**Lecture # 4**

**Political Communication and role of Social Media**

Introduction The Internet is a sphere that involves virtually all levels of the political communications. Social media has caused major changes in the political communication and has become useful resource often used by the politicians in order to strengthen their visibility.

All the new media resources viz., the websites, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus, etc., of the politicians or the political parties allow the affirmation (Confirmation) of a discursive (broad) identity of politicians contributing to the customizing (modifying) of the political discourse (verbal expression in speech and writing).

Social Media In the past few years, social media have made a rapid growth in terms of user counts globally. Facebook has more than 1.2 billion active users. Twitter counts more than 200 million users . Google Plus has more than 540 million users. (Facebook Statistics & Wikipedia)

Social Media & Politics Social media has emerged as an essential tool of communication for political parties. Social Media has created new ways of political mobilezing (activating) and encourage social media users in political activities ranging from joining their political groups by: ϒ Tweeting Short Messages in Twitter. ϒ Facebook Status Update. ϒ Expressing Supports Through Blogs. ϒ Videos on YouTube. ϒ Group Hangouts on Google+.

Functions of the Social Media in the Political Communication Politicians promote their controlled (organized) speech and present their point of view without being interrupted by journalists or by media format limitation. Social media has given privilege (freedom) for politicians to post a presumptive (Convincing) political agenda. By means of social media, political parties or politicians can mobilize public and invites them to participate in discussion on some issues of public interest. By using the social media tools, politicians and political parties interacts apparently with more efficiently with their supporters, beyond institutional and bureaucratic rigors.

Social Media in Pakistani Politics Social media is playing a considerable new role in Pakistani democracy. Presently, political parties are increasingly embracing social media to encourage people. With the changing scenario of Pakistani Politics, political parties and politicians have found a new ways of reaching out to a younger and aspiration population. It is really a long leap from the times when politicians were relied mainly on posters, cardboard, cutouts, graffiti, banners and personal canvassing to win over voters.

 Social Media & Pakistani Political Parties Among major political parties in Pakistan, PTI has the biggest charisma in social media. The trend of making full use of online technology started with Imran Khan’s PTI; a party that saw great potential in the relatively new medium. After seeing the PTI make effective use of Social Media, many other parties copied the stance and tried improving their content to attract the masses.

“The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf is taking a very careful and tactful approach when it comes to Social Media”, PTI spokesperson Faisal Javed Khan stated. “We have hired experts with immense technical knowledge who help convey targeted messages to selected audience”

Like the PTI, the Social Media Wing of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML N) is also taking full advantage of online networking. Talking to Dunya News, their Social Media representative said: “We try our best to deliver positive and timely messages. For us, negative publicity is a big no, so we try to avoid that.”

Main Featers

In the last few years, social media have become an important political communication channel in Pakistan and globally. Social Media enables political parties and voters to directly interact with each other. Social Media allows political activities to gain more transparency and citizens might be more involved into political decision-making processes. The political parties, which have exploited the benefits of promoting their image and political messages by means of the social networks, have enjoyed active participation of their supporters.

Assignment

Active Pakistani Politicians on Social media with their profiles