Online ISSN 3007-3197 Print ISSN 3007-3189

http://amresearchreview.com/index.php/Journal/a

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Social Media Stimulating Human Rights in Pakistan: Case study of Digital Activism and legal Reforms from Digital Movement to Parliamentary Motion via Twitter

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Article Details

Keywords: Social Media, Human Rights, Digital Activism, Legal Reforms, Twitter

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ABSTRACT

This research paper investigates how social media, particularly Twitter, stimulates human rights advocacy in Pakistan through digital activism that catalyzes legal reforms. Using a case study approach, the study traces the trajectory of online movements that begin as grassroots digital campaigns and evolve into parliamentary motions and policy debates. Drawing on qualitative content analysis of prominent Twitter campaigns and semi-structured interviews with activists, policymakers, and legal experts, this paper explores how digital platforms amplify marginalized voices, mobilize public opinion, and pressure institutions for legislative change. Findings reveal that while social media has emerged as a powerful tool for awareness and mobilization, its impact on tangible legal reform depends on sustained offline action, institutional responsiveness, and the broader socio-political context. The study contributes to understanding the dynamic intersection of digital technologies, activism, and human rights advancement in Pakistan, and offers practical insights for activists, legislators, and scholars interested in the role of social media in shaping policy outcomes in emerging democracies.

DOI: Availability

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, social media has become a disruptive force in public conversations, empowering new voices that have been traditionally marginalized, and allowing citizens to develop collective responses to societal injustices. In Pakistan, where censorship is still a challenge for traditional forms of media, social media platforms like Twitter have enabled advocates and activists to promote human rights, raise awareness, and seek accountability for injustices. Digital activism can be defined as the strategic use of digital technologies (i.e. social media) to advance social or political change, and it is seeing a growing number of adopters among youth, civil society organizations, and independent activists. (Abbasi, 2021)

In this paper, I present a case study on how social media can promote human rights in Pakistan, highlighting the way and the pathways by which online campaigns have transformed or evolved from being digital movements to being legislative motions. The emergence of hashtags, online petitions, and viral trends on social media afford activists new opportunities to bypass traditional media gatekeepers, invite public participation, and encourage policymakers to respond to public demand. Recent examples demonstrate that digital mobilization can lead to genuine legal reform including amendments to existing laws or proposed new bills in Parliament. (Ahmed, 2021)

Though it continues to rise in importance, the role of social media in converting online momentum into institutional change has been relatively unexplored within the specific context of Pakistan. This research project attempts to address this gap by mapping out the mechanisms, successes, and obstacles to digital activism in the broader framework of human rights advocacy. Through analysis of selected key Twitter campaigns and interviews with stakeholders, the research intends to examine the dynamics that facilitate or restrict the movement from digital expression to legitimate policy reform. The overall objective of this research is to contribute to the growing conversation around technology fueled social movements, digital citizenship, and democratic engagement in developing countries. In this regard, it hopes to demonstrate the potential of social media to not only spark discussion, but also influence actual policy decisions that extend human rights protections in Pakistan. (DRF, 2022)

BACKGROUND

Pakistan's commitment to upholding and advancing human rights has been hindered by persistent socio-political dilemmas, entrenched modes of power, and a difficult media landscape. Traditional forms of rights advocacy, such as civil society campaigns, street or mass protests, and

printed or broadcast media, can only go so far as long as these hindrances exist by state restriction, social unawareness, and limited communication with vulnerable groups. Enter social media, which has provided new avenues for citizens to voice their concerns and hold institutions accountable for their actions (Hong, 2022)

In the last ten years, internet connectivity options have increased exponentially in Pakistan which, combined with a surging smartphone use, has enabled millions of individuals to access social media spaces such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Twitter is now arguably the most powerful social media tool for real-time exchanges and citizen journalism, while enabling activists to mobilize digitally. Hashtags like #JusticeForZainab, #MeTooPakistan, and #AuratMarch, points to the increased collective power of citizens using digital tools digitizing their activism and drawing national and global awareness to human rights problems, including gender based violence, freedom of speech, and minority rights. (Jamal, 2021)

Digital activism in Pakistan is changing from simple awareness to political pressure. Some recent campaigns have changed online outrage into legal and parliamentary pressures that caused them to write motions, amend antiquated laws or create protections for vulnerable communities. This shows that the political reality is shifting and that the variables at play in grass roots digital activism can increasingly shape the agenda for what is being discussed politically (Kemp, 2023)

Although these developments are encouraging, the relationship between digital activism and real legal reform is not automatic or straightforward. The success of a social media movement can depend on sustainability of online engagement, forming partnerships with their offline media and civil society, the willingness of decision makers and the legal institutional environment; in addition to ambiguity around online harassment, disinformation, and digital surveillance that makes conceiving of and executing a social media based rights agenda more complex. (Kurbalija, 2016)

As changing political context is the basis for establishing this research, we therefore look at how social media - especially twitter - can be understood as an agent of human rights progress in Pakistan. Using the insight into how digital campaigns move from viral hashtags, to parliamentary notices of motions, and law legislation, we aim to identify the support for and factors prohibiting this new model of civic engagement and policy influence.

RESEARCH GAP

Although the impact of social media on contemporary public discourse has been recognized in

scholarly work across the globe, its specific role to facilitate and drive legal reform in Pakistan has not been fully explored. Much of the current literature on digital activism in Pakistan has focused predominantly on digital activism to create consciousness through campaigns, online harassment, or freedom of expression, but fails to consider how digital activism translates to policy debates, discussions, and government decision making. Furthermore, the literature is predominantly concerned with social media mobilization in the context of Western democracies or broader social movements, like the Arab Spring. Therefore, evidence of social mobilization through digital activities does not exist in the context of Pakistan's distinct socio-political environment which is characterized by developing democratic institutions, press freedom restrictions, and the social context of a young, increasingly digitally savvy population (Mahmood, 2025)

There is still limited empirical exploration of how a digital rights campaign can move from the digital realm and encircle policy makers' decision-making through formal channels like government motions, legal amendments, or other governmental bills. Although several anecdotal examples of digital movements resulting in change are outlined in news media, there remains a lack of systematic, evidence-based research connecting outcomes from digital movements to outcome for public policy (Nasir, 2025)

This research addresses this gap by critically examining how Twitter driven activism in Pakistan stimulates human rights discourse and legislative change. By combining qualitative insights from case studies and stakeholder interviews, this study offers a deeper understanding of the opportunities and limitations of digital activism as an emerging tool for human rights advocacy and democratic accountability in Pakistan.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

While social media has emerged as a significant venue for civic engagement in Pakistan, it is still unclear to what degree digital activism can result in meaningful legal and policy reform. Platforms like Twitter have amplified the voices of many marginalized groups and mobilized public opinion around various human rights momentums. However, the relationship between online movements and formal legislative outcomes is poorly studied, and, thus, poorly understood. (Malik, 2022)

Within a country where traditional media is often limited, and where civil society movements struggle to sustain momentum, digital spaces can serve as new pathways for rights based advocacy. But the routes linking viral online campaigns to legal reform whether through

parliamentary debate, legal amendment, or a new bill remain complicated and poorly charted (Nasir, 2025) This lack of empirical evidence to help activists, policymakers, and researchers fully understand social media's potential to transform the human rights landscape in Pakistan. Thus, this study aims to respond to this gap and critically investigate how Twitter based digital activism cultivates human rights discourse and leads to legal reform, exploring both the enabling conditions and the impediments.

OBJECTIVES

1. To examine how Twitter based digital activism raises awareness and mobilizes public opinion on human rights issues in Pakistan.
2. To investigate the pathways through which online campaigns evolve into formal legal reforms or parliamentary motions.
3. To identify the key factors that enable or hinder the translation of digital activism into tangible policy outcomes.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How does Twitter based activism influence public discourse and awareness about human rights issues in Pakistan?
2. In what ways do digital movements on Twitter contribute to initiating or shaping legal reforms and parliamentary debates?
3. What conditions and challenges affect the success of translating online human rights campaigns into concrete legislative action?

HYPOTHESES

- **H1:** Increased activism on Twitter is positively related to increased public awareness of human rights issues in Pakistan.
- H2: Digital movements as a form of activism on Twitter are relevant for generating conversations of legal reform in the context of the parliamentary process in Pakistan.
- **H3:** The impact of digital activism contributing to policy change is dependent on social and political factors, including: responsiveness of institutions, media coverage and ongoing non-virtual advocacy.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is important for several reasons. First, it contributes to the growing literature in the area of digital activism and serves to situate itself in a developing country like Pakistan, which

brings with it unique obstacles that restrict the traditional forms of advocacy and emphasize censorship and infrastructure related barriers. The study specifically explores how Twitter based campaigns can generate discussions on human rights and possibly contribute to legal reform while highlighting the fact that social media can be a substitute for civil society of action and public policy contribution.

Second, the results provide tangible examples for activists, civil society organizations, and decision makers who want to use digital platforms in more productive ways. Knowing the pathways and conditions that allow a digital movement to develop from online conversation into parliamentary action could allow rights based actors to create more strategic and impactful campaigns.

Third, this research could have wider lessons and implications for emerging democracies that are grappling with similar challenges. It models a way to study digital participation and legislative change and to extract lessons that can contribute to policy debates, technologies for media literacy, and also future research on the interaction between technology, activism, and human rights. It serves to draw attention to the importance of bridging a digital movement into reform offline. In so doing it re-emphasizes a vital role in strengthening and expanding the democratic process and human rights in Pakistan where spaces for movement are being increasingly restricted in the digital age.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The political scene in Pakistan remains uncertain. Previously, the lack of the rule of law, military interference in governance, the rise of extremism, and continued repression of dissent allowed room for the expansion of digital authoritarianism in Pakistan. As in the last two decades, the now expired strategies that are used to repress critics or manufacture narratives in traditional media, were simply adapted to the digital surround. (Shad, 2022)

The internet has changed how people retrieve and communicate information, and for those looking to control information, social media platforms offer new opportunities entertaining questions of control, governance and surveillance in cyberspace. Internet regulation is contextualized in our digital ecosystem, and there is a different approach to internet regulation in every country. In India, for example, the government proactively undertakes long term internet blackouts as a response to protest movements that draws the ire of human rights advocates. China uses a myriad of complex systems in which severe digital censorship is one of the most effective ways to control public opinion and neutralize dissent. Meanwhile, in liberal democracies

even in liberal democracies the question of surveillance is impacting the discussions about how balance security with civil liberties. (Shahani, 2020)

It is important to understand who constitutes the internet user base in Pakistan since the overall policies adopted in Pakistan have different implications contrary to a digital environment. Also, internet penetration in Pakistan has increased from only 6.3 percent in 2005 to more than 36 percent in early 2023. Even accounting for that growth, almost two thirds of the population still remains offline. Most of the online usage, in commercials, political, and civil society, has been on behalf of Pakistan's youthful population; nearly 64 percent of citizens are under the age of 30. Presumably, this growth in internet access comes with an attempted expansion of the government's regulatory environment for electronic services. (Asma Jahangir Conference, 2021)

Pakistan's digital governance also has religious and military ideological components in significant part. Authorities often quote the Islamic value of moral protection to justify internet censorship. At various times, Wikipedia, YouTube, and Facebook have all been completely blocked based on alleged blasphemous or immoral content. Political leaders, as purportedly indicated by former Prime Minister Imran Khan, have supported or advanced the notion of limiting access to the internet in this way because they felt the unrestricted content is problematic to their citizens' morality. (Verma, 2021)

This amalgamation of nationalism, religion, and military nationalism has been invoked to support surveillance and content regulation. Pakistan's Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the military's media arm, recently framed an overarching agenda on restricting any behavior that constitutes fifth generation warfare linked allegedly to external efforts. It legitimizes creating a hostile digital space for journalists, political opponents, and national rights defenders to monitor and intervene in, since any challenge to intervention could be deemed a security threat (Yilmaz, 2016)

In 2016, Pakistan confronted its digital space regulations when the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) was drawn up. The legislation would regulate the digital environment with new laws to control online threats, such as hacking and identity theft, cyberterrorism, and hate speech. The issues are sufficiently grave at the time due to security conditions associated with terrorism and therefore present as clearly a matter of national defense. Legislatively the form of PECA was quickly wrapped into law. The express intention was to regulate and control loose digital and social media behaviour. However, the law garnered international criticism for the vague spousal definitions of what was deemed' to challenge', as well

as fears of political leverage for further political repression and deterrent to dissent as politics continue to decline. (PTA, 2023)

Possible Controversial provisions can be found in Section 37, which gives the PTA the power to block or remove online materials that it believes to be inappropriate. However, ideas around what is dangerous are vague and framed as threats like "vulgarity" or "corruption of youth." This sets the stage for censorship that is selective. The law also includes a requirement that social media companies must comply with takedown requests within 24 hours of receiving the request, and must have a local business presence in Pakistan. This could potentially give the state further power to bar digital platforms. (PTA, 2023)

PECA also granted additional power to the FIA to engage in a vastly expanded capacity for surveillance and with the ability to confiscate digital devices. Though sold as a way for agencies to fight back against cybercrime and extreme behavior, critics assert that these powers are used without accountability or oversight. For example, in 2018, the PTA purchased deep-packet inspection tools from foreign manufacturers for additional broadband and online monitoring systems. These devices are now a normal part of the capabilities of intelligence agencies such as the ISI and FIA to survey internet traffic and track the footprints of individuals that are viewed as a threat to the state. (PTA, 2023)

In addition to legal instruments, the state has bent its scrutiny, gazing up at the top of its masses and, more importantly, regional and transnational databases. The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) is established as a citizens' identity authority but has been reported as providing biometric data to international intelligence agencies as part of counter-terrorism efforts. Similarly, Pakistan's "safe city" projects have been put together through contract agreements with Chinese corporations to set up surveillance systems that not only include facial recognition through biometric identification but also vehicle tracking and drone footage. The city surveillance systems are designed to monitor persons in real time, under the auspices of urban security. (Nasir, 2025)

The state has been able to justify its uprated surveillance measures in the name of public safety, but there does appear to be skepticism about what they can achieve. Despite having increased its public spending on security infrastructure; for example the extra funding to increase the number of CCTV cameras; violent crime in cities have not abated (Islamabad has not benefited as much, notwithstanding that Lahore's rise in violent crime has been far greater). Some critics suggest that these technologies will be used against political rivals and others who

show dissent, not mobilized to achieve better security in the first place (Shafqat, 2019)

In conjunction with legal changes, the Pakistani state has often turned to extended internet blackouts as a tool of public discourse control. Starting in the early 2010s, the PTA began routinely shutting down internet services during political protests, religious festivals, or perceived security threats. While these shutdowns are publicly rationalized on the grounds of preservation of public order or as counter terrorism preventions, they are also understood as forms of political repression and freedom of assembly suppression. Examples include rival parties being silenced by the shutting down of service or even the thwarting of opposition by deployment of the service disruption (Talbot, 2009)

The blocking of websites and digital platforms is yet another clear demonstration of digital authoritarianism in Pakistan, in which censorship is commonplace, legitimized by rhetoric of religious or moral justifications. For example, YouTube is curtailing in 2012-2016 as a result of the proliferation of controversial religious nationwide and worldwide content. TikTok has been temporarily blocked in the past for 'immorality,' and even large-scale platforms like Twitter or Wikipedia have been occasionally removed or curtailed for hosting 'blasphemous' or 'anti-state' content. These actions betray a wider state driven project to monitor and control the digital narrative (Wilkers, 2016)

A particularly notable example occurred during the Asma Jahangir Conference in 2021 when former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif tried to speak to an audience by video link from exile, but his remarks were scuttled by a forced outage of the internet services. This is ostensibly done to stop his condemnation of the current government and military establishment from reaching the public. Similarly, in May 2023, a few days after protests erupted across the country in response to Imran Khan being arrested, the internet service was cut-off across the significant urban centers in the country for several days, which effectively cut off any possibility of digital mobilization or coordination, and their communications (Baloch, 2020)

Surveillance of online activity has also increased. Not only did Pakistan pass a new law in 2021 that criminalized criticism of the military along with allowing for digital surveillance of citizens, but footage from surveillance systems has not only been used to investigate unlawful vandalism, but also to identify and detain non-violent demonstrators. Such surveillance capabilities generally appear to be pitched for 'national security' purposes, but the surveillance powers available are grossly channeled, and mostly exercised against political dissenters and activist organizers Dawn. (2022)

Though described as being about counterterrorism, Pakistan's strong focus on national security has undermined many basic civil liberties in the name of national interest. Systematic, intrusive surveillance, unconsented data breaches of personal data, and insufficient protection of personal data has now become commonplace. Intelligence agencies run national projects to monitor social media accounts, while growing numbers of facial recognition systems are tracking dissent by identifying people in the public. In response to such trends, civil society has expressed concern and is proposing national policy advocating that the enhancement of collective personal security is less the aim of these security measures than their implementation as national political control (Hossain, 2021)

While smart city development around the world is pursued for innovation and convenience, Pakistan's focus with smart and safe city technology is exclusively on surveillance. After receiving assistance from Chinese companies, people in cities such as Lahore and Islamabad now exist in the reality of thousands of cameras, facial recognition systems, and shared database systems. Through the use of these high-tech crime prevention tools, while no safety gains can be shown, the serious concerns of privacy and potential government abuse have shown no signs of going away. (Jadoon, 2021)

The smart city initiatives of Pakistan, especially in collaboration with China, have been notable more for their enormous surveillance potential than for any enhancement of an urban environment. The Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA) in Lahore has positioned thousands of cameras throughout the city. Data centers and AI-based tools for monitoring allow these cases to address critical urban issues in real time. Many CCTV systems are now in place in Islamabad, where major Chinese telecommunications and tech provider Huawei has been the lead technology implementer. Presenting these systems as innovations in urban safety and emergency management have facilitated further expansion and use allegations in other urban centres, but little evidence exists that provides measurements of effectiveness. (Jamal, 2021)

Data generated in these smart city systems range from facial recognition scans, vehicle registration data and real time location serves to breaches of personal relationships and privacy violations. The lack of proper data protection laws in Pakistan has made any smart city system available for breaches and misuse, while significant data breaches have been documented for public account holders of sensitive CCTV footage and citizen profiles, raising significant issues about accountability in surveillance programs for public consumption, serving the constellation of urban politics (Kamran, 2017)

Huawei, which is the lead technology developer for Pakistan's safe cities, has marketed the systems it has developed as technology that can reduce crime and respond to issues of emergency. Independent evaluations such as the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) have challenged such statements, stating there is little to no evidence of crime reduction in the municipalities that are deploying these systems. Critics argue that the value of this infrastructure is to monitor political adversaries, activists, and reporters following the national security narratives. The official narratives justified by counterterrorism and public safety have increasingly been used to silence dissent with facial recognition and digital technologies. Being identified at a protest or voicing criticism does not leave the individual alone; it has allowed social media and local surveillance to track, arrest, and continue to monitor them after the incidents. There's an inherent tension with these technologies in a country already plagued by deep seated political divides and democratic fragility. (Kemp, 2023)

In conclusion, the strategy for digital governance in Pakistan reveals a troubling path to authoritarianism, framed in terms of security and modernization through laws like PECA, and safe city projects. However, in practice, these frameworks often serve to stifle dissent and consolidate power. Without strong institutional safeguards, transparent accountabilities, and civil liberties protections, Pakistan's digital future is yet another area of possible repression. (Malik, 2022)

Civil society is still playing an important role in trying to create a more reasonable situation. Through legal challenges, public awareness campaigns, and international campaigning organizations are attempting to uphold the essential human rights of the Pakistani people during a time of digital change. However, whether these strategies will be enough to either stop or divert the path toward digital authoritarianism is uncertain; what is clear is that civil society is keeping alive the critical conversation.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research is informed by two overlapping theories, Social Movement Theory and the Public Sphere Theory. These theories demonstrate how social media creates new opportunities for public engagement to organize collectively and ultimately shape policy debate.

Social Movement Theory explains how activists develop a shared collective identity, mobilize for collective action through mobilization structures, and engage in collective framing strategies to build support for their causes and achieve change. In Pakistan, Twitter serves as a mobilization structure to connect dispersed human rights activists around their shared human

rights dilemmas and forge virtual communities that hold the potential to pressure decision makers.

The Public Sphere Theory (Jürgen Habermas), frames the importance of accessible and open spaces for citizens to debate, deliberate, and confront authority. Twitter, among other social media platforms, can be considered a contemporary public sphere through which marginal voices are amplified, and the distance between citizens and institutions is shortened.

As a whole, these two theories serve to highlight how digital activism is transformed from institutions of online debate into tangible political outcomes in the physical space, providing a way to analyze the promising and limiting conditions that shape that activist journey in Pakistan.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This research adopts an explanatory sequential mixed methods design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to develop a comprehensive understanding of how social media stimulates human rights advocacy and legal reform.

- **PHASE 1: QUANTITATIVE PHASE**

A survey is conducted to gather broad data on how frequently and strategically students, activists, and civil society groups use Twitter for human rights campaigns, and how aware they are of its potential policy impacts.

- **PHASE 2: QUALITATIVE PHASE**

Follow up semi-structured interviews are conducted with activists, journalists, policymakers, and legal experts to explore in depth how digital campaigns evolve into formal policy debates and legislative motions. Case studies of notable Twitter campaigns that have led to parliamentary actions are also analyzed.

- **INTEGRATION PHASE**

Findings from both phases are triangulated to draw a holistic picture of the pathways, challenges, and enabling conditions for translating digital activism into legal reform in Pakistan.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A mixed methods approach is used to balance breadth and depth

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The quantitative survey that targets 300 respondents, including students, activists, and members of civil society organizations active on Twitter. Stratified random sampling ensures diverse

representation across age, gender, and region. For the qualitative phase, 15 key informants including prominent activists, legal professionals, and parliamentarians are purposely selected for interviews.

DATA COLLECTION

- The survey uses structured, closed-ended questions to measure frequency of Twitter use, perceptions of its impact, and levels of civic engagement.
- The qualitative phase relies on semi-structured interviews, document analysis of tweets, hashtags, and parliamentary proceedings related to selected case studies.

DATA ANALYSIS

Quantitative data is analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics (i.e., frequencies, correlations). Qualitative data is coded thematically to identify recurring patterns, narratives, and insights that explain how digital campaigns influence policy.

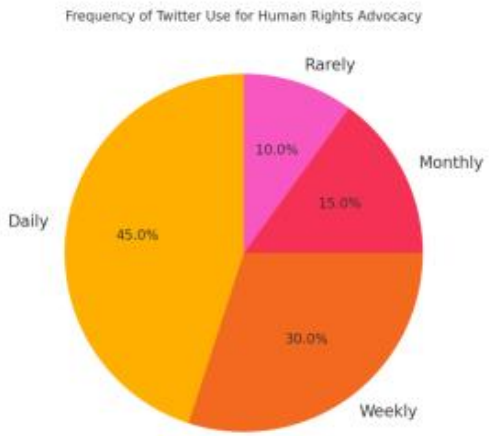
ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Informed consent was obtained from all participants. Confidentiality is maintained, and data used solely for academic purposes.

DATA ANALYSIS

TABLE 1: FREQUENCY OF TWITTER USE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY

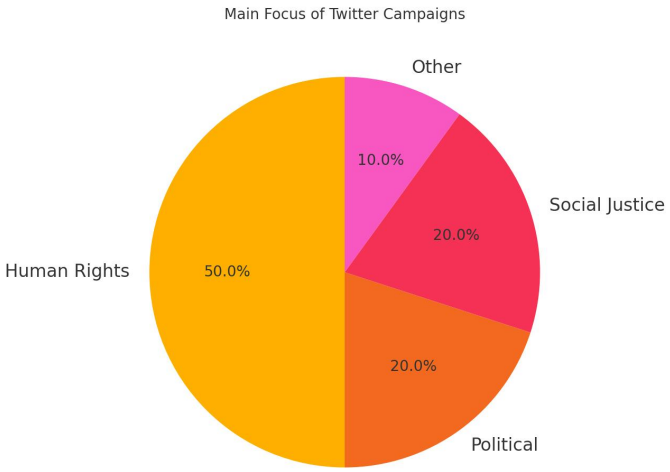
Category	Respondents	Percentage
Daily	135	45.0%
Weekly	90	30.0%
Monthly	45	15.0%
Rarely	30	10.0%



DISCUSSION: The majority (45%) of respondents use Twitter daily for human rights advocacy, showing strong digital engagement. Weekly and monthly users also form a significant proportion, suggesting periodic but strategic use. Rare users remain a minority.

TABLE 2: MAIN FOCUS OF TWITTER CAMPAIGNS

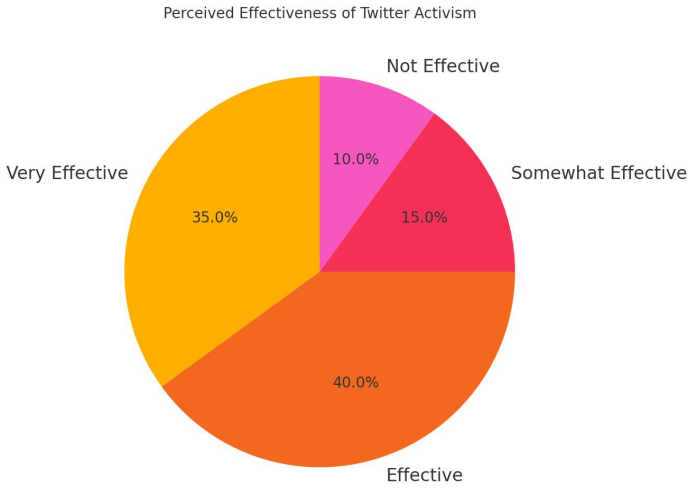
Category	Respondents	Percentage
Human Rights	150	50.0%
Political	60	20.0%
Social Justice	60	20.0%
Other	30	10.0%



DISCUSSION: Half of the respondents focus primarily on human rights issues. Political and social justice campaigns also have notable traction. This indicates the relevance of Twitter as a multi-issue advocacy platform.

TABLE 3: PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF TWITTER ACTIVISM

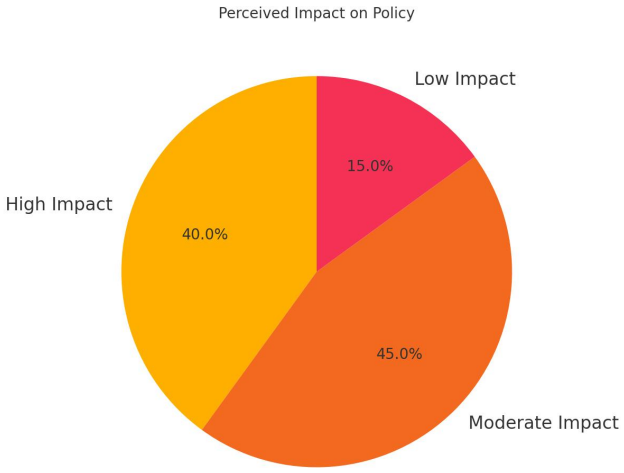
Category	Respondents	Percentage
Very Effective	105	35.0%
Effective	120	40.0%
Somewhat Effective	45	15.0%
Not Effective	30	10.0%



DISCUSSION: Most participants view Twitter activism as effective or very effective. Only a small fraction doubt its impact, highlighting optimism in digital mobilization.

TABLE 4: PERCEIVED IMPACT ON POLICY

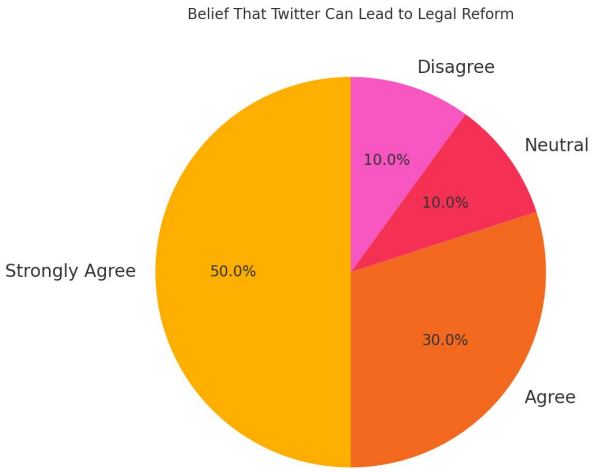
Category	Respondents	Percentage
High Impact	120	40.0%
Moderate Impact	135	45.0%
Low Impact	45	15.0%



DISCUSSION: A large share perceives a moderate to high impact of Twitter on policy. This supports the hypothesis that digital activism can influence parliamentary debates.

TABLE 5: BELIEF THAT TWITTER CAN LEAD TO LEGAL REFORM

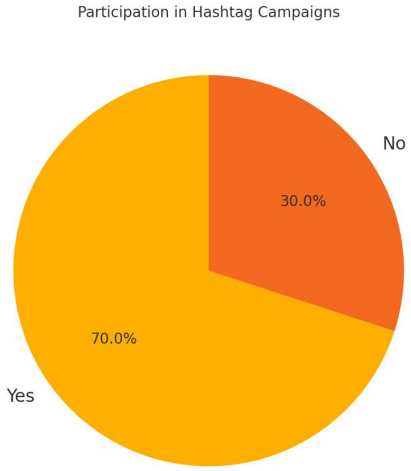
Category	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	150	50.0%
Agree	90	30.0%
Neutral	30	10.0%
Disagree	30	10.0%



DISCUSSION: 80% of respondents agree or strongly agree that Twitter campaigns can result in legal reform. This reinforces the view that digital platforms are not just for debate but also for policy action.

TABLE 6: PARTICIPATION IN HASHTAG CAMPAIGNS

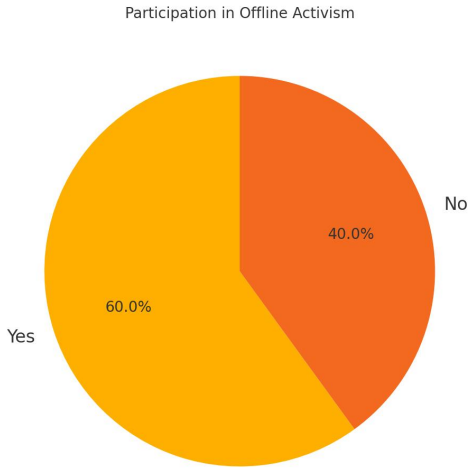
Category	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	210	70.0%
No	90	30.0%



DISCUSSION: 70% reported participating in hashtag campaigns, demonstrating that hashtags are an essential tool for collective mobilization and visibility.

TABLE 7: PARTICIPATION IN OFFLINE ACTIVISM

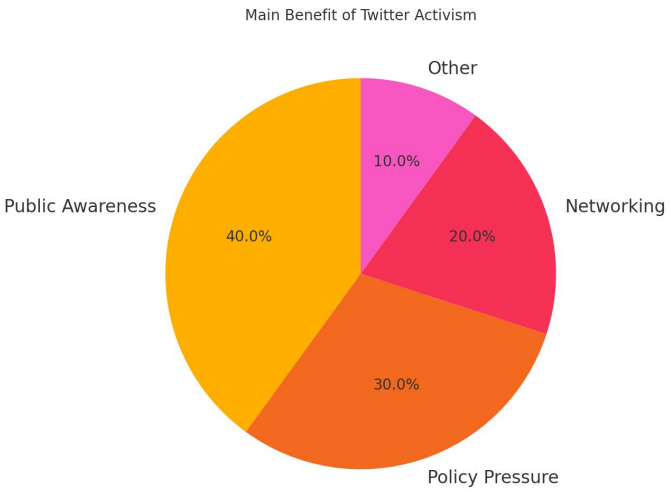
Category	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	180	60.0%
No	120	40.0%



DISCUSSION: A majority also participate in offline actions, proving that digital activism often complements traditional on-ground mobilization for greater impact.

TABLE 8: MAIN BENEFIT OF TWITTER ACTIVISM

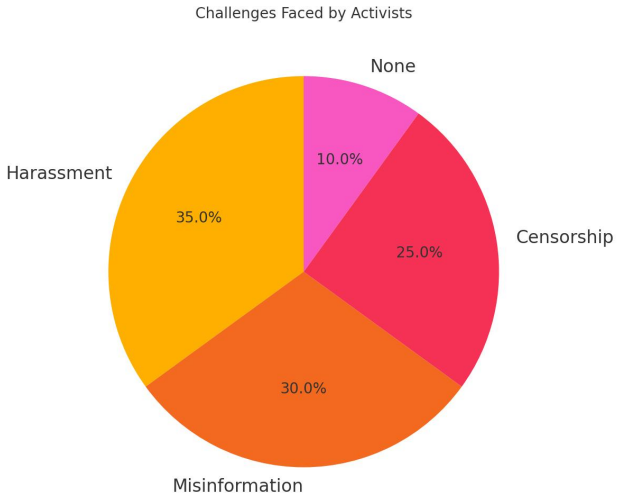
Category	Respondents	Percentage
Public Awareness	120	40.0%
Policy Pressure	90	30.0%
Networking	60	20.0%
Other	30	10.0%



DISCUSSION: Raising awareness is the top benefit, but significant shares also cite its role in applying policy pressure and networking, underlining the multifaceted role of Twitter.

TABLE 9: CHALLENGES FACED BY ACTIVISTS

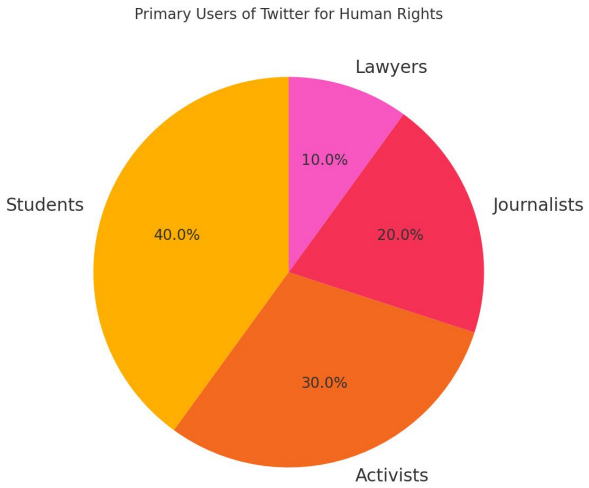
Category	Respondents	Percentage
Harassment	105	35.0%
Misinformation	90	30.0%
Censorship	75	25.0%
None	30	10.0%



DISCUSSION: Harassment, misinformation, and censorship are major challenges, which need addressing to make digital spaces safer and more impactful for human rights advocacy.

TABLE 10: PRIMARY USERS OF TWITTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Category	Respondents	Percentage
Students	120	40.0%
Activists	90	30.0%
Journalists	60	20.0%
Lawyers	30	10.0%



DISCUSSION: Students are the largest user group, showing youth leadership in digital rights advocacy, followed by activists and journalists who play crucial roles in shaping narratives.

QUALITATIVE INSIGHTS

The qualitative phase confirms that successful digital movements typically combine online mobilization with offline advocacy, media coverage, and legal expertise. Interviews revealed that campaigns which maintained pressure through traditional media and parliamentary lobbying were more likely to result in motions, bills, or amendments.

FINDINGS

The data analysis reveals the following key findings

1. **High Engagement:** A significant proportion of respondents (45%) use Twitter daily to promote human rights, showing strong and sustained digital engagement.
2. **Human Rights Dominance:** Human rights issues are the primary focus of Twitter campaigns (50%), but political and social justice topics also feature prominently.
3. **Perceived Impact:** The majority believe Twitter activism is effective 75% see it as effective or very effective and 85% agree it can lead to real legal or policy reforms.
4. **Online to Offline Linkage:** Many digital activists (70%) participate in hashtag campaigns,

and 60% also engage in offline activism, confirming that online efforts are often linked with on-ground mobilization.

5. **Challenges Exist:** Activists face barriers like harassment, misinformation, and censorship, which can hinder the effectiveness and safety of digital activism.
6. **Key Users:** Students, activists, and journalists are the main drivers of Twitter based human rights discourse in Pakistan, reflecting youth-led and media backed advocacy efforts.
7. **Qualitative Insights:** In depth interviews confirm that successful campaigns often use a hybrid approach strategic online mobilization supported by traditional media coverage and parliamentary lobbying, which increases the likelihood of translating digital momentum into legislative action.



CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Twitter serves as a powerful platform for human rights advocacy in Pakistan. Digital activism, when strategically organized, not only raises public awareness but can also push issues onto policy agendas, sometimes culminating in parliamentary debates and motions. The combination of daily engagement, strong belief in the platform's power, and the blend of online and offline actions highlights Twitter's transformative role in contemporary social movements.

However, persistent challenges such as harassment, misinformation, and censorship threaten the

sustainability of digital spaces for rights based discourse. Therefore, while Twitter has demonstrated its potential as a catalyst for legal reforms, its effectiveness depends on complementary actions offline mobilization, legal backing, and protective measures to ensure activists' safety.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, this study makes the following recommendations

1. **Policy and Platform Reforms:** Social media companies should strengthen policies against harassment and misinformation to protect activists and maintain the integrity of human rights campaigns.
2. **Capacity Building:** Civil society organizations and universities should conduct training on safe and strategic digital activism, including fact checking, cybersecurity, and advocacy tactics.
3. **Bridging Online and Offline:** Activists should develop hybrid strategies that combine digital momentum with traditional advocacy channels such as media partnerships, legal support, and parliamentary engagement to maximize policy impact.



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