

A
PROJECT REPORT ON
"The Role of Local Government in Rural Development"

Submitted to the



H.K.E.Society's

A.V.PATIL ARTS, SCIENCE & COMMERCE COLLEGE ALAND

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CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION


This is to certify that the project entitled "The Role of Local Government in Rural Development" is completed successfully under guidance of Dr. Venkatesh G. Assistant Professor and is submitted to the Department of Political Science, HKES'S A.V.PATIL ARTS, SCIENCE AND COMMERCE COLLEGE, ALAND.

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THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

A political subdivision of a nation or (in a federal system) state, which is constituted by law and has substantial control of local affairs, including the powers to impose taxes or to exact labour for prescribed purposes. The governing body of such an entity is elected or otherwise locally selected. Local government as a means for grass roots and national development has persisted in spite of modern achievements in the fields of politics, economics, technology, communication, transportation etc. the increasing demand for local government in every part of the world is being motivated by the desire of the rural populace to contribute directly in the affairs of their communities. In fact, local government is as old as mankind; because it is the only form of human’s administration that has existed from the history of man. The theory of human society is shrouded with the necessity of community development through a recognized local administrative structure that culminated into local government administration.

The 1976 local government reforms in India saw local government as the government at local level exercised through representative councils established by law to exercise specific powers within defined area. These powers should give the council substantial control over local affairs as well as the staff, institutional and financial powers to initiate and direct the provision of services. it also exists to determine and implement projects so as to complement the activities of the state and federal government in their areas, which is to be achieved through the active participation of the people and their traditional institutions, so that local initiative and response to local needs and conditions are maximized.

The United Nations office for public administration states that local governments should have control over local affairs which will include the powers to impose taxes or to exact labour for prescribed purposes. It states further that those who are to govern such entity should be elected or locally selected. The local government must also be constituted by law.

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Local government is any form of administration that is found at the grass roots level with the primary objective of integrating the rural populace into the decision making process of the state (Gowon, 1990).

“Local government is the third-tier of government in India vested with the responsibility of transforming various communities into effective socio-economic and political advanced structures for national development that is the improvement of the quality of life of communities”. Therefore, local government system is an administration of the rural areas by people who know their community needs. This type of administration is informed by the idea that since the people know the needs of their community, they would do everything within available resources to develop the area.

Local government is an agent of grass roots development because of its indispensable role in mobilizing local resources for meaningful socio-economic and political changes in the rural areas. The contribution of local government in the development of the rural areas. The contribution of local government in the development of the rural areas can be dated back to the period of community-based efforts of developing the individual societies where local authorities are used to mobilize all resources for development . Therefore, every government seeks to affect the lives of its citizens by the way they handle their welfare and total well being through economic, social and political development initiatives. This, according to early scholars forms the basis of cooperation and reciprocity between government and the society, which engenders the maintenance of the well being of that society. When members of the society pool their efforts and resources together, they realize their collective goals better. The basis of legitimacy must therefore, emanate from the ability of government or the political institutions to discharge such basis responsibility as provision of amenities and security to government.

Every government owes it citizens the duty to develop them through the provision of portable water, health care, education, roads, food, shelter, and any socio-economic variables. Such provision must also include framework that will enable them to have a say on what they get and how they get it. It is in this respect that the members of the society can be expected to discharge their own civic responsibilities to the government and the society at large. Legitimacy involves the capacity of the system to engender and maintain the belief that the existing political institutions are the most appropriate for the growth and development of the society. Groups regard a political system as legitimate or illegitimate according to way in which its values fit with theirs .

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The existence of the three tiers of government in India is therefore, expected to respond to these functions or responsibilities. While the three tiers have varied geopolitical boundaries of authority, they all have certain common responsibilities towards the development of the country in general and in particular their individual areas of influences. As for the level of human materials and financial resources available to them, the federal government is the richest, followed by the state, leaving the local governments as the poorest. Yet the latter is the closest to the majority of the people of the country, most especially to those living in the rural areas. The local government administration is most suited for the development of the rural communities, which are very remote from both the state and central government.

The Federal government said through:

“In embarking on these reforms, the federal military government was essentially motivated by the necessity to stabilize and rationalize government at the local level. This must of necessity entail the decentralization of some significant functions of the state government to local in order to harness local resources for rapid development. The federal military government has therefore decided to recognize local governments as the third tier of governmental activity in the nation”

Local government should do precisely what the word government implies that is government at the grass roots or local level. He went further to say that, the reforms are intended to entrust political responsibility to where it is most crucial and most beneficial, that is, to the people. These local governments have remained integral parts of the administration of the country from the colonial times and have continued to remind the people of the state and central government. Most times they have always been composed of local people who the members of the society can identify and relate with, culturally. This explains the constant clamour for their creations by rural communities. There are no institutions in this country, which are potentially more capable and including physical infrastructural facilities that local government councils. Local government represents the generally accepted fact of political life that all the functions of government cannot be run on the basis central administration alone. It consequently represent the need for political participation and fro convenience (Hashim, 1981). This is true in recognizing the fact that apart from bringing the government closer to the people which a popular cliché often used by government officials, local government are better positioned to understand the development needs of the communities.

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In spite of the existence of local government administration in Nigeria, development in the rural areas has continued to remain a mirage. In almost every rural community, there is dearth of portable water, health care delivery facilities, accessible roads and good schools, among others and also infant mortality rate and maternal deaths are on the rampage. Mensah opined that the rural areas in the third world countries have remained backward and static at a time when the global economy has experience and is still experiencing tremendous forward movement. Indeed, it is poverty level of the rural communities occasioned by this lack of development that has earned India a place among the world's poorest nations in spite of our huge materials and human resources. The United Nations through its human development index (HDI) has consistently rated Nigeria among the poorest nations of the world. This poor state of the nation, emanated essentially, from the rural communities where over 85% of the population resides in the rural areas (Avichi, 1995), states that it was estimated by World Bank (1990) that over 1.15 billion people in developing countries were living below the poverty line (US \$350 per annum) and majority of these dwell in rural areas which constitute about 80% of their national populations. Ijere (1989), observed that, Nigeria's rural poor constitute the other India with poverty linked characteristics, lacking purchasing power enough to maintain a minimum standard of living and they are the victims of collective poverty in contrast to pockets or “Islands” of underdevelopment, the American Style which are surrounded by regions of abundances. This situation clearly generates apathy towards government as in number of rural communities, quite a sizeable percentage of the population do not bother about government and issues emanating from official quarters. The level of mobilization is low and there is little or no consolation with the communities on any issues. This trend to question the rationality of the establishment of local government administration, which should act as a medium for rural development. An examination of the existence of local government administration from colonial times reveal that successive government have handled the issue of rural development with less than piquant approach. Local governments instead of being used as tools for effective rural transformation, tend to be

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used for purposes other than social development. Some reasons that can be advanced for this sad development is the fact that Before (1976), no properly articulated rural development policies have always been introduced on the communities by government officials without their sustainability being covered. The essence of this study was to establish the role local government on rural development in Jos South Local Government Council It has been observed that the way to have good and safe government is not to trust it all to one, but to divide it among many, distributing to every one exactly the function he is competent to. This is why local government as the third tier of government is very important. In recent times, local governments in India have been assigned specific development roles by the constitution. But this should not be taken to suggest that in the past local governments did not contribute to economic development. For example, between 1955 and 1965, local governments were responsible for an average of 12% of total public expenditure in the country. A local government may be defined as government at the local level established by law to perform specific function within defined areas. Local government is vested with substantial powers to take control over local affairs. It is the integration agent, indeed, the tendon that joints the rural people, their problems, aspirations and progress, to the central government. Local Government, “simply and precisely, is the government at the local level.” Put in another way, Local Government is a system of devolution of power to the local authority to provide services of a 1961 nature. It is an autonomous or independent body created by law and charged with the responsibility of administering and dealing with matters of local importance within the area defined by that law. Today however, the local government is constitutionally recognized as the third tier of government.

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In order to leave no doubt as to what our central concern in this work is all about, it is important to start by defining local government. The United Nations Office for Public Administration define local government as: A political subdivision of a nation or (in a federal system) state, which is constituted by law and has substantial control of local affairs, including the powers to impose taxes or to exact labour for prescribed purposes. The governing body of such an entity is elected or otherwise locally selected.

Local government in Rural development:-

Local government in India could have been said to have started when politicians assumed leadership role of regional legislators under colonial reforms. That gradually led to regional self-government in the early 1950s. Before this, under the native system, indirect rule was introduced. Indirect rule sought to rule the local people through their local chiefs. India's rural area have for many decades remained backward and static, especially at a time when global economy is experiencing tremendous change. This is more evidence after the country's civil war (1967-70) featuring others. Upsurge petroleum revenue, the consequent ability of government to finance large construction prove of in urban Centre, as well as unprecedented migration of able bodied youth from rural urban center, all combine to force a decline in rural area development.

The essence of creating local government any where in the world stems form the need to facilitate development of the grassroots. Local government councils are constantly structuring to improve the effectiveness and efficiency service delivery. Most especially, in the area of health care and education services, local government in Indians are striving to ensure that priorities are not misplaced in this country India in the provision of service delivery to their rural area or rural dwellers .

Local government in its real sense, is very vital in the socio-economy polity of India, this is so because it is the nearest form of government to the common man in the observed rural settings everywhere. However, not every or much has been achieved by the way of development of rural area. Largely due to lack of focus administration of local government

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councils, if any are in doubt of this assertion, then such a person perhaps may not have paused to ask for reason why almost rural villages lack good roads, electricity, school, health care centers and social amenities in which local government is not left out. What happen to all the resources been allocated to these local government areas?

Local government are expected to carry out regional policies with respect to ameliorate poverty, unemployment etc. In the 21st century you may wish to imagine that living in most rural India is traumatic, if you care to observe, you will see men and women, boys and girls pursuing menial activity or task just to survive. Local government has undergone very numerous and constant reforms aimed at evolving a viable system that could serve the purpose of which local government is created. In essence, local government should be machinery for rural development and transformation, but research findings and empirical evidence have shown that most local government activities have not adequately mobilized the people for rural development activities.

The year 1976 was never a product of many years of socio-economic and political changes. It further makes a water-shed when the whole country acquired a uniform provision in its local government system. Hence, policies and strategies are made for implementation as a means to an end. Therefore, local government administration should be a strategy for socio-economic and political development form below show that all resources at the disposal of the country can be effectively and efficiently tapped to achieve and accelerate basic needs. It is through this system that basic and necessary facilities are provided which are geared towards improving and changing living conditions in the rural areas. In fact, majority of the population are left disorganized.

Consequently, local government is a form of devolution of power of state. It is the government of the grass root which is designed to set up as an instrument to rural development or transformation. From ideological perspective, local government foster the principle of democracy as local government brings government nearer to the people and if properly designed it goes to mass participation of people in the process of government.

Thus, local government is designed to achieve its goals, that is, multi-dimensional goals of economic, social and political development. For local government to achieve its goals, it should be appropriately organized/structured, adequately funded and sufficiently

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staffed with well qualified and consciously trained and motivated, competent and educated personnel.

Furthermore, local government in India started when her politician assumed leadership of regional legislative under colonial reforms that's led to regional self-government in the 1950. The instituted reform that gradually transformed local government authority from traditional rulers to elected representatives in the process; they created vacuum and space for political participation for local elites especially western educated elites who hither to played little or no role in local governance.

In addition to this, local governments in India have undergone very numerous and constant reforms aimed at evolving a viable system that could suit the purpose of which local government is created. Before the advent of colonial administration various traditional political communities in Indian were governed through the instrumentalities of their traditional political institution. In the Northern part of Indian, the Hausa/Fulani operated as highly centralized hierarch leally organized authoritarian large Feale state and were ruled by powerful Emirs. The Yoruba of the western India had centralized freedom in which the who played constitutional role. The Igbo have fragmented and diffused autonomous local government, the council of elders shared in political authority with the Chief of the community.

In the light of this, local government should be a machinery tools for rural development, but research finding and empirical evidence seems to have shown that, most local government have not adequately mobilized the people for rural development activities. Consequently, this study will like to stress out the impact of local government on rural development and the way forward.

Similarly, the expediency of local government everywhere in the world stems from the need to facilitate development at the grassroots. The important of local government is a function of its ability to generate sense of belonging, safety and satisfaction among its populace. All forms of government regimes or political systems for ensuring national administration development and political efficiency are found in the concept and practice of local government. Whatever is the mode of government, integration, administration and development.

What are some of the challenges faced by local government bodies?

In India, though political decentralization has been successfully achieved through the establishment of local government bodies, the actual transfer of functions, finances, and functionaries to these institutions remains incomplete. This weakens the system and inhibits its proper functioning.

A Devolution Report, published by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj in 2015-2016 estimates the extent to which states have devolved functions, finances, and functionaries. It concludes that while certain states such as Kerala, Karnataka, and Maharashtra have transferred relatively more power to local bodies, real decentralization has a long way to go in India.

Functional challenges: The power to devolve functions to local governments rests with the state government. For a variety of reasons, states do not devolve adequate functions to local government bodies, severely affecting the system’s efficiency and effectiveness. For instance, state governments have been known to create parallel structures for the implementation of projects around agriculture, health, and education—undermining areas for which local bodies are constitutionally responsible.

Additionally, many local bodies lack the support systems necessary to carry out their mandates. The 74th amendment requires a District Planning Committee to be set up in each district; so that the development plans prepared by the panchayats and urban local bodies can be consolidated and integrated. However, it was seen that District Planning Committees are non-functional in nine states, and failed to prepare integrated plans in 15 states.

Financial challenges: Devolving functions is meaningless without providing adequate funds to carry out said functions. After nearly 25 years of decentralization, local government expenditure as a percentage of GDP is only two percent—a number that is extremely low when compared to other major emerging economies such as China (11 percent) and Brazil (seven percent).

Most local bodies, both rural and urban are unable to generate adequate funds from their internal sources, and are therefore extremely dependent on external sources for funding.

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Studies show that around 80 percent to 95 percent of revenue is obtained from external sources, particularly state and central government loans and grants.

– State governments have not devolved enough taxation powers. Most states only permit local bodies to collect property taxes and water tariffs, but not land tax or tolls, which can provide more substantial revenues.

1. **Functionary challenges:** The capacity of local bodies to carry out their mandate is often circumscribed by the state government officials. Additionally, the secretariats of local governments are grossly under-staffed and under-skilled, and therefore unable to provide the required support to the elected body. Their capacities need to be further strengthened through training of existing personnel and the recruitment of new staff. Though local bodies are authorized to recruit staff, this is prevented by limited funding. India’s local governance system needs to be empowered in all three areas to ensure that power truly rests with the people, not just on paper, but also in practice.

1.3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The argument for giving increased attention to the problem of rural areas is pioneer and widely acceptable by scholars. It has become a tremendous and pretentious phenomenon in local government, since the government was expected to serve as effective instrument of rural development.

However, the level of effectiveness of local government in rural development would be affected try the following variables, finance, inadequacy of skilled workers, problems of participation and involvement.

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Many people in the rural live on miserable low income; as a result, their standard of living is very poor. Apart from this, they do not have access to social amenities and other basic necessity of life such as water, electricity, roads, health care services etc.

Secondly, a low level of participation by the poor, even though the ultimate shareholders in the rural development efforts are the rural poor, all often they are derived a voice in the formulation, implementation and management of rural development programmes.

Fourthly, absent of thorough knowledge of local system and the needs or rural people as well as grass root action research and service programme designed primarily to test how to plan and implement rural development programmes within the co-operation of recipient often made governments rural development efforts to fail.

Fifthly, the lack of political will and stability, there has been no continuity in rural development efforts in Nigeria state since independence. Each successive regime introduced its rural development programmes. Such programmes ends with the termination of the regime introduced it.

In addition, the rural areas are lacking so many things among which are good roads, good educations, good water supply and good health care system etc. these problems lootings about rural-urban drift which had created a myriad of socio-economy problems for both rural and urban centers. As a result of rural-urban migration, rural areas have been deprived of human resources, engage mostly in the agricultural sector, and have the low level of productivity. The aftermath of this scenario includes housing problems in cities, unemployment and increase in crime rate.

Furthermore, inadequacy of skilled workers is another major obstacle confronting much local government, same form few local council in Lagos state and perhaps, some Southern states, local government generally has experiencing death of skilled, technical and professional staff like qualified Engineers, medical Doctors, Accountants, Town planners, to mention but a few.

In the same vein, problem of participation and involvement is another obstacle of local government. For the past decades, more euphemistic phrases have been employed to

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justify people’s participations at the grass roots. They includes: “Development from below”, Bottom-up approach to the development”, popular participation”, bringing government closer to the people’s etc. train all indication and corrections, research and physical observation have shown that there has been more hue and cry than action.

Similarly, misplaced priority poses another problem. Hardened and limited resources accrued to and raised by local government are always mismanaged. Priorities are misplaced, projects are done not accordingly or as demanded by the people but regrettably in line with selfish and agreement of the political leadership in collaboration with the senior bureaucratic at the local government level of administration.

The degree of external influence and intrusion in local government affairs by higher level of government is worrisome and needs to re-valuation. Situation where the state governor unconstitutionally dissolved the entire elected council’s officers without proper investigation on spurious allegation is not good for the future of the local government administration in the country.

- a. Can embezzlement or misappropriation of funds by the official of the rural people contribute to the rural development of their areas?
- b. Can the inflow of the rural people to the urban centers because of lack of social amenities bring about rural development?
- c. How to carry the rural dwellers along with the modern trends of the development?
- d. How to ensure full utilization of resources available to the local government?

This research has the above as the statement of the problem. Majority of Indians live in the rural communities, which have failed to witness any significant development, despite the strategic positions the local governments occupy in the scheme of affairs. Poverty is endemic and a stark reality that people die from unpreventable ailment. Farming and tin mining, the main occupations of the people is declining and, the quality of primary education has fallen, health care delivery and access roads are in deplorable conditions. Local government autonomy means that the local government is elected at the local level and operated independently of the state and federal government. The local government is no longer an appendage or field office of the state government. But in India today, local government lack autonomy as a result of interferences by both the state and the federal

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governments. They lack the freedom to make their own laws, rules and regulations, formulate, execute and evaluate their own plans and the right to recruit, promote, develop and discipline its own affairs.

Over the years efforts have been made to reform the local government system and to increase the participation of the people. Despite these reforms there are problems with the local government system. However, some of the problems associated with Jos South Local Government Area are peculiar to some of the problems of local government in India. These problems include among other things like insufficient funding or poor financial base to exercise complete independence in the provision of social services, lack of adequate human, material and financial resources both in terms of quantity and quality to carry out its own activities, corruption and poverty mismanagement of funds and lack of autonomy. In spite of development place India which dates back as far as 1946, local governments in India are still underdeveloped.

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to achieve meaningful result from this research, the following research questions have been formulated as a guide to the research and shall be examined:

- a. Does the performance of Local Government Area in the field of rural development measures up to its legal responsibilities?
- b. Does weak financial base, limits the capacity of Local Government Area to meet its goal in rural development?
- c. Does morale among the staff of Local Government Area militates against the realization of its rural development responsibilities?

1.5 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- a. To know the performance of Local Government Area in the field of rural development.
- b. To improve the weak financial base which limits the capacity of Local Government Area to meet its goal of rural development?
- c. To see how Local Government Area has helped in economic development. Since it is conviction of the Federal Military Government as emphasized in the guidelines for the

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Local Government, the objective of this study is also based on Federal Government Objectives. The study sought to investigate the roles and functions of Jos South Local Government Area in the development of rural areas and to identify and proffer solutions to some of the fundamental problems challenging the development of rural areas

Specifically, the study intends to achieve the following aims and objectives:

1. To evaluate the role of Jos South Local Government Area in rural development.
2. To examine the organic relationship between local government and rural development.
3. To make a critical appraisal of the performance of Jos South local government council between 2008-2014 in relation to rural transformation.
4. To identify the constraints militating against the performances of Local Government in the development of rural areas.
5. To analyze the prospect for Indian local government in the light of this investigation and coherently recommend ways for more effective and vibrant administration and management of local government in India.

The result of such an empirical research would place us in advantageous position to inquire whether the Local Government has achieved any significant level of economic development at the grassroots level of development. We will look into the problem hindering such goal attainment.

This research is to find out the performance of the Local Government in the surprised role which it should play, e.g building of roads, maintenance of maternity home and markets etc.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of this research is for its outcome to throw more light on the problem facing Local Government in the area of economic growth:

- a. To ascertain solution to these problems. We also hope that the result will be of interest to policy makers on the country.
- b. It is also intended to be beneficial to the residents and indigence of Indian Local Government who are the target group of the economic development activities of the Local Government, who may be ignorant of the problems facing the Local Government.
- c. Finally, a critical and careful observation into this research work will further help disclose the factors responsible for a go slow in rural development in Indian Local Government and possible ways of tackling such problems. The important aspect of this research work is that, local governments in India today has failed in diverse ways in the

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provision of social services to the local people thereby rendering the development of rural areas impossible. However, the essence of this research work is to provide enlightenment and to educate the people on the need for rural development. The study will help immensely in guiding the local government policy makers to make better decisions for rural development in rural areas.

Thereafter, this study is to provide an insight in which local people will be able to participate in the politics of their communities and to educate the people on the roles and duties they should play in the development of their locality. Thereafter, this research is beneficial to the researchers, students, Jos South LGC.

This work is important due to the fact that it will go a long way to provide literature material and propel further research in relation to the problems of local government and rural development in India.

1.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The area to be covered by this research work is limited to Indian Local Government with its headquarters at Kings Square, Benin City.

The research intends to critically examine the role of the Local Government in rural development of in the local area as well as Edo state at large.

1.8 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

During the conduct of this research work, some factors posed as constraints to the determined efforts of the research to carry out the research study to such a depth and in such a manner that it ought to have been carried out judging from its relevance to management, such factors include:

- a. **Management Restriction:** management more often than now allow access to information that are considered very confidential in nature like detail information of organization of the organizational corporate profile. As a result of the restrictions the author was able to work with only the information that he has access to.
- b. **Time Constraint:** Time is also another factor that acts as hindrances in carrying out this research study. This is as a result of the fact that other things were still being attended to in the course of carrying out this research work.
- c. **Financial Constraint:** money also acts as a problem in the conduct of the research work. Traveling expenses were incurred in getting the materials for the research work.

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Also incurred, were expenses for the typing and distribution, building and a lot of other expenses.

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THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON VOTER BEHAVIOUR

INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The advent of internet and technology has exposed majority of the global population to different interactive platforms on which different kinds of information is exchanged which might significantly have effect on human behavior, decision and judgment (CES, 2012). Social media are new information network and information technology using a form of communication utilizing interactive and user-produced content, and interpersonal relationships are created and maintained. The emergence of the Internet as the new mass medium of the 21st century now changes the mass media substantially. Information can be distributed at high speed, low cost, and broad scope and as a result, there is egalitarian access to the production and the consumption of news (Prat in 2011)

Today's social media has made the world a “global village”, with the quick transfer of information overriding the challenges of time and distance (Friedman, 2007). Social media's has gradually become one of the important means of influencing the society and this influence is based exclusively on its social aspects of interaction and participation. As social media gains more popularity and scope, its impact on voters' political and cultural perceptions cannot be underestimated as social media practically influences the way users interact, communicate and make decisions on social, cultural, and political issues in today's world.

Voting behavior is a form of political behavior exhibited by electorates which can be influenced by a lot of factors ranging from emotional, ethnicity, religion leading them to make certain decisions. Various factors such as gender, race, culture or religion go a long way in affecting the way a voter behaves and the decision he makes as regards selection of a candidate of his choice. However, key external factors may also influence a voter's behavior such as political socialization, socio-cultural views, tolerance of diverse political views and the media, internet inclusive. The effect of these influences on voting behavior is dependent on attitudes, beliefs, knowledge and the source of available information to the voter.

The social media has become a powerful medium which may affect voting behavior because of its potential to provide direct and cheap access to the production and consumption of current information at any part of the world without editorial filtering. Not

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only do social media provide information about political affiliations, candidates and their party manifestoes, it also provides a platform through which voters across cultural divides can relate and interact with themselves on issues about these candidates.

political parties, including the two prominent parties took to social media platforms such as online networking sites, blogs, mobile newspapers, news ads, etc. to campaign and mobilize not only youths but all class of internet users to vote for them. This brought about a variety of interesting news and drama online providing opportunity for users to read, respond, interact, argue and trash out issues online. Twitter, Facebook, blogs, online newspapers etc. became platforms for people to air their thoughts on various candidates, and sway others towards their line of thinking with various debates, hashtags and online campaigns. This brought all Indians together irrespective of political divide, ethnicity and religion on national issues.

Nearly every political party in the country used social media to campaign and advance its plans, message and manifestoes to supporters including advertising, mobilization and organizing in all the states of the federation, and even fundraising. Facebook, YouTube and especially Twitter were used to let voters know how each party or particular candidate felt about important national issues ranging from security to power. Hence social media became powerful enough to influence voter decisions and choices as many voters who had fixed their minds and conscience on voting a particular party or candidate began to change their minds based on certain information or idea they got online about the party or candidate. Information gotten by a particular voter was also not static, as the same voter would use several internet tools and buttons to broadcast same message to other voters like him through medium such as blogs, Facebook, chat rooms etc. in order to influenc

News, social media and voter behaviour

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The day before counting began in India’s recent general election, *The Columbia Journalism Review* referred to the massive polling exercise as “India’s WhatsApp election”. For all the

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profound issues at stake, it said, the most riveting aspect of the campaign had been the “rampant proliferation of disinformation and hate speech online”.

Given these worries about active electoral subversion, a study released on June 11 by the Delhi-based Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) would have brought relief, if nothing else, for its anticlimactic findings. The large-scale survey, available on the website of the CSDS affiliate Lokniti, indicated some perceptible links between social media use and voting behaviour, but not of sufficient scale to override other determinants of political choice.

From a sample of over 24,000 voters broadly mirroring India’s population in caste and gender terms, social media users were identified and classed by the frequency of their visits to five specific sites: Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, You tube and Instagram. Since most respondents would typically use more than one platform, the study isolated the impact of overlapping usage patterns, and worked out a “composite index” which classed respondents four ways: From high social media use, to moderate, low and finally zero.

What was striking in this exercise was the relative ubiquity of WhatsApp. Yet for all the early warnings, the numbers turned in by the survey were modest. Over 63 per cent of the respondents fell within the category of “zero access” to social media. Among those with access, 47 per cent said they never read political news on social media. To an open-ended question about news sources, 49 per cent named television, 11 per cent named “other people around them”, and 10 per cent mentioned newspapers. A very modest 3 per cent named social media as a news source.

There was a pronounced advantage for the BJP among voters with high social media exposure: 43 per cent of respondents within this category reported an inclination towards the party, against 21 per cent for the Congress. But with the “high exposure” category being a mere 10 per cent of total sample — and by implication, the population — winning its favour would have been of negligible benefit without similar advantages in other categories. Sure enough, the BJP had advantages across all categories, of roughly the same magnitude by which it bested the Congress in the national popular vote share.

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The Lokniti study will be closely parsed in the months ahead. Yet certain inconsistencies with other research findings need to be highlighted for a broader understanding.

Just a month before the vote count, the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism (RISJ) published its own survey-based findings on the digital news domain. Very different in coverage (being confined to only the English language audience) and methodology (being based on online surveys), the RISJ arrived at conclusions at sharp variance with Lokniti's. Even more than other markets with high mobile phone penetration, it found, India was emerging as a mobile-first market, where the “distributed discovery” of news was the norm. Primary news sources were of less importance than the social media platform from which news was accessed. And increasingly, video was the format in which news was being consumed.

Lokniti's finding that the intensity of social media use — estimated on the basis of respondents' recall — does not square with figures on data traffic over the mobile network. The *Ericsson Mobility Report* (EMR) is the industry standard here, and successive editions record the rapid global growth of smart-phones, in which India was quick to catch up despite a late start.

The EMR clubs India along with Nepal and Bhutan as a market, but the numbers could safely be assumed to pertain mostly to India. In its most recent edition, the EMR speaks of an average data traffic of 9.8 gigabytes (GB) per month over each smart-phone in the India region in the last quarter of 2018. This was sharply up over the earlier year's figure of 6 GB per month. Going back to 2015, the data traffic on each smart-phone was a mere 1.5 GB per month.

Factoring in the rapid growth in smart-phone numbers, the total data traffic over the mobile network increased from 0.3 Exabytes per month in 2015 (each Exabyte is a billion Gigabytes) to 4.6 in 2018.

These figures are obviously very difficult to reconcile with the Lokniti finding that news access over social media is a rarity. The problem may lie in mutual intelligibility between Lokniti's surveyor and the respondent in what was meant by “news”. It is a definition in constant flux. The older understanding of news as something the media industry produces

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is yielding to a new construct. News is now a collective outpouring of angst at the betrayal of all the promises that liberal democracy functions on.

The right-wing has understood that reality to create a corrosive populism that actively pursues the disenfranchisement of those at the margins. Media practitioners committed to values of liberalism are yet to discover an antidote for this growing malaise.

During the Indian parliament election in 2014, social media was a popular word. Politicians used social media as their tool to communicate with their intended audience; to call them either to vote or to protest. One of the prominent reasons for social media being used by political parties is because traditional mass media communication is highly regulated by the Election Commission of India. Politicians have also chosen social media in an attempt to reach voters inhabiting the new media society in a more efficient manner. The 2008 U.S. presidential election was the first election to fully grasp the power and reach of the SNS to impact voters. The U.S. President Barack Obama’s campaign used Facebook in an exceptional way to reach out to young voters. It proved to be successful; allowing him to win the votes of nearly 70% of voters that were under 25 years old. During the anti-corruption movement in 2012, social activist Anna Hazare used social media to connect people in New Delhi.

Social media and elections

The widespread use of social media platforms for self-expression, communication, and social participation has resulted in an abundance of voluntarily disclosed personal information online, which can be aggregated to gauge public opinion unobtrusively. As compared to traditional methods of public opinion measurement, social media allows time- and cost-effective data collection and analysis with less human effort. Scholars analysing social media data to gauge public opinion have supported the idea that the predictive validity of social media analysis does not necessarily rely on how representative the users are of the general population.

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The indulgence of political parties in social media has seen a surge over the last decade. Over the years, Indian politics has also become more dependent on the usage of social media to connect with people experiencing the effect of fellow democracies. . In India, the social media platform analyses the closest proximity of the actual vote holding of the political parties. The data is collected from social media platforms to analyse the number of people in support and opposition and those who can be targeted

The prediction of results can be done through parameters involving volumetric and sentimental analysis. The volumetric analysis encompasses the volume of tweets, tags and hashtags associated with the leaders of political parties and their influenced users. The sentimental analysis includes comparison based and direct opinions. This was seen in the Delhi elections that took place in 2015 where the researchers got overall positive sentiment towards the political party AAP and their CM candidate. Although the analysis depicted a smaller number of differences in vote holding, it depicted a greater number of tweets for BJP, conveying that the dominant mood was in support of the party.

The youth of this generation is highly invested in politics and the ideas associated with it. Previously, there was no standard platform for individuals to voice their opinions and politicians had to take to the streets to gain popularity. However, now, social media has become a platform where people can freely express themselves. Politicians still use posters, cutouts, etc for their campaigns- but becoming digital and paying attention to their digital platforms has changed the picture. Platforms like Twitter are perfect for political organizations to broadcast information on a worldwide stream for either debates or discussions. With an estimated 53.1 million active users, (as per the census of 2015), India is the third-largest user of Twitter. The number of people using this platform is huge and it is believed to be a great way of influencing elections and campaigns.

Thus, Indian political parties are utilizing the internet and social media to connect with youth for their agenda and political events because they now know how and where to find them. All the political parties and their candidates have their respective social media pages and teams to run their campaigns vehemently, and greater resources are being invested in digital campaigning. Observing the famous 2014 general elections of India, social media was the battleground for various political campaigns and there was a tremendous flow of varied political opinions. The election proved that there was a great potential to influence the country's youth over social media through social media and political campaigns. A serious note was found in both the occasions: regional election as well as state election.

They used social media like never before. Conventional ways of sending messages, recording calls and public gathering became redundant. In 2014 the strategy inculcated by the parties was to first monitor the support through social media and then formulate better strategies to seek targeted votes from the people. This resulted in Narendra Modi gaining a following quickly. In India, the use of social media became more relevant and important following the Anna Hazare movement and the victory of Shri Narendra Modi in the 2014 Lok Sabha Election.

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Impact of negative campaigning or negative advertising on social media

The political parties and their followers had chosen social media sites for campaigning before elections because of its wider reach. In March, Facebook revealed that BJP had been leading the political ad spend on Facebook. According to the official data of Facebook, BJP and its affiliates accounted for over 50% of the total ad spend as of February while the opposition party, Congress, and its affiliates were at the third position after regional parties.

However, it is pertinent to note that mere tweets are not enough to count the votes and predict the results. The failure in the prediction of election results can be clearly understood through the US Presidential Elections in 2016, where Donald Trump surprised the world with his win over Hillary Clinton. All the popular vote forecasting tools had predicted Clinton's chances of winning with a 70% to 99% range. Therefore, result forecasting could be an easy formula to find out the vote holding of a party and to formulate strategies to target more voters for political parties. However, it isn't always the most reliable method.

Along with the positive benefits of social media, there are a lot of negative effects from social media campaigning and advertising. Sometimes news published on social media can be interpreted in the wrong way and thus incorrect interpretations of news will misguide the voters. While heavy campaigning takes place over social media platforms, there is also an increased chance of the spreading of fake news across these same platforms- such as WhatsApp, Facebook and others. This is often done to influence the voting choices of the citizens. [A recent survey also found that there are a number of fake pages on social media.](#)

It was reported that Facebook, upon intimation by the Government, had deactivated and removed over 1,000 pages, groups and accounts for violating Facebook's security policies including fake pages. Individuals associated with an IT Cell of the Indian National Congress (INC), and an Indian IT firm, Silver Touch. Social media's alarming influence over the general public came sharply to light after nearly 31 people were killed by lynch mobs in several states such as Assam, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tripura, and West Bengal over a rumour of child kidnapping which was spread using WhatsApp. There are also a large number of 'trolls' and news by various pages to defame individual candidates or political parties. Thus, the issue of regulating social media is a matter that needs to be debated in many countries, as social media is a good servant which becomes bad when handled by a bad master.

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The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting under the Government of India has declared that social media needs to be regulated. Prior to the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, the Election Commission had made a few guidelines to regulate social media and had made it mandatory for the candidates and political parties to declare the amount spent on digital campaigning and also to authenticate the pages belonging to the party and its candidates. The commission also made it necessary to certify the advertisements prior to publishing them on social media. However, these guidelines were only laid down to regulate the pages of political parties and candidates and not those of the public.

Prior to the recent elections, the Election Commission had said that the model code of conduct would apply even to social media and online campaigning on various platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tiktok, Whatsapp etc. These guidelines were implemented after meeting with the Industry Body Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI). The EC also mentioned that any violations on social media would be processed under the provisions of the [Representation of Peoples Act, 1951](#) and [Section 126](#) of the Act would be applicable. It also made it mandatory for the candidates to mention their pages and their party pages in the nomination papers before the election.

There are many laws and provisions that regulate the social media troll pages, such as the [Information Technology Act 2000 \(Amendment 2015\)](#), [Indian Penal Code, 1860](#) etc. [Section 66A of the IT Act](#) had been the provision for online abuse or defamation, however, in 2015 the Hon'ble Supreme Court upholding the provisions of [Article 19\(1\)\(a\)](#) had struck down [Section 66A of IT Act, 2000](#) in the landmark case *Shreya Singhal and Ors v. Union of India*. However, there are many provisions in the IPC for the offences relating to cybercrimes and abuse by the troll pages, which are: [Section 295A \(Intentionally insulting religion or belief\)](#), [Section 153A \(promoting enmity between people\)](#), [Section 499 \(Defamation\)](#), [Section 505 \(Statements conducing to public mischief\)](#), [506 \(criminal intimidation\)](#), [Section 124A \(Sedition\) etc.](#)

In spite of having many legal provisions for regulating the various platforms in social media like troll pages, many people get away without facing the consequences due to low awareness about the legal provisions. More offences are being repeated by the political parties, candidates and party workers on social media platforms because of weak laws and more financial resources being circulated for digital campaigning. Hence, awareness needs to be created and stringent laws need to be drafted and implemented for the safety of citizens.

Election commission and social media companies : measures taken to make 2019 Elections safer

The Election Commission of India, ahead of elections had directed its state-level bodies to appoint nodal officers who would be responsible for keeping an eye on the spreading or

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circulation of fake news, hate speech and other unlawful content across social media companies. The Election Commission of India had directed its Chief Electoral Officers in states and union territories that any violation of the model code of conduct on social media platforms should be immediately reported to grievance officers of the concerned company and the election commission.

In order to keep social media secure during elections, the commission had also appointed three nodal officers. Their work was to examine the code violation cases instantly and write to the companies to take appropriate action after receiving approval from the director-general of media. In March, social media companies Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Google and Internet and Mobile Association of India had submitted the voluntary code of ethics for the general election 2019 to the chief election commissioner. The companies had agreed to create a high priority dedicated reporting mechanism for the ECI and also appointed dedicated teams during the elections for taking speedy action during violations. The code of ethics was aimed at preventing inappropriate or objectionable political advertisements.

The steps taken by social media companies to make elections safer are:

1. Facebook launched an exclusive feature for India named ‘Candidate Connect’ which allows Lok Sabha candidates to record their election manifesto in the form of 20 second videos.
2. Facebook planned to start an operations Centre in Delhi, which will work with its offices at Menlo Park, Dublin and Singapore to monitor election content.
3. WhatsApp introduced a telephonic tip line for its users to report misleading content and fake news.
4. Microblogging platform Twitter expanded its political ads policy and Ads Transparency Centre (ATC) in India.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The use of emotional appeals in political campaigns to increase support for a candidate or decrease support for a challenger is a widely recognized practice and a common element of any campaign strategy. Campaigns often seek to instill positive emotions such as zeal and hopefulness about their candidate to improve turnout and political activism while seeking to raise fear and anxiety about the opposition. Zeal tends to reinforce preference for the candidate and party, while fear and anxiety interrupt voter behavioral patterns and leads individual voters to look for new sources of information on divergent political issues. Sources of information available to a voter vary widely including the traditional media, TV, radio and newspapers. However, with the advent of online social media forum, most voters can access information, debate on the information and also give feedback on his own views, opinions and expectations from the party and candidate.

Although the social media has helped in increasing the popularity of candidates and their parties, it has the capacity to make or mar their chances and voter’s perception of the party or candidates. Rumors, falsehood, propaganda and derogatory information about individual candidates or parties are commonplace online and spread faster than anticipated, often with disastrous outcomes. This is largely attributed to the lack of editorial filtering, and the anonymity of most online users. The internet encourages anonymity of its users, which means that those who write and comment often use nicknames or aliases. Hence, anonymity provides an excellent opportunity for writing false stories or spreading rumors about candidates and their parties and this often leads to rancor fear and anxiety about the opposition party.

This has a huge influence on voter behavior, as most voters who read stories online have a tendency to believe such stories without crosschecking facts and take decisions based on this propaganda. This is a widely known fact among political parties and they use it to their advantage in bringing down their opponents. Previous research has found that it is possible to influence a person’ attitudes toward a political candidate using carefully crafted information about such candidate online, which in turn may influence the voter’s behavior towards the candidate. Social media can also be used by various parties to propagate false news and propaganda about the opposition in order to disfavor such party or candidate in the eyes of the electorates while exonerating theirs. This has a huge influence on voter behaviour as many voters make decisions based on such news they read online.

Furthermore, social media has made voters privy to any kind of information about politicians and their lives as there are no longer any isolated places or hiding holes. The private and public lives of society’s most influential figures including politicians have been made public online. This is because in today’s world, once a politician declares for a post, his entire life including his educational background, his family, his job and any past mistakes or excesses are made public on social media platforms for people to comment, discuss and publicly judge. Many politicians have been found in compromising positions with their words or phrase taken out of context and magnified to huge proportions by opposition parties in order to discredit them.

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Many times, people go to the extent of recording private conversations or actions of these candidates and make the recorded audio or video public on various social media platforms such as Youtube quickly, with a view to elicit response and vicious backlash from voters and other online users. The belief is that it will go a long way in influencing voter's behavior and turning such voter against the candidate since the voter can now judgmentally make decisions about the candidate based on what he said, did or other information about him or her. Even though, such information are refuted sometimes by the concerned party or individual, it remains valid in the minds of many voters who may have made up their mind already or simply are not aware of the true situation.

The Problem: Today the idea of social media usage is drastically different from the media usage of an era ago. Before the users considered social media as a new technology medium however now they consider it as a source of information and think it to be reliable medium. In 2014 Indian lok-Sabha elections, the social media platforms became a medium for Indian vote casters to find about the Prime Minister candidates. As a result, Prime Ministers political campaigning also used social media to target these citizens effectively. Mr. Modi who is currently Indian Prime minister established social media as an essential part of the political campaigning. This research studies whether political campaigns that are more social media savvy ultimately garner more votes. Secondly, the study also seeks to ascertain if use of Facebook and Twitter for sending messages to potential voters for their support – can positively affect only the younger persons possibility to cast a vote or it has effect on all age groups. **Methodology:** The sample size for this study was 150 Indian citizens who were above the 18 years age who agreed to take part in the quantitative element of this research investigation. The research was conducted using a cross-sectional quantitative (Survey Questionnaire) design. Survey methodology is behavior-oriented research that focuses on the actions of the respondents. The overall research approach is deductive in nature, as its main aim is to explore the previously researched phenomena's from a new and a different perspective and test the hypothesis that have been based on the literature review of this research. Probability sampling technique has been used to identify the sample from the overall population. **Conclusion and Recommendations:** The research shows that due to the presence of social media in Indian politics and political campaigning, the influence on individual voter behavior is limited. Respondents still find the traditional communication mediums like Television, Newspaper & Magazines and Public opinions to be significant and essential in comparison to receiving or reading updates on social media about political candidates. However, it is evident from the survey findings that the major portion of the active users on social networking websites became heavily reliant on social media for seeking updates regarding political leaders. Moreover, they consider it is very important for a political leader to have a profile on these social networking sites. The scope of use of social media in Indian politics is extensive if utilized strategically. Lastly, although twitter has most number of registered users in India, as per the survey response Twitter is the site, which is never used even once a month by most of the respondents. **Author keywords:** Social media, politics

Impact on Political Knowledge: Receiving either paper produced no effect on knowledge of political events or stated opinions about those events, and there were no differences between the treatment and comparison groups in voter turnout for the 2005 gubernatorial

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election. In November 2006, however, there was a 2.8 percentage point increase in voter turnout. It is surprising to see a result in 2006 but not in 2005. This could be a result of the post-election exposure to the remainder of the ten-week newspaper subscriptions, or the fact that 17 percent of the treatment group renewed their subscription after the free period ended.

Impact on Political Preference: Interestingly, receiving either newspaper led to an increase of support for the Democratic candidate. Despite the political slant of the newspapers, the effects were similar for the Post and the Times, resulting in an overall 7.2 percentage point increase in likelihood of voting for the Democratic candidate. This may be due to the fact that the Republican President's approval ratings were falling over that period of time, or perhaps the Democratic candidate was conservative-leaning. In either case, these results suggest that the informational effect of more exposure to news was stronger than the effect of its slant.

This study takes advantage of this natural setting to measure the effect of political news content on people's political behavior and opinions. Approximately one month prior to the Virginia gubernatorial election in November 2005, researchers administered a short survey to a random selection of households in Prince William County.

From the 3,347 households of registered voters who reported that they received neither the Post nor the Times, researchers randomly assigned households to receive a free subscription to one of the two papers for ten weeks, or to the comparison group that was not sent either paper. A week after the election, a follow-up survey was administered asking individuals whether they voted in the November 2005 election, which candidate they selected or preferred, their attitudes toward news events of the previous weeks, and their knowledge about recent news events. Voter turnout data was also collected for the November 2005 and 2006 elections from state administrative records.

Prince William County in northeastern Virginia lies just 25 miles from Washington, D.C. Here, the population is far enough away from the nation's capital so as not to be dominated by citizens involved professionally with politics, but close enough to be within the circulation of Washington's conservative and liberal newspapers. The Washington, D.C. metro area is served by two major newspapers, the conservative Washington Times and the more liberal Washington Post. The presence of a liberal and conservative paper serving the same region creates an opportunity to study the effect of media slant in a natural setting within a single population, which is subject to the same outside factors, such as political events and outcomes, and has a range of political leanings.

Citizens learn about politics and government primarily from television and newspapers; these media outlets can influence voters not only through the slant of a particular report but also merely by choosing which stories to cover. This study measured the effect of receiving free subscriptions to either a liberal or conservative-leaning newspaper on voters' political knowledge and opinions in the United States. Results demonstrated that neither subscription had an impact on voters' political knowledge, but that both subscriptions caused voters to increase their support for the Democratic presidential

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candidate. This suggests that the informational effect of news exposure was stronger than the effect of the slant.

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The general objective of this study is to determine the effect of social media on voter's behaviour in Lagos State. The specific objectives are;

1. To find out if social media influences voter behaviour in Indian State
2. To determine the influence social media has on voter behavior in Indian state
3. To find out other factors that influence voter behaviour in Indian state

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Does social media influence voter behaviour in Indian State?
2. What is the influence of social media on voter behaviour in Indian State?
3. What are the factors that influence voter behaviour in Indian State?

1.5 HYPOTHESES

In order to enable the researcher assess the effect of social media on voter behaviour in Indian state, the following hypotheses will be tested:

1. **Ho:** Social media does not have any effect on voter behaviour in Indian state.
2. Social media has effect on voter behaviour in Indian state.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will help beam the searchlight on the impact of social media on voter's behaviour, the decisions they make and elections as a whole based on the information available to voters on the internet. It will also enlighten relevant stakeholders such as political parties, candidates, and even the civil society on how social media can bring about awareness and campaign opportunities if properly utilized.

This research study will help stakeholders understand that maintaining a good and healthy profile online with a cordial relationship between the party and voters can positively influence voter's behaviour. Lastly, this research work will add to the body of knowledge on the already existing scholarly materials on the impact of social media on voter behaviour.

1.7 SCOPE/LIMITATION OF STUDY

This study will examine the impact of social media on voter behaviour in Lagos state with special reference to the actual influence it has on vote's behaviour either positive or

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negative and the factors determining the behaviour and attitudes that an ordinary voter adopts based on available information.