

Influence of Facebook on Political Behaviour of Youth from 2014 to 2018

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Abstract:

Introduction: Social Media has not only remained high in the life of individuals for their private space, but also achieved importance during elections. 2014 was the first election in India where social media especially Facebook was used for political campaigning. Aim: This research focuses on the use of Facebook has influenced the political behaviour during the 2014 elections. Design: This is a descriptive research based on questionnaire as primary data. Data was collected and analysed to understand the five different parameters of how Facebook influenced the political participation. The data was collected from 1740 Undergraduate and post graduate students of Mumbai. Findings: It was found that youth was more inclined towards the FB page of the politician. Female gender had special interest in the activities conducted by the political groups.

Keywords: Face book , Youth , Political Campaign

1.1 Introduction:

“Social Networking Sites (SNS) are defined as virtual communities. It is cyber space where users can create individual public profiles, interact with real-life friends, and meet other people based on shared interests.

Facebook is one such social networking site with boom among Indian users. It is an online social networking platform, launched in 2004, where individuals create unique profiles, upload personal photos, videos and status. This platform helps an individual to communicate throughout the online world. It was initially created by Mark Zuckerberg to facilitate one connect with friends, family who can meet virtually. It also aids in creating new relationships.

Social media was a well-liked word in Indian parliament election 2014. Political parties use social media because traditional mass media communication mediums are highly regulated by Election Commission of India. For over a decade, politicians have taken the online in an effort to raised reach voters in our new media society. Initially it had been the utilization of static webpage to market campaign goals, promises and knowledge . However, as social media or the social networking sites (SNS) began to rise in popularity within the mid-2000, campaigns began in earnest attempting to harness their power to succeed in more voters.

1.2 Functions of social media as a new tool in Indian general election 2014

In the context of relationship between politicians, social media and public, identifies number of functions that Internet have as follows:

- Politicians promote their controlled speech and present their point of view without being interrupted by journalists or by media format limitation.
- Social media has given privilege for politicians to post a presumptive 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.

1.3 Significance of the study:

2014 marks the year where BJP targeted youth for gaining votes. The Election Commission of India also took steps to enrol youth voters in large numbers. Facebook, where fan pages of a politician, political parties were followed by youth. Facebook was as a source to frame opinions, through the News Feed. The opinion posted on Facebook is taken seriously by follower. Directly or indirectly his mindset is framed accordingly and youth falls for it. Education, Demographic, Gender are the areas

taken in to consideration during election. But now-a-days, Facebook Campaign is also an important aspect.

2.1 Review of Literature:

Tsandzana D (2018) studied about the role of social networks, specifically Facebook, in the political and social engagement of urban youth in Mozambique. It covered a span of 4 years from 2014 to 2017. The research throws a light on Youth and Internet Governance, Political Participations and Online Limitations, Youth Participation and Political Power, Facebook as an Alternative for Participation

Limitations: Inequality in Accessing Internet, Socioeconomic Factors Affecting Youth Usage of Facebook

Bene M (2017) conducted a research to understand the role and impact of Facebook as a central political information source with high-choice information environment among university students. This study was conducted on 800 Hungarian students from 35 different universities. It tried to find out the impact on political information sources, professional mass media consumption, encouragement to vote, intensity of political identity, subjective financial well-being.

Limitations: Social Influences on Political Attitudes on Social Media, Information through Facebook and Satisfaction Level, Facebook as a source of Political Communication

V et al., (2015) carried out a research to examine the extent use of social media by the political parties to promote their image and political messages, among their supporters and peoples in social media. It further tries to scrutinise how people consume the political issues or political discussion on social media. This study was conducted on the 100 students of Hyderabad.

Limitations: Influence of Popular Leader Campaign Strategy on Youth

Kim (2015) conducted a research to understand how the use of different types of social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, affects public participation. It throws a light on the theory of motivation, which addresses the effect of internal and external political efficacy as well as the perceived political importance of social media. The interaction effect between social media use and perceived the political importance of social media on public participation is also investigated in this study. 525 students from America and 486 students from Korea were selected for the study.

Limitations: Impact on Political Participation of Youth and Facebook, Communication and Politicians

3.1 Hypothesis:

H1: Facebook has an influence on Political Participation of Youth

4.1 Research Methodology:

Survey method will help to collect data from each sample. According to Kraemer Survey research quantitatively is use to describe certain aspects of a given population. These aspects typically include the examination of the relationship between variables. Second, survey data needed for research, therefore, are relative gathered from people. Finally, the research results of the survey can be returned to the general population from which a selected portion of the population uses.

The scope of the study comes under the Mumbai region. The youth (Undergraduate and Post Graduate students) from the age group of 18 to 24 were considered for the study. Questionnaire method has been followed to collect the data from users of the study in which total 1740 respondents equally which were selected randomly. Respondents had to rate their aggrement for each item on 5 point Likert Scale.

4.2 Measure of Reliability:

Measure of reliability was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha, which measure **0.807**.The value derived for 5 items is 0.807 is relatively high and acceptable in social science (Crotina, 1993).

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.807	5

5.1 Analysis:

India is considered to have largest democracy among the other countries. The country adopted its constitution on 26th November 1949. In 16th Century the idea of Suffrage was developed and India adopted Universal Adult Suffrage in its constitution. By this, adult person has the right to cast his vote. Youth plays a major role in building a developed nation. Developing a nation requires youth involvement at all levels. In the age of 19 to 21, youth is more involved in career building for jobs. The other segment of youth is involved in their own making of living. The first segment is known as Student Youth and the another one is known as Non-Student Youth, as per the sociologist Y. B. Damle (Banerjee, 2013).

This area of research relies on study of student youth and their political affiliations. For this, Descriptive Statistics was calculated to rank the variables according to their mean value.

Descriptive Statistics		
Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
FB_Politican_Page	5.12	0.989
Political_Activities	5.09	0.986
Content_on_FB	4.98	0.889
Politician_Pages	4.67	1.203
Political_Updates	4.30	1.027

According to the table, highest mean rank of 5.12 was seen for the variable FB Politician Page with standard deviation of 0.989. Followed by Political Activities with mean score of 5.09 and SD of 0.986. The variable Content on FB has the mean value of 4.98 and deviation of 0.889. Variables Politician Pages and Political Updates have mean value of 4.67 and 4.30 respectively, with standard deviation of 1.203 and 1.027.

This shows, youth is always engrossed in the content exposed on Facebook by the politicians. The student youth accessed the FB pages for two main reasons, one is to understand the personality of politician, and second is to understand how the issues are tackled by the political party. It not just increased the interactivity with the parties through comments, likes, share and messages but also provided ways to judge the character of politician (Douglas et al., 2014).

Further, Chi Square test (χ^2) was used to analyse the goodness of fit of the variables.

Variables	Chi Square Value	df	Significance
FB_Politican_Page	2192.460	4	0.000
Political_Activities	2040.861	4	0.000
Content_on_FB	1999.270	4	0.000
Politician_Pages	1996.789	4	0.000
Political_Updates	2189.155	4	0.000

Highest Chi Square (χ^2) value of **2192.460** was obtained for the variable *FB Politician Page* followed by *Political Activities* with a score of **2040.861**. Variable *Content on FB* has a score of **1999.270** which shows that though youth keeps an eye on the content updated on the Facebook page. The variable *Political Updates* has a value of **2189.155**. Least Chi Square (χ^2) value was seen for the variable *Politician Pages* with the score of **1996.789**. All the variables have 4 as the degree of

freedom. The significance value 0.000 is less than p value of 0.05. This accepts the alternative hypothesis of FB having an influence on the political participation of youth.

As Chi Square test is always accompanied by the test of strength, Spearman Correlation was analysed between gender and variables.

- **FB_Politican_Page**

			Gender	FB_Politican_Page
Spearman's rho	Gender	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.098
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.240
		N	1740	1740
	FB_Politican_Page	Correlation Coefficient	.098	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.240	.
		N	1740	1740

As per the Spearman's rho (r_s) for the Gender and FB Politician Page, the correlation was valued at 0.267 with the significance value of 0.240. The significance value is greater than 0.05 and therefore, it shows no correlation.

- **Political Activities:**

			Gender	Political_Activities
Spearman's rho	Gender	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.068(**)
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.004
		N	1740	1740

Political_Activities	Correlation Coefficient	.068(**)	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.
	N	1740	1740

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

According to the Spearman's rho (r_s) correlation, the coefficient for gender and Political Activities is 0.068. The correlation is significant at 0.004. The correlation is accepted at 99% confidence. Considering the political activities in India, women always played a lead role for building up the nation. 2014 elections, the women participation had seen on rise. Females ensured their presence in main stream politics with male counter parts. Out of 397 million eligible female voters, two thirds of them exercised their rights in 2014 Lok Sabha elections (Kumar et al., 2016).

- **Content on FB**

	Gender	Content_on_FB		
Spearman's rho	Gender	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.011
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.644
		N	1740	1740
Content_on_FB	Content_on_FB	Correlation Coefficient	-.011	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.644	.
		N	1740	1740

The Spearman's Correlation (r_s) shows negative correlation between gender and the Content on Facebook. The coefficient score observed is -0.011 with the significance of 0.644.

- **Politician Pages:**

	Gender	Politician_Pages		
Spearman's rho	Gender	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.038

	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.116
	N	1740	1740
Politician_Pages	Correlation Coefficient	.038	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.116	.
	N	1740	1740

As per the Spearman's rho (r_s) for the Gender and FB Politician Page, the correlation was valued at 0.038 with the significance value of 0.116. The significance value is greater than 0.05 and therefore, it shows no correlation.

- **Political Updates:**

			Gender	Political_Updates
Spearman's rho	Gender	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.056(*)
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.019
		N	1740	1740
Political_Updates	Political_Updates	Correlation Coefficient	.056(*)	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.019	.
		N	1740	1740

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As per the above table of the correlation of gender and political updates, the coefficient (r_s) is valued at 0.056 with the significance of 0.019. The significance value is less than 0.05. So, the correlation of gender and political updates is accepted at 95% confidence. In the age group of 18 to 21, 41% female respondents felt, it was quite natural to be engaged in political updates as students whereas, male kept the political updates out of compulsion (Source: Statista, 17th June 2020).

Gender has a positive correlation with Political Activities and Political Updates. When it comes to updating about Political affairs, women are on forefront these days. They keep themselves up to date

with the information available through sources, in which Facebook is considered to be on the top most list. The easy access to politicians helps them to influence the youth. With this, the Alternative Hypothesis of youth is influenced by Facebook for political participation is accepted.

5.2 Conclusion:

While understanding the role of Facebook with reference to elections, it is seen that the youth falls for social media while deciding their political behaviour. This study was conducted on the youth of Mumbai. Similar studies can be conducted in other regions and during local elections to understand the changing scenario of decision with new social media evolving each day!

5.3 Bibliography:

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