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Topic: **Digital Democracy: Social Media and Political Participation**

Outlines

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    1. Evolution of democratic governance

    2. What is digital democracy?

    3. Thesis statement

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B. The Emergence of Digital Democracy Through The Introduction of Various Technologies in Political Sphere

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    2. Rise of Web 2.0 democracy

C. Digital Democracy as De-Institutionalization

D. Digital Democracy as ~~Re~~ Re-Institutionalization

    i. Re-institutionalization aligning with participatory democracy

E. Social Media and Political Participation

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3. Inclusivity in policy-making
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Essay

Since long, human beings have been living in communities. To politically organise these communities, human beings have adopted various modes of governance. These include monarchy, oligarchy, and democracy. Among them, it is the democracy that empowers the masses to govern themselves; therfore, it is considered as one of the best forms of governance. Its origin can be traced back to the 500 BC city-states of Ancient Greece where it existed in the form of direct self-rule. However, it moulded itself with the dynamics of various times and places, transforming it into the current form of representative democracy. Similarly, it adopted various technologies, particularly the telecommunication technologies, that either hindered or thrived its progress. Digital democracy is one such evolved form. It refers to the use of digital technologies to enhance or transform democratic practices. It involves using internet, social media, and other digital technologies to increase citizen engagement and make decision-making process more inclusive and participatory. In the face of these emerging technologies, democracy has seen two major phases, one with the rise of Televisions and other with the invention of

speedy internet and social media. The two evolved formed are often referred to as teledemocracy and wikidemocracy. Moreover, the tranforming effect of technological advancement on democratic practices have divided the experts into two schools of thoughts; one who believes digital democracy as de-institutionalization while the other viewing it as re-institutionalization, leaving the dis impact of social media open to debate and discussion. However, social media has immensely impacted the political sphere. For instance, it has led to the concept of e-voting, e-budgeting, and holding online plebiscites. In the coming discourse, this essay highlights the emergence of digital democracy, its various forms and the immensely increased political participation due to the rise of social media.

Electronic or teledemocracy emerged in the second-half of the 20th century. It refers to the introduction of communication technologies such as telephones and televisions in the political processes and engagements. This term was first coined by Ted Becker, referring to increased utilization of telecommunication technologies in democratic practices. Their utilization led to increase in civic engagment and

political participation which, in turn, contributed in democratic progress. However, the political participation was still limited, mostly to urban and educated population.

Wikidemocracy replaced teledemocracy as the speedy internet and the rising social media took the place of traditional media as means of communication. Characterised as read-only, traditional media kept the flow of information one-sided. Conversely, social media which enables netizens to not only read and watch the information but also to generate and send, a drastic shift from traditional read-only to read-write one. This shift in the the flow of information posed challenges as well as opportunities to democratic progress. Moreover, unlike the traditional media, it was widely accessible and spread which led to immense increase in political participation. Therefore, it is understood as digital democracy.

As mentioned, digital democracy has moulded itself with various communication technologies; in the coming paragraphs, various concepts regarding digital democracy have been discussed.

Digital democracy is often percieved as a potential de-intermediation and

de-institutionalization. This concept holds that the emerging communication technologies have the capacity to enable the citizens to virtually discuss and deliberate over issues of public importance and the policy formulation accordingly. Therefore, the parliament, political parties and other representative institutions would loose its relevence in public sphere. The advocates of this idea hope the revival of direct democracy that was witnessed in the ancient city-states of Greece and those advocated by the political philosophers like Aristotle and the Enlightenment philosopher J.J. Rouseau.

Digital democracy is also understood as a process of re-institutionalization. It refers to the phenomenon in which the emerging telecommunication tools transform the political institutions. These transformed institutions are focused on increased civic engagment in state affairs, transparency, accountibility, and timely timely addressal of public issues, ensuring effective and responsive governments. This sort of democracy with the tranformed political institutions aligns with that of participatory democracy which is a combination of both direct and indirect democracy, ensuring public debate,

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public education, and active citizenship. It has been discussed that digital democracy has become possible owing to the advancement in telecommunication technologies; furthermore, social media, an emerging communication platform, has led to an immense increase in political participation which is discussed below.

Firstly, Holding periodic elections is a cornerstone of democracy. To do so, democratic governments hold polls and the citizens participate in it. But since long, low turn-out ratio has been a perpetual issue in electoral processes. However, the introduction of social media can overcome this persistent issue as e-voting could be held. It refers to the process where electors cast their votes via any suitable digital platform; in doing so, their physical presence at any particular site is not mandatory. For instance, Estonia has introduced the practice of e-voting, facilitating its citizens to choose their representatives from anywhere in the world. Similarly, pilot voting system in the United States provides opportunities to its overseas stationed citizens, particularly soldiers, to cast vote, contributing to increase in turn-out. To sum up, social media can facilitate public participation in electoral process.

Secondly, social media can contribute in e-budgeting. As the budget indicates the priorities of a nation, it is a vital task in any governance structure. Traditionally, in democratic countries, budgetary process has been carried out by the representatives of the people; however, the speedy means of communication has provided an opportunity to prepare the budget by the people themselves without the intermediation of politicians. For instance, many cities in the United States prepare budget through the process of e-budgeting, reflecting the true aspirations of the people. Although it is not common particularly at national level in democratic countries, it has the potential to replace the traditional process for of budgeting. If adopted, it can help in levying taxes, facilitate public spending on health, education and the well-being of the people, making the budgetary process more effective and people friendly. In short, the utilization of social media platforms can transform the budgetary process to the benefits of the people.

Thirdly, social media can bring inclusivity in decision-making process. In representative democracies, policies are formulated through the elected representatives of the public; however, this system

has numerous limitations such as under-representation of certain sections of society. Moreover, only the wisdom of the representatives are applied in decision-making. As a result, the policies either do not address the grievances of the people or the remedies they present are not sufficient. The emerging digital infrastructure presents an opportunity for inclusivity in decision-making. The increased means of speedy communication enable the citizens to express their views and the potential solutions for any problem. As Beth Simone Noveck mentions in her book Wiki Government: How Technology can Make Government Better, Democracy Stronger and Public More Powerful that the rising technologies have led to increasing input from citizens in the decision-making process in the form of sharing their ideas and expertise. Globally, an initiative named Open Government Partnership has been launched which emphasizes on its member states to reformed their governance structure, making them more responsive and inclusive. In short, the digital constellation has provided an opportunity to make the decision-making process more inclusive.

Fourthly, the emerging social media has led to increase in

advocacy, leading to the emergence of digital democracy. As mentioned above, the traditional media was read only, meaning the audience were recievers recievers who m consumed whatever the media outlets used to disseminate. As the media was quite controlled and limited in its scope; therefore, advocacy for various demands were not loud. But, today, with the emergence of social media, the audience are no more silent spectators, rather they are generators and disseminators of the information, shifting the media from read-only to read-writte model. This shift has led to increase in advocacy which has, in turn, strengthened digital democracy. In which voices for various movements like women rights movements, minority rights, labour rights and other marginalised voices have become more loud and heard. This is due to the fact that social media is less controlled; moreover, it enjoys wide scope in terms of access to audience. In short, the rising social media has led to immense increase in advocacy.

Lastly, holding online plebiscites have become possible due to the emerging social media, leading not only to increase in public participation but also paving the way for virtual democracy.

Plebiscite is a practice through which the views of the people are directly taken over important public matters.

This had been a norm in democratic direct democracies, but, over the time, the nations grew immensely both in terms of population and they territory they occupied; therefore, it became difficult to seek the opinion of such large population. But with the development of tele-communication technologies, this vital practice could easily be revived, paving the way for virtual democracy. The currently emerging concept of plebiscitary democracy is based on the holding of plebiscited, could be online, over matters of public importance. In short, the emerging social media has made possible the seeking of public opinions directly via online platforms.

To conclude this essay, it can be stated that the emerging social media has led to an immense increase of mass participation in political sphere; moreover, this increased participation in political sphere has significant impacts on democratic practices, leading to the evolution of digital democracy. The concept of digital democracy with the incorporation of various telecommunication technologies

in democratic practices. Historically, the traditional means of communication such as print and electronic media contributed to the strengthening of democratic practices, leading to the concept of teledemocracy. With the emergence of internet and social media which were the more speedy means of communication immensely impacted the state of affairs in democratic structures. This newly evolved form of democracy was refered to as digital democracy that has been percieved in two ways. by the political scientists. Some argue that the emerging technologies would potentially deminish the role of political parties and other representative institutions such as parliament. On the other hand, some political scientists view that instead of de-institutionalization, political institutions would be reformed into more responsive and participatory ones. ~~that~~ Though the impacts of social media on democracy is open to debate, it has immensely ~~increased~~ political participation. Because, it has the potential for ~~can~~ holding e-voting, preparing e-budget, making the policy-formulation process more inclusive, increasing effectiveness of advocacy, and

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holding online plebiscites. Moreover, it is known that representative democracy is often criticised to to the to Therefore, digital democracy could be proved more responsive, inclusive, and more effective that would stand firm in the face of emerging challenges.

The End

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plz try to bring more creativity
good thing about your writing is that it is clear in stance and good in language

one suggestion: try to. Write more engaging and interesting

command over language is fine