

## Chapter – VI

### Conclusion & Suggestions

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*'At Facebook, we build tools to help people connect with the people they want and share what they want and by doing this we are extending people's capacity to build and maintain relationships. By giving people the power to share, we're making the world more transparent.'*

-Mark Zuckerberg<sup>1</sup>

The process of Indian Political System is affected with many troubles that resulted in the erosion of middle class from its fold. Every elections added lakhs of people who were not willing to vote. Political alienation was far and wide. Probably it also raised fundamental questions of Indian Democracy. But things changed and new twist in the electoral process is being emergence of social media. Www (World Wide Web) is almost 25 years old in India. Internet generation has almost 25 per cent voting share. That proved the fact that they are going to change the fundamental constructs of Electoral Process. 16<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha is a clear case study in Indian electoral system which proved that the social networking is giving a new shape to electoral process. Many electoral studies of reputed research originations explained that more than 160 constituencies out of 543 were largely influenced by the Social Media. One such study was made by IRIS Knowledge and Internet AND Mobile Association last year (2013) the survey conducted by the IRIS Knowledge Foundation and Internet and Mobile Association of India came out with results that show that there are 160 Lok Sabha constituencies (also called as 'high-impact constituencies') in the country where the number of Facebook users is more than the victory margin seen in the 2009 Lok Sabha election or, in other words, they constitute 10 per cent or more of the voting population. The study also shows that 75 of the 206 seats won by the Congress

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/m/markzucker453430.html#6PFBuTEclpClpk6D.99>

and 43 of the 144 seats where it finished second are in the high-impact constituencies. For the BJP, this is true for 44 of the 116 seats it won and 50 of the 110 seats where it came second.

Social Networking Sites have positive and negative both features. Democratic societies like India, SNS has helped to remove the costume of hypocrisy dominant in social life (moral values, religion etc.). Thus when people are joining these networking sites, they are freely expressing their opinions and favourites like music, movies, interests and politics, sometime hiding their identities and doing all those things, which they still not dare to, do in their actual identity, which provides psychological relief to their suppressed emotions.

The factors of social media affecting public opinion and their support, rapid dissemination of news, extensive messaging and ability of the individual to circulate information globally. In 2009 Twitter changed its prompt from “what are you doing?” to “what’s happening?” Blake Hounshell keenly defines the proficiency of SNS, “one of the fastest ways to tell whether someone's not worth following is if they're still answering that first question.”<sup>2</sup>

“The networked population of the world has grown from the low millions to the low billions”<sup>3</sup>. Social media has change the life of civil society, Netizen, activists, nongovernmental organizations, telecommunications firms, software providers, politician and governments. As the communications landscape gets denser, more complex and more participatory, the networked population is gaining greater access to

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<sup>2</sup> Hounshell, Blake. “The Revolution Will Be Tweeted.” *Foreign Policy*, Issue 187 (2011).

<sup>3</sup> Shirky, Clay, *The Political Power of Social Media*, Technology, the Public Sphere, and Political Change, february, 2011

information, more opportunities to engage in public speech, and an enhanced ability to undertake collective action.

Technology, globalization and social media have altered the propaganda landscape permanently. The historical use of information as power was primarily limited to nation-states. Today a blogger and SNS users can impact on election, Internet posting can recruit a rebellion and an audiotape can inflame fear in the strongest of nation-states. “Social networking is not evidently helpful in facilitating political bargaining in constitution writing processes but social media have played an unlimited role to form a new political system.”<sup>4</sup>

Social networking can only facilitate not create the leadership that is necessary for survive and succeed. Ground-level person-to-person organizing and mobilization needs some level of personal interaction. As the world continues to globalizing and social networking usage continuously increasing still there is a big challenge of digital divide in countries like India.

. In the history of independent India, never has a general election been fought at such a scenario that the social media has had a tremendous impact already upon the population of the country. General Election 2014 is going to be distinct because the real impact of social networking on voting. The overall penetration of social media given the mobile revolution that's happening in our country, more and more people are using social media not just communicating but also for the purposes of expressing their political speech and their political ideas. YouTube achieved instant success to adding millions of users to audio-videos shearing portal.

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<sup>4</sup> Alterman, Jon B. “The Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted.” *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 4 (2011), 104.

## **6.1 Suggestion:**

**Findings:** To achieve the goal of this study, the researcher explored Present Study has made progress in terms of developing our understanding of patterns of Social Networking Sites (SNS).

- 1) The study shows that 85% Netizen of NCT Delhi interested in i-voting for easy and convenient voting through internet from anywhere, as well as NRIs also filed a writ in Supreme Court for the same cause.
- 2) Approximate 10% SNS users of Delhi using SNS for real time news and updates.
- 3) The primary data reveals that 54% SNS users got invitation for political movement in NCT Delhi through social networking sites.
- 4) 67% Respondent of NCT Delhi said that SNS should be concern as democratic indicators in law making and policy formulation.
- 5) Present study shows that 68% respondents among the SNS users of NCT Delhi said that SNS helped then in General Election of 2014, as an information channel about the candidates.
- 6) Present study reveals that 82% Netizen of Delhi agree with that SNS impacting the politics as tool for engagement and active participation.
- 7) This research work indicating that 60% respondents of NCT Delhi liked political contents on social networking sites.
- 8) Present study discovered that 80% SNS users got political Contents and advertisements on their wall of social networking sites.

- 9) 75% respondents of NCT Delhi admitted that SNS is tool for Political involvement and booster for political participation.
- 10) 76% Information technology savvy generation of NCT Delhi have a facebook Account as well as 40% have a WhatsApp application on their mobile phone.
- 11) Social networking mania is rapidly increasing in NCT Delhi, 93% of internet user's login SNS firstly and 35% users expend more than one hour on SNS per day.

From the above findings and following limitations can be derived.

### **Limitations of the Study:**

Limitation of social networking, along the same lines, is a gap in the level of participation of social media users. One million likes on a SNS page does not translate into one million mobilized participants, or even one million people who agree with the cause of the host. Twitter isn't the maker of political revolutions.<sup>5</sup> In the Middle East, the images of youthful protesters "taking to the streets" with cell phones in hand and terms such as the "Twitter Revolution" tend to mask the facts that indicate that in the Middle East in fact is not really using social networking.

The researcher found certain limitations in the study as aspects of area for further study:

- The researcher had work under considerable limitations. The present study does not include whole country and other states of India during the survey. Primary data was collected form NCT Delhi.
- Secondly limitation of study is limited literature available on this topic. This concept is new for research in India especially in political aspect of SNS and

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<sup>5</sup> Hounshell, Blake. "The Revolution Will Be Tweeted." *Foreign Policy*, Issue 187 (2011).

that's why there is not enough literature is available on this topic in concerning regard. Since the sample in the study was small, very limited variables had taken for data collection.

- A lot of types SNS are available according to the users need, availability and features. It is very tuff task to study all SNS by a single researcher as well as every SNS have millions to billion users and every SNS have its peculiar working profile.
- Political processes are immeasurable area for study hence researcher touched only two major political processes interface with SNS. Social Networking users are growing day by day as well as some SNS losing their popularity so it is very difficult to balance the SNS variable in rapidly changing scenario.
- SNS is very new phenomena in political aspect so it is very tuff to conduct a comparative study about the impact of SNS on politics with other dimensions.
- Number of SNS users fluctuating every day so it is a challenge for researcher how analyzes the active users of the SNS.

**Conclusion:** Despite the above limitations, the researcher draws up the final conclusion of the study.

The fundamental question is being raised does social media change the political understanding of the young generation? How far it intuites them to active participation in the electoral system? Almost 2003 million tweets in a day during the campaigning of the 16<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha made it amply clear that the Netizen is neither naïve about politics nor they are passive. The vibrancy of good governance is rooted in electoral participations. The huge chunks of SMS, tweets and blogs proved this fact

that youth are willing to take on the politics of India. Almost 150 million first-time voters between the ages of 18-23 years had casted their votes.

In India, on the other hand, internet penetration is just 205 million out of 1.2 billion, and registered voters (814 million) vastly outnumber social media users (103 million). So it may be premature to call these parliamentary elections India's 'first social media elections'. Indian democracy is on the cusp of a revolution led by social networking users. The last 5 years has also seen a greater expression of disaffection in the government and the political class by the citizenry who have taken to the streets to protest. This was seen during the fast by Anna Hazare. This happened during the infamous rape incident in Delhi. Citizen activism is higher than ever before and the young in India are certainly showing a fair amount of restlessness and unhappiness at the state of affairs. It is unlikely that the voice that the citizenry found would stay suppressed for long and it would be interesting to see if it finds expression through their vote at the hosting. It is significant that online media generally have played a huge role in mobilizing people for protests. The highest tribute that could have been paid by way of recognizing this is the setting up of a social media lab by Mumbai police to track social media activity to anticipate possible trouble spots and identify those they see as trouble makers. India is also rapidly urbanizing which is seen as a sign of upward mobility. This has serious consequences for the aspirations of the residents and the extent to which they would go to understand their objectives. Anecdotal evidence suggests that an urbanized population is also an assertive population, and prepared to take an aggressive posture, and easily swayed given their access to not just state controlled media but also alternate points of view not available to them until now. Secondly, a report entitled "Social Media in India – 2012" released

by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) in February 2013 throws up interesting findings about the tentative impact of online social networking on general election 2014.

According to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), India has edged towards 13 per cent internet penetration with roughly 160 million users in 2013, whereas nearly 40 per cent of the global population is online at the same time. It was predicted that by 2015, internet users in India will rise to 330 million, according to a McKinsey and Company report of December 2012. At present India is the world's third largest internet user after China in number one and the USA in number two position.

In India, these days the use of the social is networking especially Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter growing rapidly. The social media has now become a 24x7 activity for the people; from anywhere and any place to engage in events related to politics, sports, entertainment etc., we can see all of these have been given a platform, where these can be shared with other people not only in our society, but globally as well. In India, as the 16th Lok Sabha election is being held, it is necessary to analyse the role of the social media in the election. The use of the social media by the political parties and their leaders in the developed countries for elections and other purpose is not new. For example, US President Barack Obama got 33,510,157 followers (the data as on July 1, 2013) in his Twitter account @Barackobama. But, for a country like India, it is new; of course, there are politicians like Shashi Tharoor, Sushma Swaraj, Arun Jaitley, Subramanyam Swami and Narendra Modi etc. known to the common people (that is, those people who use the social media for their tweets every day or connect with online citizens) through the social networking.



Before the ongoing general election, the role of the cyber world was not seen; however, in the 16th Lok Sabha election, every political party, from national to regional, wants to use this cyberism as much as possible to gain support and influence the voters. The social networking has emerged as the most popular online activity worldwide. This is the reason why these days we are seeing IT cells existing in almost all the parties which work day and night especially in the field of social networking platforms such as Facebook and Google+, Blogs and micro-blogs such as Twitter and WhatsApp; content communities such as You Tube etc. The potential of the social media for opening up new spaces for dialogue, debates, and issue-based deliberations which are free from the mainstream hierarchical and bureaucratic tendencies of the institutionalized political process has been often celebrated.

Since independence till now we have seen a total of 15 Lok Sabha elections but there is something unique about the ongoing 16th Lok Sabha election 2014, which is for the first time witnessing the largest number of young voters. The youth of the country became a vote-bank themselves with 149.36 million first-time voters, who constitute about 20 per cent of the electorate. This formidable vote-bank on an average 90,000 voters in each constituency—is going to be a major factor in deciding the fate of several candidates. There exist excitement and expectations among the new young voters who are for the first time exercising their right to vote to elect their representatives. It will be interesting to see on what basis they will cast their votes as there are many factors which play an important role like: which political party a candidate is representing; credibility of the candidate, young or old; whether or not he/she is a new entrant to politics; the caste and religion etc. of the candidate; if the young voters are going to boycott the election.

Despite whatever has been written earlier in this article about the role of the social media in the Lok Sabha election, there are many critics who believe that among those having Facebook accounts, not all are eligible to vote as many of them are teenagers. Also, even among those who are eligible, all may not come out on the voting day and stand in queue in the polling booth to cast their vote, because they are more interested or active in Facebook sitting along with their computer, laptop, smartphone or mobile phone etc. This is also true for other social media tools which are available. The critics further argue that the social media (like Facebook or Twitter) are an urban phenomenon, and in the election it is the people from the rural areas who come out in large numbers to cast their vote, when compared with the urban areas. Regarding the participation of young voters, the critics argue that the present young generation is fed up or frustrated with our political system and they are not interested in any political activity (voting), these activities raised the demand of the i-voting to cast the vote through the internet portal.

Whatever the critics say about the social media and young voters, we should not forget that the role played by the social media and young people of this country in the Anna Hazare-led Jan Lokpal Bill and Nirbhaya movements not only in the Capital city (Delhi) of the country, which of course became the epicentre of these movements, but almost all over the country. Perhaps it will be naive to presume that the social media and young voters are going to play a major role in the 16th Lok Sabha election, but it is also wrong to discard them totally. At the least we can say that for both the social media and young voters, a beginning is being made to participate in the democratic processes starting with this 16th Lok Sabha election, and there is still a long way to go. Nevertheless, this election is unique for the reasons mentioned above.

## **Suggestions:**

Keeping in view the revealed findings and conclusions drawn, following suggestions are made:

### **Scope for Further Research**

Impact of social Networking on Political Processes is a study of the role of SNS in political participation and political occurrence in an especial reference to National Capital Territory of Delhi.

- Study of particular social networking site in the context of political engagement, advertisement and information sharing.
- Study of politician`s activities on twitter as content analysis research.
- Role of SNS in political Campaigning.
- Study of level of SNS activities of Political parties.
- Content analysis of political posts on Social Networking Sites.
- Study of SNS as a democratic indicator.

**Suggestion for Political Parties:** On the basis of present study and effect of SNS in general election 2014, there certain suggestion for political parties

- Social networking is an easy and convenient way to reach internet savvy voters.
- Social Networking Sites can be used for political advertising on very low cost.
- Parties should have their accounts on different SNS, so that their fan and follower get attached with the party line.
- Parties should have their SNS enabled media cell so that contents can be delivered to target audience.
- Data base of the SNS related activities should be kept by the party.
- Party media cell should have regular touch with SNS so that defamation can be observed.
- Achievements of party and further plans should be disseminating through SNS.
- Mobile phone can be used for political campaigning tool as voice calling, messaging, and free miscall alert.
- Number of cellphone holders is rising very rapidly so database of party volunteers and members should be used for connectivity and mobilization.

**Suggestion for Policy Makers:** Social Networking is rapidly growing in India, growth of SNS rises some obligations for policy makers. Here are some suggestions for policy makers

- Content of SNS should be filtered to prevent different religious, social, communal and regional disputes.
- Recently some cases of SNS used as a channel for rumors, so policy makers have to develop some organization for limited restrictions on SNS.

- Fake SNS accounts are used for Phishing and disturbing the harmony so regulation for cross verification of the account holders should be done.
- Internet related issues should be retaining under a new department or ministry.

### **Suggestion for SNS users**

SNS user's population in India cross 150 million facebook, twitter, google+, YouTube and WhatsApp are the popular sites. Social networking sites mention the minimum age to have an account but many school going kids also using facebook; hacking and phasing may become serious fraud in these cases. Anyone can know about 18 things about a SNS user through his profile. Bases of the study on the SNS here are some suggestion for SNS users:

- Users should not accept all friend requests without knowing the senders.
- Before opening or liking the any account user should verify the authenticity of the concerning site.
- Users should be use CMC (computer mediated communication) for political participation as information source about parties, candidates and scenario.