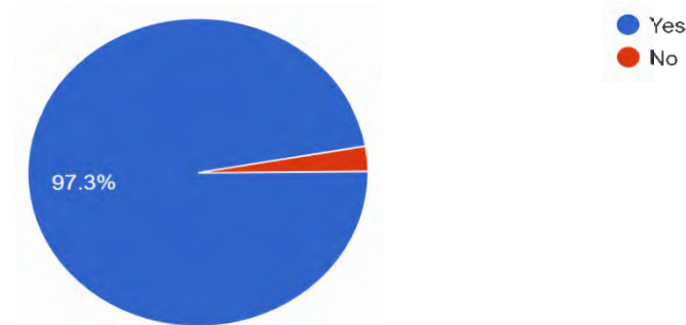
4.1.6 Purpose of Social Media Usage

Based on 225 replies, the bar chart shows the main motivations behind social media use. The most often given response, "Socializing with friends and family," accounted for 82.7% of the total with 186 responders. This implies that social media is mostly utilized as a means of preserving relationships and communication with close friends and family.

161 respondents, or 71.6% of the participants, selected "Entertainment" as the second most common use. This suggests that a sizable percentage of users use social media for leisure activities like viewing videos, looking through memes, or following content that is related to entertainment.

"News and information" comes in third place, with 80 respondents (35.6%) citing social media as their primary source of news and trend updates. This emphasizes how important the platform is in providing a wide audience with current information and updates. While social media does play a role in the professional and political arenas, these are not the main motivations for most users, as evidenced by the less prevalent usage of "Professional networking" (9.3%) and "Political discussion and engagement" (13.8%). Merely 4 percent of

the respondents chose "Other," indicating that there aren't many key uses that fall outside of the specified categories.

What do you primarily use social media for? (Check all that apply)
225 responses

4.1.7 How often they use social media:

An examination of the respondents' frequency of social media use indicates a considerable propensity for regular and frequent use of digital platforms. 81.58% of respondents, a sizable majority, said they used social media frequently. The high degree of activity highlights how important social media is to the respondents' everyday life and suggests that these platforms are essential for their communication, information intake, and perhaps political engagement. The fact that a sizable portion of the sample is heavily involved in social media emphasizes the platform's function as a major hub for political discourse, social contact, and news.

Compared to those who use social media multiple times a day, a smaller percentage of respondents—9.65%—reported using it just once a day. This reflects a more measured approach, but it still indicates regular interaction. Rather of using social media as a constant throughout their day, some individuals might use it primarily for certain goals, including connecting with friends and family or staying informed.

The remainder of the respondents, who use social media less frequently (0.88%), once a week (0.88%), or a few times a week (5.70%), comprise a minority that uses these platforms less frequently. There are a number of reasons for this decreased usage, including lifestyle decisions, personal preferences, or a conscious attempt to spend less time online. These people might not utilize social media as their main means of communication or

information gathering, and they might not interact with political content on these sites as much.

The overwhelming majority of respondents, according to the research, are quite engaged on social media, indicating that the platform is important to them. These people's high usage frequency may have a big impact on how they interact with and consume political content, as well as how they take part in online political debates and activities. The small percentage of respondents who use social media less regularly can be an indication of a group that relies more on alternative channels for information and communication and is less impacted by digital developments.

How often do you use social media?
224 responses
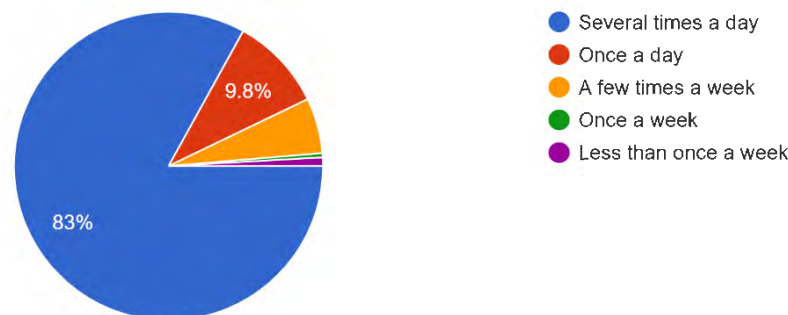
4.1.8 Political Participation

A thorough examination of the respondents' political engagement revealed a high degree of engagement, with 79.30% of them reporting having taken part in political activities. The bulk of responses imply that the participants are not just engaged on social media but also engage in offline political activity. The high degree of political participation suggests a politically knowledgeable and engaged populace, which may have been impacted by their regular use of social media as a source of political information and mobilization.

A sizeable percentage of respondents—20.18%—said they were not involved in any political activity. This category could contain people who use social media often but do not participate in politics for a variety of reasons, such as a lack of personal interest, doubts about the benefits of politics, or a desire to observe rather than participate. Their lack of engagement may also indicate a gap between political discourse online and offline politics, implying that not all social media activity translates into actual political engagement.

60

The majority of respondents had high rates of political participation, which highlights the potential role social media may play in encouraging political activism and awareness. Social media can be a starting point for many people to get involved in politics since it offers the networks and information needed to do so. On the other hand, the minority of people who do not engage in politics could need to engage in alternative ways or they might belong to a group that is less impacted by online political conversation.

Dichotomy between political activists and non-activists provides important context for understanding the dynamics of political participation in the digital era. It draws attention to the ways in which social media may be an effective tool for certain people while simultaneously highlighting the drawbacks or obstacles that keep other people from taking their online activity offline. Gaining a better understanding of the causes of this disparity may be essential to increasing political involvement among various populations.

Have you ever participated in any political activities?
225 responses
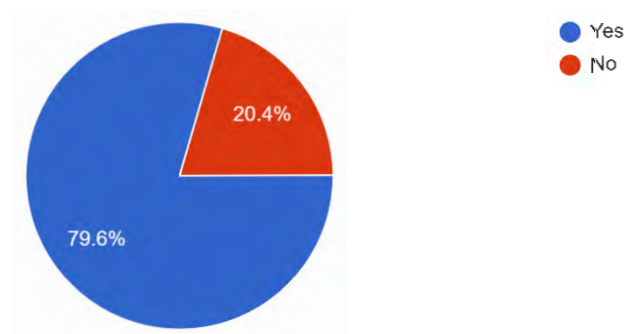
4.1.9 Political Activities

Voting in elections is by far the most popular way to get involved in politics, with 69.27% of respondents saying that they have done so, according to an analysis of the different political activities that respondents engaged in. This large proportion suggests that for most respondents, voting is still the most convenient and primary way to participate in politics. A strong feeling of civic duty and the conviction that the electoral process can impact government and policy are indicated by the emphasis placed on voting.

Conversely, it seems that the respondents engage in other types of political activity significantly less frequently. The fact that only one respondent mentioned going to political gatherings or rallies may indicate a lack of interest in or perceptions of obstacles to doing so.

61

Similarly, only two and three respondents, respectively, reported volunteering for political campaigns and participating in online political conversations. While many people are willing to vote, it may be the case that they are less likely to participate more actively in political movements or conversations given the low degree of interest in more overt or direct forms of political participation.

The fact that just 12 respondents said they had joined a political party indicates that most respondents' political lives are not significantly influenced by their political party affiliation. This may suggest a predilection for independent voting or a general mistrust of political parties, which encourages people to participate in politics outside of official party systems. The low level of involvement in other activities, like volunteering or rallying, suggests that social media or other online platforms may be used more frequently for political engagement than in-person interactions or activity in the real world.

Overall, the data indicates that while voting constitutes the primary means of political engagement for the majority of respondents, other types of participation are much less common. This may be a sign of a larger trend in which people would rather participate in politics through less visible and time-consuming means, like voting, than through more involved means, like running for office or going to demonstrations. Comprehending these participation patterns can aid in formulating tactics to promote more extensive political involvement outside of the voting booth.

If yes, what type of political activities have you participated in? (Check all that apply)
193 responses
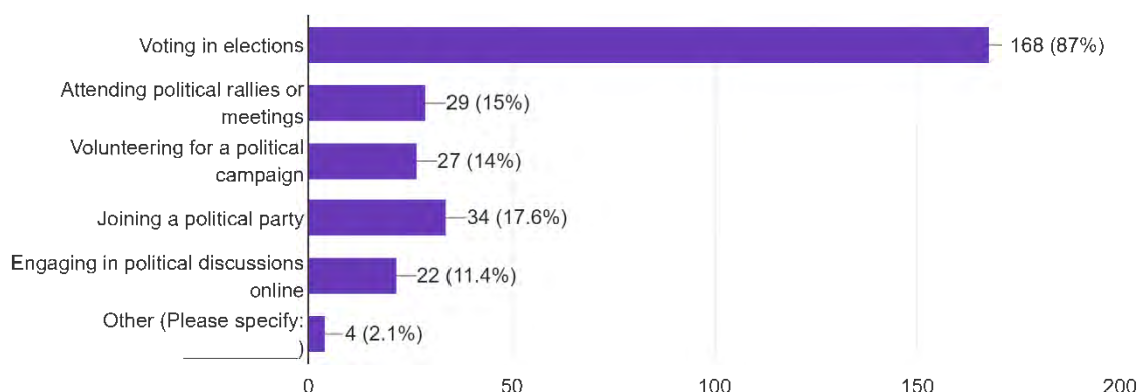
A diverse degree of engagement with political activities is revealed by the study of the respondents' frequency of political participation. Of those who claimed routinely participating, 44.74% said they did so in every election cycle. This constant

involvement demonstrates that these people have a strong sense of civic duty and are likely to regularly participate in politics because they see it as an essential component of their civic duties. Regular participants help to maintain the stability and continuity of democratic processes since they are frequently more knowledgeable and engaged.

However, 19.30% of respondents only sometimes participate, suggesting that even while they are not as involved in politics as regular participants are, they do occasionally get involved. This group's participation may be influenced by certain problems or occasions, indicating that their engagement is more situational. Occasionally involved in politics is more likely to be driven by specific issues or the significance of specific elections than by a regular involvement in politics.

A total of 35.96% of respondents said they rarely or never engage in political activities; 16.67% said they do so infrequently, and 18.86% said they never do. This sizable minority suggests that there may be a detachment or indifference in politics, which could stem from a number of things, including a sense that their participation would be insignificant, access issues, or disenchantment. The existence of a substantial number of uncommon or non-participants emphasizes the difficulties in promoting broad political participation and the significance of removing obstacles that might keep these people from taking part more frequently.

In conclusion, even if the majority of respondents indicate some degree of political involvement, a sizeable segment of the population continues to be either sporadically or completely disengaged from politics. Gaining insight into the motivations behind this range of involvement may be essential to raising civic consciousness and making sure that all opinions are heard during the legislative process.

How frequently do you participate in political activities?
227 responses

- Regularly (e.g., every election cycle)
- Occasionally (e.g., once in a while)
- Rarely (e.g., very few times)
- Never

44.9%
19.4%
16.7%
18.9%

4.1.10 Following Political Leaders:

A noteworthy tendency can be seen when one asks whether people follow political parties or leaders on social media. 152 of the respondents said they followed political figures or parties, demonstrating a significant amount of online political material consumption. This implies that a sizable portion of the population is interested in using social media platforms to remain current on political viewpoints and events.

On the other hand, 75 respondents reported that they do not follow political leaders or parties on social media. This figure reflects a smaller segment of the population who may prefer to avoid political content online or choose to engage with politics through other means, such as traditional media or personal interactions.

Overall, the data shows a distinct difference in the way people interact with political personalities on social media. Although the majority of people actively follow political figures and parties, a sizeable minority choose not to participate in this online activity, which may reflect different priorities and preferences when it comes to how they take in political information.

Do you follow any political leaders or parties on social media?
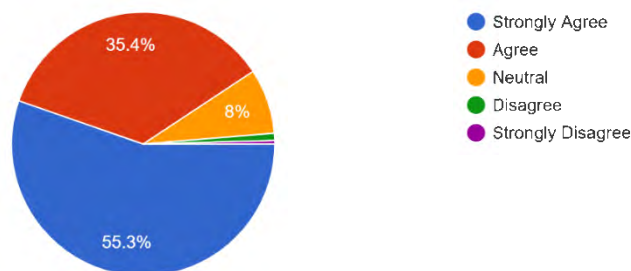227 responses
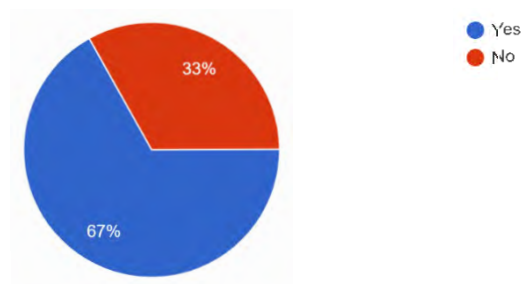
4.1.11 Social Media and Awareness of Political Issues:

There is broad agreement when it comes to the answers to the question of whether social media has raised awareness of political concerns. A considerable number of respondents—125 in all—strongly concur that social media has improved their comprehension of political issues, indicating a strong belief in the platform's ability to increase political awareness. Eighty respondents also share this opinion, which lends more credence to the idea that social media improves political awareness.

Only 18 responders, on the other hand, express no opinion, indicating that their views on the influence of social media on political awareness are ambiguous or inconsistent. It is evident from the comparatively small percentage of respondents who strongly disagree (1) or disagree (2) that social media is not a useful tool for increasing political consciousness.

The majority of participants believe social media may be a useful instrument for raising political awareness, although a small minority disagrees with this view or is apathetic.

Do you believe that social media has increased your awareness of political issues?
226 responses

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

35.4%
8%
55.3%

The responses to whether individuals have used social media to express their political opinions or support for a cause show a close divide. A total of 114 respondents, representing approximately 50.9% of the total, have used social media for such purposes, indicating a significant engagement with political expression and activism online.

On the other hand, 112 respondents, or about 49.1%, have not used social media to express their political views or support causes, suggesting that nearly half of the participants either choose not to engage in political discourse on social media or prefer other means of expression.This close split illustrates the variety of ways in which people engage with political content online by reflecting a balance between those who actively utilize social media for political goals and those who do not.

Have you ever used social media to express your political opinions or support for a cause?
226 responses

- Yes
- No

50.4%
49.6%
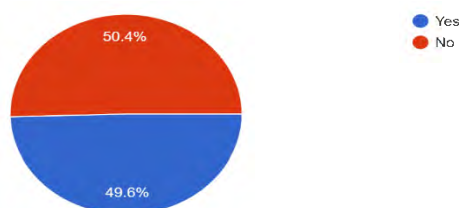
4.1.12 Social Media Influencing Political Opinions:

There has been a noticeable impact, according to replies when asked if social media has affected political beliefs or ideas. A total of 114 people strongly concur that social media has influenced their political opinions, indicating that these platforms have a significant impact on individual convictions. Eighty-five more people concur, underscoring the influence of social media on political beliefs.

On the other hand, 25 respondents express a neutral or ambiguous opinion regarding the impact of social media on their political beliefs. The modest percentage of respondents who strongly disagree (1) or disagree (2) suggests that there is little to no sense that social media influences people's political ideas.

In summary, the data indicates that a noteworthy percentage of participants hold the belief that social media has significantly influenced their political beliefs, whilst a smaller subset perceives this influence to be neutral or unimportant.

Has social media influenced your political views or opinions?
227 responses

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

37.4%

11%

50.2%
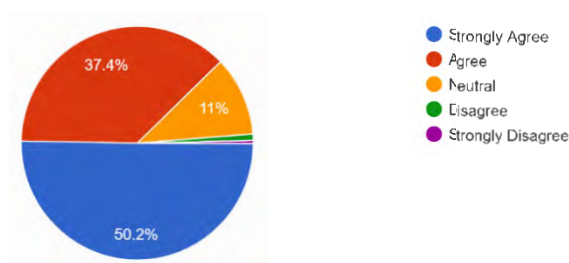
4.1.13 Social Media as a Tool for Mobilization:[i]

The answers to the question of whether social media platforms are useful instruments for political engagement and mobilization show that people strongly agree that they are. Out of the total respondents, 118 persons strongly agree (about 41.4%), stating that social media is essential for political engagement and mobilization. Furthermore, 86 respondents, or around 30.1% of the total, concur, adding credence to the notion that these platforms are successful in this area.

However, 20 respondents, or roughly 6.9% of the sample, are indifferent, expressing ambiguity or conflicting opinions regarding the usefulness of social media for political

objectives. The low percentage of respondents who strongly disagree (1) and disagree (2), which constitute 0.7% and 0.3% of the sample, respectively, indicates that relatively few people believe social media is useless for political activity. Only a small percentage of respondents questioned the effectiveness of social media platforms as tools for political engagement and mobilization, compared to the majority who think they are beneficial.

Do you think social media platforms are effective tools for political mobilization and engagement?
227 responses
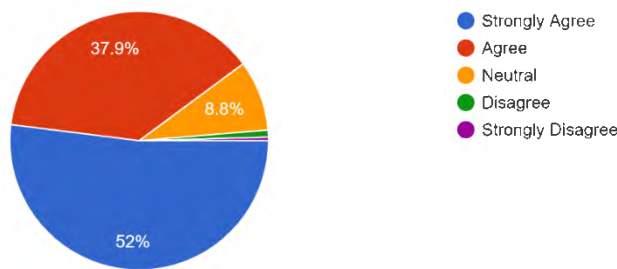
4.1.14 Advantages of Social Media for Political Participation:

A variety of perceived benefits are revealed by the responses to the question on the benefits of using social media for political engagement. With 68 respondents choosing "Easy access to information," this benefit is most frequently mentioned. This emphasizes how important social media is for giving people quick and easy access to political news and information.

Both "Direct communication with political leaders" and "Ability to connect with like-minded individuals" garnered fifteen votes apiece. This suggests that a sizable portion of people value social media for connecting them with like-minded persons and for enabling them to communicate directly with public figures.

The choice of "Real-time updates on political events" by 14 respondents emphasizes how crucial timely information is for staying informed about political developments. It is evident from the eight people who mentioned "increased visibility for marginalized voices" how social media plays a part in amplifying the voices of the underserved. Lastly, two respondents chose "Other" and added details, implying that social media has additional benefits for political participation that are not as widely known.

In your opinion, what are the main advantages of using social media for political participation?
(Check all that apply)
226 responses

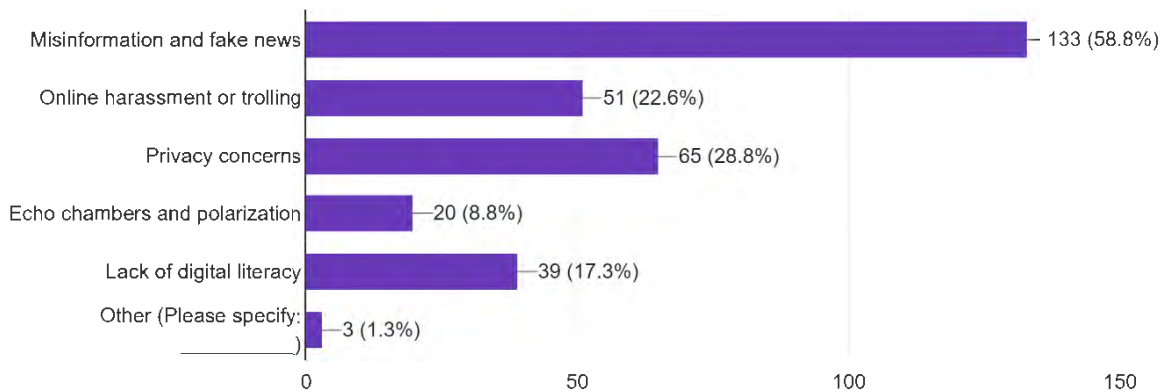|	
Easy access to information	155 (68.6%)
Ability to connect with like-minded individuals	93 (41.2%)
Direct communication with political leaders	81 (35.8%)
Real-time updates on political events	75 (33.2%)
Increased visibility for marginalized voices	55 (24.3%)
Other (Please specify:___)	3 (1.3%)
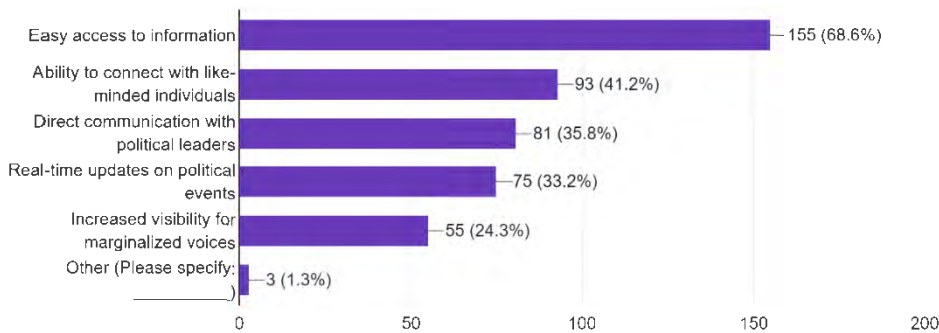
4.1.15 Disadvantages:

The comments on the difficulties or drawbacks of using social media to engage in politics bring up a number of important issues. With 68 respondents choosing "Misinformation and fake news," this is the most commonly mentioned topic. This indicates a general apprehension regarding the veracity of information disseminated via social media. 38 participants mentioned "privacy concerns," showing that a lot of people are apprehensive about the way their personal information is handled on these platforms. Twenty respondents cited "online harassment or trolling" as a major issue, highlighting the unfavorable experiences some people have with online political conversation.

The topic of "echo chambers and polarization" was selected by seven respondents, indicating that although less common, some users are nonetheless concerned about the reinforcement of prejudiced viewpoints. The observation of "lack of digital literacy" was made by 17 respondents, indicating a deficiency in the abilities required to interact critically and explore online content.

Furthermore, two respondents chose "Other" and gave their own details, bringing up additional issues that might not be as well-known but are nonetheless pertinent. This wide range of answers shows that although social media has many benefits for political engagement, users must also overcome a number of important obstacles.

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What are the main challenges or disadvantages of using social media for political participation? (Check all that apply)

226 responses

Misinformation and fake news	—133 (58.8%)
Online harassment or trolling	—51 (22.6%)
Privacy concerns	—65 (28.8%)
Echo chambers and polarization	—20 (8.8%)
Lack of digital literacy	—39 (17.3%)
Other (Please specify: ____)	—3 (1.3%)

0   50   100   150

### 4.1.15 Perception of Women Politics in Dir Lower:

District Dir Lower residents' opinions of women's roles in politics are largely favorable. Approximately 60.2% of the 137 respondents think that women's participation in politics in the district is "Very positive." This implies a strong conviction of the importance and influence of women's political involvement in the field.

A further 66 respondents, or roughly 29.2%, rate the role as "Positive," suggesting that a sizable percentage of people have a positive opinion of it, albeit not as strongly as those who rate it as extremely positive.

Conversely, 17 respondents, or approximately 7.5%, indicated that they were "Neutral," which indicates that they had no opinion or were unsure about it. The smallest groupings show that just a small portion of respondents have a negative opinion, with 5 respondents viewing the role as "Negative" (2.2%) and 2 respondents viewing it as "Very negative" (0.9%).Overall, the data reveals that most people in District Dir Lower have positive opinions on women's roles in politics, with very few having negative opinions.

How do you perceive the role of women in politics in District Dir Lower?
227 responses
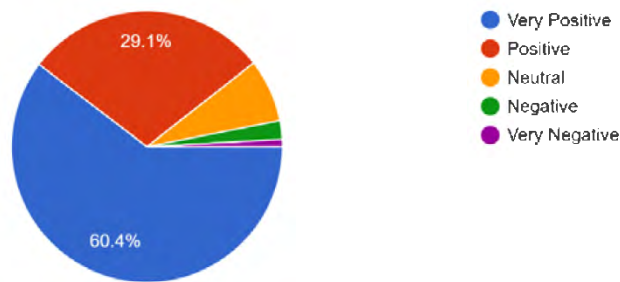
4.1.16 Can Social Media Play Role In Increasing Political Participation OfWomen

The answers to the question of whether social media can help increase women's political engagement in District Dir Lower show how strongly people believe it can. A total of 142 respondents, or roughly 62.6%, said that they "Strongly agree" that social media can increase the involvement of women in politics in the district. This suggests a strong belief in the ability of social media to increase participation and engagement.

The notion that social media might be a useful instrument for boosting women's political involvement is further supported by the 72 additional respondents, or roughly 31.5%, who marked themselves as "Agree" with the statement.

On the other hand, 7 respondents, or roughly 3.1%, indicated that they were "Neutral," which denotes ambiguity or lack of interest in the function of social media in this situation. The two "Strongly disagree" (0.9%) and "Disagree" (4.1%) respondents make up the smallest groupings of respondents, indicating the small percentage of people who do not think social media has the power to affect women's political participation.Only a small minority of respondents disagree, with the majority seeing social media as a useful tool for increasing women's political participation in District Dir Lower.

Do you think social media can play a role in increasing women's political participation in District Dir Lower?
226 responses
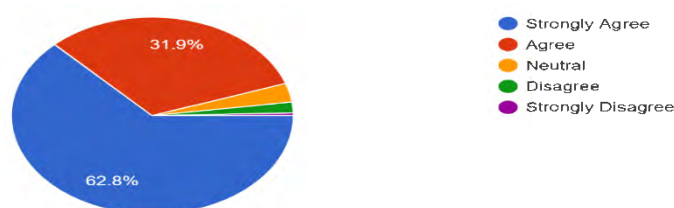
4.2 Discussion

With special focus to gender and geographical contexts, the data from the survey of 228 respondents provides some important insights on the demographics, behaviors, and views around social media and political engagement.

The respondents' age distribution shows a notable bias towards younger age groups, with 20.61% of respondents between the ages of 18 and 24 and 56.58% of respondents between the ages of 25 and 34. This focus on younger demographics implies that younger to middle-aged persons make up the majority of the viewpoints and behaviors recorded in the survey. The underrepresentation of older age groups (7.89% for those 45 to 54 and 3.51% for those 55 and above) could indicate that these age groups utilize social media differently or with lower engagement rates. This bias may affect how broadly the results may be applied, especially when considering how social media is used by people of different ages. Younger respondents predominately, which is probably due to their increased use of social media and familiarity with digital communication tools. This may have a stronger influence on their political beliefs and behaviors than it does on older respondents.

The respondents' educational backgrounds are strikingly varied, with a sizable chunk possessing bachelor's degrees (30.26%) and a large number having at least a higher secondary education (33.77%). A well-educated sample is shown by the presence of advanced degrees (7.46% with master's degrees and 1.75% with PhDs). According to this distribution of educational backgrounds, respondents are probably more knowledgeable and perceptive when it comes to social media use and political concerns. Their high level of education might have an impact on how individuals interact with political content online, which could result in more complex perceptions and engaged actions. On the other hand, the low percentage of people with only a primary education or no formal education (0.88% and 3.07%, respectively) may indicate that the opinions of those with less formal education are underrepresented, which could have an impact on the study's findings.

According to their occupation, students make up the majority of respondents (56.58%), followed by working professionals (24.56%). Due to the large percentage of students, it is possible that the poll includes a substantial quantity of data from people who are still enrolled in school, who may have different social media usage habits and levels of political activity than people who work. The lower percentages of pensioners (0.44%), homemakers (6.58%), and jobless people (11.40%) suggest that these demographics may use

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social media at different levels of participation or in different ways. The wide range of professional backgrounds emphasizes the importance of considering the ways in which different life phases and work-related obligations affect social media use and political engagement.

According to the distribution of marital status, the majority of respondents (64.47%) are single, but a sizable portion (27.63%) are married. According to this demographic split, people who are unmarried and may have less family responsibilities may interact with political and social media information more regularly and strongly. Contrarily, married respondents may strike a balance between social media use and family obligations, which may have an impact on their level of political engagement. The limited number of respondents who reported being divorced (4.82%) and widowed (2.19%) may restrict the understanding of how major life events affect social media use and political engagement.

Social media is widely used in daily life, as seen by the startling 96.49% of respondents who said they use it. Social media is widely used by respondents (81.58% of them use it frequently), which emphasizes its vital role in communication, information exchange, and maybe political activity. The minority of non-users (2.63%) may be attributed to obstacles to access or a choice not to interact with digital platforms. Although the views of non-users may be underrepresented, the high levels of user participation indicate that social media is an important instrument for studying political behaviors and ideas.

According to the respondents, chatting with friends and family (82.7%) and amusement (71.6%) are the main motivations for using social media. These applications outweigh news and information (35.6%), indicating that although social media is essential for preserving leisure and interpersonal connections, its function as a source of political news is less significant. Social media is predominantly used for personal objectives rather than political or professional ones, as seen by the comparatively lower participation with professional networking (9.3%) and political conversations (13.8%).

With 81.58% of respondents utilizing social media regularly, the frequency of use indicates a robust pattern of everyday participation. This consistent communication highlights the platform's significance in their everyday lives and possibly in their political endeavors. The lower percentages of infrequent users imply that, despite social media becoming the primary medium for many, there is still a subset of users that interact with it more measuredly, which may represent different ways to online engagement.

The significant percentage of respondents who reported being politically active (79.30%) suggests that social media users are involved in both online and offline political activity. Voting continues to be the most popular way to get involved in politics (69.27%), indicating that although respondents are politically engaged, their involvement is typically restricted to more conventional avenues. A preference for less obvious forms of participation is reflected in the lower levels of volunteering, party identification, and participation in political rallies. The noteworthy proportion of participants who express seldom or nonexistent involvement underscores the multiplicity of political engagement and proposes prospective avenues for augmenting political mobilization.

With 114 respondents strongly agreeing that social media influences their political beliefs, the data shows a considerable impact of social media on political opinions. There are 85 more people who concur, adding to the impact. While a minority of respondents may not consider social media to have a substantial influence on political beliefs, the comparatively small number of respondents who feel neutral or disagree implies that social media plays a significant role in influencing political views for most users.

The majority of respondents think social media is a useful tool for political engagement and mobilization (41.4% strongly agree, and 30.1% agree). This suggests that social media is widely acknowledged for its ability to support political action and mobilization initiatives. The fact that relatively few respondents disagreed or expressed no opinion supports the idea that social media is commonly seen as an invaluable tool for political endeavors.

Easy access to information (68 respondents), direct communication with political leaders (15 respondents), and the capacity to connect with like-minded people (15 respondents) are among the benefits of social media that people perceive as having for political engagement. These advantages show how social media can improve connections and access to political information. On the other hand, the drawbacks, which include false information (68 respondents), privacy issues (38 respondents), and online abuse (20 respondents), highlight the serious difficulties that come with using social media. These problems imply that, despite social media's many advantages for political participation, there are hazards associated with it as well that should be taken into consideration to guarantee responsible and efficient use.

Women's political participation is seen favorably by most respondents in District Dir Lower (60.2% see it as very positive and 29.2% as positive). This positive opinion is consistent with the notion that social media can significantly boost women's political participation (62.6% strongly agree and 31.5% agree). The favorable perceptions of women's political participation and the conviction that social media may augment it underscore the significance of utilizing digital platforms to bolster and encourage women's political engagement.

4.3. Conclusion

The survey offers a thorough summary of the behavioral and demographic variables affecting social media use and political participation. The majority of respondents were younger, more educated, and often used social media, which is indicative of contemporary trends in political behavior and digital participation. Social media plays a multifaceted role in influencing political attitudes and involvement, as evidenced by the variety of reasons people use it and the perceived benefits and drawbacks. The favorable opinions of women in politics and the conviction that social media may increase their participation indicate the platform's enormous influence on political dynamics. Comprehending these trends is essential to formulating tactics to enhance political engagement and tackle the obstacles linked to social media utilization.

CHAPTER-5

5. Major Findings and Conclusion
Finding and conclusion are as under:

5.1 Findings

5.1.1 Age Distribution and Social Media Usage

According to the study, the majority of respondents are in the younger age groups, with a sizable share falling between the ages of 18 and 34. The predominance of social media participation within this generation is consistent with research that indicates younger people use social media platforms more frequently. Since the majority of these age groups use social media often for communication, entertainment, and information distribution, it is possible that their heavy usage of these platforms influences their political participation. The underrepresentation of older age groups raises the possibility of a knowledge gap regarding social media's impact on various generational cohorts.

5.1.2 Educational Attainment and Political Engagement

The data indicates that educated people are more likely to use social media as a tool for political engagement and information, but the limited representation of those with lower educational backgrounds may lead to an underrepresentation of their perspectives on social media's impact on political participation. This is consistent with the literature that suggests higher educational attainment is associated with greater political awareness and engagement. The majority of respondents have at least a higher secondary or bachelor's degree.

5.1.3 Occupational Status and Political Activity

The survey emphasizes that among respondents, students make up the largest occupational group, followed by working professionals. This distribution highlights the important role that social media plays in the lives of younger people who are juggling work and school obligations and are still in their educational phase. According to the findings, students who use social media more frequently may be more impacted by political content found online. Working professionals also use social media extensively, however their use may be balanced by their commitments to their employers.

5.1.4 Marital Status and Political Engagement

The majority of responders are single, which suggests that they may have more free time than married people to engage in politics and use social media. According to the findings, single people may participate in online political conversations and activities more

frequently. In contrast, married respondents exhibit a different pattern of engagement than single respondents, balancing political participation with family duties. The low percentage of widowed and divorced people points to a possible area for additional study into how life changes impact social media political activity.

5.1.5 Social Media Usage and Political Participation

The vast majority of respondents use social media, and their frequent use shows how important it is to their everyday life. This high level of engagement is consistent with the body of research indicating that regular usage of social media is linked to higher levels of political participation. According to the data, a large number of respondents used social media to follow political figures and participate in political discourse, demonstrating its importance as a tool for political mobilization. A sizable percentage, nonetheless, either never uses social media or uses it little, which may have a different effect on how they engage in politics.

5.1.6 Perceptions of Social Media's Role in Political Awareness

Most respondents think social media has changed their political views and raised their awareness of political issues. This result adds credence to the body of research showing social media can be an effective instrument for influencing political opinions and increasing political knowledge. In spite of this, a portion of the public maintains a neutral or skewed opinion regarding the influence of social media on political participation, indicating a discrepancy in viewpoints that demands more investigation.

5.1.6 Women's Political Participation and Social Media

According to the data, women in District Dir Lower are seen favorably by the public, with the majority of respondents thinking that social media may increase women's involvement in politics. This result is consistent with other studies that indicates social media might give underrepresented groups—including women—a forum to become more involved in politics. The conflicting opinions of social media's usefulness for this aim, however, suggest that, despite the optimism, there might be obstacles or restrictions preventing women from fully utilizing these platforms.

5.2. Recommendations

5.2.1 Targeted Social Media Strategies

Social media tactics that target a wider audience should be implemented in order to remedy the underrepresentation of older age groups. To encourage older audiences to participate more, platforms and campaigns should think about producing content that speaks to their unique needs and interests.

5.2.2 Educational Outreach

Educational institutions and organizations should use social media to encourage political knowledge and engagement, especially considering the high level of education among the respondents. It is possible to create educational programs that inspire young professionals and students to use their social media power to support and engage in political activism.

5.2.3 Diversified Content Creation

Social media content needs to be diverse in order to appeal to a range of educational backgrounds. Developing interesting and approachable content that speaks to a range of comprehension levels might make it easier to incorporate those with less education and provide them useful political knowledge.

5.2.4 Inclusivity in Political Platforms

Efforts should be made to create inclusive online political platforms that cater to diverse occupational groups. For instance, creating platforms or forums that address the specific political engagement needs of students, working professionals, homemakers, and retirees can enhance overall participation.

5.2.4 Addressing Privacy and Misinformation

Stricter rules and fact-checking procedures should be implemented by social media platforms to allay worries about false information and privacy. Building trust and promoting better informed political engagement can be achieved by teaching users how to recognize trustworthy information and preserve their personal information.

5.2.5 Enhancing Female Political Engagement

Proposals for training programs and campaigns that equip women with the skills necessary to use social media for political engagement should be encouraged. The goal of

these initiatives should be to increase women's participation in politics via social media by providing them with platforms and networks that encourage and support their involvement.

5.2.6 Encouraging Offline Political Activities

While social media is an important tool for political engagement, it's also important to encourage offline political actions like volunteering, attending demonstrations, and taking part in local events. Using both physical and online engagement techniques can contribute to the development of a more all-encompassing strategy for political engagement.

5.2.7 Further Research on Engagement Gaps

Further investigation is warranted to delve into the causes of specific demographic disengagement, including older adults and those with lower educational attainment. By comprehending these obstacles, more potent methods for boosting their social media political engagement might be developed.

5.3 Future Research Areas

5.3.1. Exploring Social Media's Influence Across Different Demographics

Subsequent investigations ought to concentrate on comprehending the ways in which social media influences political engagement among diverse demographic categories, such as age, educational attainment, and financial standing. While there are important findings among the younger and better educated population in this study, it is imperative to investigate the impact of social media on older populations, those with less education, and people from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds. Comparative research between these groups can shed light on how various populations use social media and what conditions may help or impede their political participation.

5.3.2 Investigating the Role of Social Media in Local vs. National Political Engagement

Research that distinguishes between social media's effects on local and national political participation is needed. Although the primary emphasis of this study is District Dir Lower, it can be insightful to know how social media affects political engagement on local, regional, and national levels. Future studies could look at whether using social media increases community involvement and local activity, or if it mainly influences political discourse at the federal level. This differentiation can aid in customizing approaches to augment political engagement across multiple tiers.

5.3.3Assessing the Impact of Social Media Algorithms and Content Moderation

The influence of social media algorithms and content regulation on political activity is a developing field of study. Users' perceptions of and interactions with political issues can be greatly impacted by algorithms that favor particular kinds of material or screen out political information. Future research ought to examine how these algorithms impact political awareness and engagement as well as assess how well content moderation guidelines work to weed out false material and encourage constructive political dialogue.

5.3.4Evaluating the Efficacy of Online vs. Offline Political Campaigns

Subsequent studies may examine the relative efficacy of political campaigns conducted offline and online. Even though social media provides a wide range of opportunities for connecting with potential voters and organizing supporters, it's critical to comprehend how these online initiatives compare to more conventional strategies like public meetings, rallies, and canvassing. Research evaluating how internet campaigns affect voter behavior and involvement in comparison to offline tactics can offer a more thorough understanding of how to best utilize various approaches for political engagement.

5.3.5Exploring the Intersection of Social Media and Other Forms of Media

Studies ought to look at how social media influences political involvement and opinions in relation to other media platforms, including print, television, and traditional news sources. Gaining knowledge about how social media differs and/or enhances other media sources might help one better understand how people absorb and interpret political information. This study could investigate how social media interactions affect total political participation, as well as whether social media supports traditional media messaging or opens up new channels for political engagement.

5.4Conclusion

The study's conclusions highlight the important influence social media has on political engagement, especially among younger and better educated people. The respondents' predominant usage of social media demonstrates how useful it is as a tool for political participation, information sharing, and communication. The majority of respondents acknowledged social media's influence on their political ideas and actions, demonstrating the platform's clear impact on political awareness and opinion formation.

The study does, however, also show differences in participation amongst age groups, educational backgrounds, and professional statuses. The underrepresentation of older people

and people with less education points to the need for social media tactics that are more inclusive and target a wider range of users. Furthermore, despite the fact that social media is acknowledged for its contribution to raising political consciousness and participation, issues with false information, privacy, and online abuse continue to pose serious obstacles.

Promising views exist on women's political engagement and the idea that social media can increase female involvement. Nonetheless, focused campaigns and encouraging environments should be used to remove obstacles preventing women from fully utilizing social media. The study emphasizes that in order to encourage thorough political participation, a multimodal strategy that incorporates physical and online engagement tactics is required.

In conclusion, even if social media has shown to be an effective instrument for political engagement, it is critical to address the shortcomings and difficulties this study has uncovered. Through targeted recommendations and the creation of welcoming and encouraging online communities, social media can be an even more powerful tool for increasing political participation across a wide range of users. Social media's continuous development and its effect on political participation highlight the need for continual study and modification to guarantee that everyone has the chance to take part in the democratic process.

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