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Citizen Engagement in Digital Age: The Role of E-Democracy in Modern Government

Outline

A. Introduction

Digital age has revolutionised the concept of democracy by including voices from all spheres of life, and ensuring opportunities for active participation of masses in modern politics.

B. How Digital Age has Ensured Citizen Engagement

1- Increased accessibility to information

2- Enhanced public participation

3- Provided education and awareness

4- Empowerment of marginalised

C. How Much Role of E-Democracy is Efficient in Modern Government

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1- Ensures feedback mechanism

2- Efficiency in governance

3- Accountability of government officials

4- Global influence and connectivity

5- Innovation in administrative policies.

D- Way Forward for E-democracy
and Citizen Engagement in
Digitalisation

1- Ensuring privacy of citizens

2- Dealing with security concerns

Conclusion

"We need to create a digital public sphere where citizens can engage in meaningful dialogue, exchange ideas, and hold their leaders accountable," says Eli Pariser, a renowned author and activist of digital media and technology. Digital platforms provide excessive opportunities to citizens to engage and actively participate in politics and other such affairs. Digitalisation has made possible the accessibility of information to citizens. It has also ensured public participation, and has provided education and awareness to masses. Digital media platforms have empowered the weak and marginalized groups of society. E-democracy serves efficient role in modern governments. It ensures feedback mechanism and guarantees efficiency in governance. E-democracy has global influence and is pivotal for international connectivity. It establishes the administrative policies on global standards and always has room for innovation. There is always room for improvement in such technologies. The course of action for future in this regard

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is to make sure a check and balance mechanism for its responsible use to avert the glaring security concerns. Providing basic digital education to all the subjects of society is mandatory to end digital divide. Digitalisation is the use of electronic devices to do the task of any sort. Today's age is the age of digitalisation. Where, it has revolutionised all the sectors and spheres of world, it has also profound impact on civic engagement. People from all the classes and all the regions have their say in national and international arenas, a service that was not accessible to them a few decades ago. It has enhanced or rather replaced the old concept of democracy. It has made possible the practice of democracy in true sense, where people from any background, regardless of their social status have equal chances to amplify their voices. Digitalisation has certified the citizen engagement in many ways.

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Mainly, it has increased the access of public to information. With the advancement of services, people can easily access to educational, recreational or any other services. Digital sphere has become gateway of accessing basic public services. The internet has played the leveled the playing field, allowing all the individuals to gain information previously restricted to elites only. They can have approach to government's statistics, and keep the record of its functioning. It is only because of digitalisation, public reach to such information has become possible.

This access to information has provided people with significant education and awareness. The civic sense of public has enhanced and people realise their rights and duties altogether in society. Digitalisation has undeniably transformed the way people engage with communities and governments, and has amplified civic awareness. In this regard, an interdisciplinary commission comprising of nine professor published a report titled; "The Future

of Civic Society: Young Engagement in Digital Age", which states that: "Digitalisation strongly affects people's ability to be an engaged citizen, therefore an advanced civic sense is seen in young individuals, because they are more prone to digital world".

Hence, more awareness to citizen engagement is expected with more exposure to digitalisation.

Education and awareness of masses make sure their active public participation. Digitalisation provides with wealth of information on current events, government policies and social issues. This allows citizens to stay informed and engaged. Social media engines, especially provides people with platforms to share their concerns and raise an agenda. Digital media help people to connect with an immense pool of audience. This is helpful to attain various viewpoints and diverse perspectives. Digitalisation has potential to draw the attention of millions of people for a cause. Thus, people consider it reliable to share their voice and to partake for betterment of society.

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Digital age has particularly empowered the marginalised and weak section of society. It operates at the principle of inclusiveness, and gives equal opportunities to everyone for expressing their views. As it is said, digitalisation is not about technology, it is about change, change in people's behaviour and their way of thinking. Digital platforms and tools create opportunities for marginalised groups, enabling them to participate in different affairs of state and society. Digital tools ensure their equal access to essential services like education, healthcare, financial services and government benefits. Hence, digitalisation is key factor behind the emancipation of marginalised.

The active participation of public in digitalisation give rise to E-democracy. Electronic democracy describes a wide range of interactive tools that embrace existing and emergent media sources as a forum for allowing members of the public to express opinions and seek to influence decision-making within their community, state, country or

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globally. E-democracy has played an efficient role so far in modern governments. It validates the working of government in many ways. Some of its glaring impacts are discussed below.

E-democracy ensures feedback mechanism in functioning of modern governments. Digital platforms allow for immediate responses and interactions, enabling governments to quickly address concerns and incorporate public opinion into decision-making. Social media and other digital platforms permit citizens to participate in open discussions and share their views about government policies. This reach a wider range of citizens, including those who might be traditionally underrepresented, ensuring a more inclusive and diverse feedback process. Thus, a representative feedback of public is only possible via E-democracy.

A real-time feedback process guarantees efficient working of government. It opens new doors for improved and enhanced administration. Digitalisation have

made it easier for governance over a large number of populations. With the modernity and evolution in world, technological infrastructure is inevitable for effective governance. It engages all the citizens of society and struck a balance for smooth working of administration. Therefore, it leads to more informed and engaged citizenry and government.

Similarly, E-democracy has ~~made~~ increased transparency and accountability by making it easier for citizens to monitor the activities of their government and held elected officials accountable to their actions.

Social and digital media along with other such platforms allow citizens to easily access government data, budgets, policies and decision-making processes. They can share their opinions and discuss the pros and cons of activities. This empowers people to demonstrate and criticize the malfunctioning by any government official. This direct involvement encourages scrutiny

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of government actions. Moreover, E-democracy develops international connectivity because of its global reach and influence. Digitalisation has been successful in making world a global village. Its influence transcends borders. It enables citizens people to connect with other people from different regions of the world. Online platforms amplify the voices of activists and civil society organisations, allowing them to reach wider audiences and exert greater influence on global issues. It helps to develop international solidarity and unity for noble cause. Digitalisation has so properly interlinked the different societies of the world, to oppose and act as bulwark against aggression or tyrannical behaviour anywhere in the world. Thus, the impact of one country over the others in world is because of significant progress of E-democracy. Global connectivity and influence of nations over each other has resulted in innovation in administrative policies.

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Governments adopt the advance and viable methods of governance. This has really helped the developing nations by letting them to learn from progressive countries of the world. Developed states have already adopted the digital sphere and its platforms for governance and administration. In this regard example of Estonia is best to seek: "Estonia has developed more advanced model of E-governance. Estonian model provides its citizens and residents with electronic identity and all other documentation". Developing countries are also trying to make a shift towards digitalisation. Hence, it has provided countries of the world to learn from each other.

Digitalisation also have certain ^{concerns} consequences, which if not handled carefully can cause huge problems. Most of its repercussions are associated with its responsible use by citizens. Still there are measurements on behalf of digital developers and administrative institutions to make its positive use possible.

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Firstly, privacy of users must be protected. Digital platforms carry immense amount of information about users, such as their residence location, family and other such important credentials. These informations can be easily retrieved and later manipulated, tempered and used for illegal purposes. According to reports, "78 percent of social media users ~~has~~ in Europe have their important information on public view on social media without their consent". In this way a collective effort is required from technology developers and all other stakeholders to maintain the privacy of users. Only the protected environment of digitalisation can guarantees its positive use.

Secondly, a check and balance mechanism must be established to avert security threats. In recent years, with advancement of technology and media, an unprecedented rise is seen in cyber attacks. These attacks contaminate the social fabric of society. Along with that, digital platforms allows radical agents and organisations to propagate and

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and share their views. It gives everyone unbridled power to make their mark. In this way a collaborative effort is demanded from developers and law enforcement organisations to check these activities, and make digital sphere clean of it. This way, the engagement of public and the role of e-democracy can be fruitful.

Consequently, one may say that digitalisation has very strong influence on society, and especially in political field. It has ensured the participation of citizens without any social divisions. It has equally empowered the marginalised sect of society. It has imparted education and awareness to masses. E-democracy has revolutionised the concept of traditional democracy and allows people to actively participate in politics. This has resulted in effective governance by ensuring transparency in state functioning and accountability of government-officials. E-democracy has the potential of global outreach.

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and international influence. It then gives rise to innovation in administrative policies. E-democracy is win-win scenario for all, if it is dealt with responsibility. Its responsible use can have significant impacts for better working of state.