

The Intersection of Technology and Democracy: Strengthening or Threatening

1- Introduction

Thesis statement:

Technology is threatening democracy in numerous ways. The undemocratic forces use it as a weapon against democracy by swelling freedom of speech, also it alienates people from ground politics and shifts control into fewer hands. Its proponents bear the other view - technology is strengthening democracy - but they are wrong in their opinion because technology is favouring the undemocratic forces.

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2- The interrelationship ^{between} of technology and democracy

3- Ways in which technology is threatening democracy are:

- i- A source of misinformation and false propaganda
- ii- A weapon to manipulate people
- iii- Technology brings higher centralisation
- iv- Technology shifts control and power in fewer hands
- v- Technological disparity favours undemocratic forces
- vi- Technology is making humans irrelevant
- vii- Advancement in psychological technology is very lethal for democracy

4- Opponent's views: Technology is strengthening democracy

- i- Provides platform for political participation, i.e. social media
- ii- Ensures freedom of speech

iii- A weapon in the hands of democratic forces to strengthen democracy

5- Reputing the opponent's views

i- Technology is alienating people from ground politics

ii- Technology deprives people from freedom of speech through Censorship

iii- Technology is a valuable weapon in the hands of anti-democratic forces

6- Various ways in which technology can be made beneficial for democracy

7- Technology and democracy in Pakistan

8- Conclusion

The advent of technology has quite interesting statements on human's lives and their ways of doing things. Whether one realises it or not, he uses technology in multiple ways, which in turn affects his life. From ^{human's} our daily routine, it has entered to ^{their} ~~our~~ social and political sphere ^{of life}. Technology is influencing their emotions and political behaviour. With the advancement of technology, it was dreamt that ~~it will strengthen democracy~~ but due to its dual use - both by democratic and undemocratic forces - it has become threatening to democracy. Technology is a source of misinformation, false propaganda and manipulation. That is how it changes the perception and thinking of people. Moreover, through technology it has become easy to ~~curb~~ ^{curb} freedom of speech and ~~curb~~ ^{curb} the opinions of others. Also, technology has ~~taken~~ ^{alienated} people from active politics and ground politics by providing them online platforms. Most importantly, with the birth of artificial intelligence and machine learning,

Technology ~~is~~ making human irrelevant, thus threatening democracy. But the proponents of technology argue that it is strengthening democracy through freedom of speech and by providing a platform to all and sundry for political participation. They are wrong in their opinion because the undemocratic forces are using technology to suppress freedom of speech through censorship and blocking of content. To boil it down, technology is proving to be ominous for democracy.

Many forces till now have influenced democracy. Some have strengthened while others have weakened it. Among such factors, technology is one of them. There is an inextricable linkage between democracy and technology. At the same time it strengthens as well as weakens democracy. Technology has entered human thoughts and behaviours emotions, thus influencing their political behaviour. It is the technology which has enabled people to express their opinion and thinking, thus providing them freedom

freedom of speech. On the same way, it has empowered the people to express their approval and disapproval for states policies and held them accountable through online platforms, such as facebook, twitter and instagram. But on the other hand, it weakens democracy because technology is a lucrative tool in the hands of undemocratic forces to suppress freedom of speech, spread misinformation and false propagandas. ^{in this way} That is how the undemocratic forces manipulate and instill false information into the minds of people and gather their support. That is how technology and democracy are closely linked with each other.

Technology in various ways is threatening democracy. Technology being a source of ~~any~~ misinformation and false propaganda is one of them. Any sort of information and propaganda can be spread through technology using platforms like twitter and facebook. False and sensational information spread

rapidly on these platforms. Through the spread of such false information and propaganda, the undemocratic forces change the perception and thinking of people. Similarly, through deep fake videos and morphed photos they defame people as well as influence other people in their own favour, which is against democracy. Technology has made the spread of misinformation and false propaganda easy, therefore it is inimical to democracy.

The opponents are of the other view - that technology is strengthening democracy - by arguing that it provides a platform for political participation. It is difficult for ~~the~~ people to participate in ground politics because not everyone has access and the required resources for that; but technology, through social media, has enabled people to actively participate in politics - which is beauty of democracy. Technology has

enabled people to canvass on social media for their manifestos and political parties. As, majority of the people has access to social media therefore, through social media they actively participate in politics. Its best example is the Arab Spring, where social media has played a vital role. Similarly, the political parties and their supporters across the world use social media for political participation such as, the political party of Pakistan, PTI, who has actively and lucratively utilized the platform of social media and stayed relevant in the politics of Pakistan even in their tough time.

The argument of the opponents - technology is strengthening democracy - is faulty by providing platform for political participation - is faulty. There is no doubt ^{in the} that ~~the~~ social media provides people a platform for

political participation, but in reality it is alienating them from active and ground politics. Ground politics are more effective in comparison to politics through social media. People, through participation in political politics using social media feel contented but that is not enough. Similarly, the anti-democratic forces counter them on social media while continuing their undemocratic politics on ground. In the same way, social media has accustomed people to politics on social media, thus taking them away from real politics.

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Technology in Pakistan is also threatening democracy. It is used as a so one of its facet - social media is widely used to spread false information and propaganda. People are using it to defame each other. Similarly, it has taken away people from ground politics. In the political ambience of Pakistan,

it can be observed that people actively participate in politics through social media but their contribution in grounds politics is less. Moreover, the undemocratic forces in Pakistan ~~use~~ utilize the technology to curb freedom of speech and opinion. In this regard, the outage of twitter can be cited and shutting down of ~~the social media platforms~~, such as facebook can be cited. Similarly, the advancement of technology has shifted power and control in fewer hands, who are using them in undemocratic ways by censoring people, content, intimidating the opposition and ^{pressing} the voices of dissent. Technology has made it easy for the undemocratic forces to control, censor and manipulate people. Similarly, there is also technological divide in Pakistan. Each and everyone does not have the same access to technology. In the same way, there is lack of literacy because of which ^{contain} people of Pakistan are not able to utilize technology is the best possible way and they can be easily

~~manipulated by undemocratic forces.~~

Such technological disparity accompanied by lack of literacy ~~power~~ is threatening democracy in Pakistan.

To cap it all,

the dual use of technology, both by democratic and anti-democratic forces, is threatening for democracy. Technology is a very powerful weapon in the hands of undemocratic forces, although the flag-bearers of democracy can also use it for strengthening ^{democracy} ~~democracy~~, but ~~instead of strengthening~~ it helps the undemocratic forces more in comparison to democratic forces. As, ~~Bertrand Russell~~ has said, ~~that~~ technology ^{causes} ~~is causing~~ higher centralization and shifts power into fewer hands, thus it ~~favors~~ dictatorship. Technology has made it easy; to quell the voices of dissent, control the flow of information and other content; manipulation of people and their thoughts. Similarly, ~~the~~ advancement in the field of psychological technology could prove very ~~dangerous~~ to democracy.

because it will enable ^{humans} to control the mind and thinking of people. The future of democracy with the advancement of technology seems bleak but its proper regulation and use can benefit democracy.

