



Impact Factor:4.081

## Social Media and Political Mobilization in India: An Analysis of University Students

(In special reference to Delhi University)

Abhishek K Singh

Academic Expert and Media Researcher,  
asingh8319@gmail.com

Dr. Charvak

Associate Professor  
Assam University, Silchar

**Abstract:** The internet is a revolution, and social media is a most important pillar of this revolution as social media has a direct impact on the social capitals. Social media are considered as one of the most popular and accessible tools to mobilized people for socio-political changes through propagation of specific ideology. In the present era of digitization and globalization, social media act as a catalyst to accelerate multiple changes in society, mindset of social capitals and formation of new identity which may further lead to political protest. New media technologies allow for political agendas and proposals to increase in visibility, scope and dissemination. The present analysis focused on the relationship between the social media and political engagement of university students. The study also pointed out the use of social media in motivating the students in specific political issue and to boost political awareness. It also studies to find the role of social media in relation to student's involvement in political expression.

**Keywords** Social Media, Delhi University, Political Mobilization, political Awareness.

### 1. Information

The social network, like Facebook, is one the most favorite social media in India, around 90 percent of Indian youth in Delhi use this social media for social networking. Today, more than 225 million of the population is using Facebook in India. Today, around 52 % of the world's population has access to the Internet and out of this around 43% population are using social media. Social media is very important as it supports social mobilization and social movement in the society, actually social media is a great power that provide visible political activity. The number of social media is increasing with a very fast rate in all the age groups of people. The young generation are very special in this regards as they are very active and using the social media for social connectivity. In fact social media have a great impact on the identity of individuals.

Emergence of social media like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Blogs certainly changed the face of modern communication. The emergence of social media increased the public participation in social decision making process. It indicates the relationship between the usage of social media and change in protest behavior of social capitals.

Media researchers have drawn assumptions that use of social media influences the protest behavior among citizens (Gil de Zuniga, et al., 2012). There are many research studies, which proved the fact that penetration of social media is very high and if it used in a planned way, of course it can turn the normal social element into political

protestors. Media is not only a source of information, identity, and social relationship, but media are also used for the generation of a certain ideology and motivates people for the public movements (Katz and Gurevitche's, 1974). Social media have an intense effect on the mindset of individuals, it has a potential to influence the social behaviors and change the expression of citizens for specific political activities. However, the over consumption of social media for specific purposes may create an impact upon the protest behaviors of the individuals. Thus, social media is very powerful tool which disseminates, motivate, accelerated information and gives new meanings to the political expressions.

It is usually pointed out that there are very close relationship between social media and gratification of young generation. The intensity of use of social media is directly related to the social trust and political mobilization. The social media is everywhere; of course social media plays a very significant role in present social capitals or public life. There are many sociopolitical movements which were supported and managed by social media. This paper is mainly focused on the relationship between social media and political mobilization among Delhi university students.

## **2. Social Media on Political Participation**

The media plays a very significant role as main sources of information related to socio-political scenario, which may also be considered as an important source of political commitment. The social connectivity and need for defining issues and building political identity has led to social participation and expression of political activity. In the similar way there are many opinions stated by the media, researchers on the positive or negative consequences of social media for political participation. Social media is very powerful in maintaining the relation between the people of different level and strata in the society. Social media is not all about the applications of ICT's but it also associated with the culture and social needs. Today we are living in the society of information, we need information for everything. Therefore, the need of information is incredible for social collaboration and networking. The use of social connectivity and social representation are the main drivers of social media users.

Today, there are many forms of social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Since 2010, these media's got a momentum and become so popular in the society that these media grown-up at a very fast rate. The most common and important strength of social media is its popularity which is increasingly being used to collect information's. Politically, social media are a boon for consumers and political leaders. These media can be considered as a great channel to maintain message flows in the society. Social media, especially Facebook is a most acceptable user-friendly and commonly used social media. Since 2015, Facebook has given a created as new culture in the market of young generation. It was well stated by Bode 2012 on political behavior that those using Facebook must have intensive participation in politics; he mentioned that Facebook community facilitates behavior and activism that promotes political engagements and increase the level of online participations. Facebook has a positive influence on political engagement, and they explain it as follows: "Facebook allows the establishment of online political groups that offer many socio-political media contents to inform and motivate political activities,

discussion forums and communicative exchange. In the present scenario, Facebook is very vital to expose political information for political participation.

### **3. Theoretical Framework**

Political scientist M. Castells pointed out a concept related to the theory of social networking and stated that a change in social relations and changing social means of interaction actually accelerated the social interactivity and social connectivity. Individuals are more connected with others and using social sites of their own choices. Castle 2005 says that social media is very powerful in socializing the society by providing easy and conformable access to the information and communication system. These tools are very important for the formation of social consciousness and a common behavior of social expression. In the similar context, social network theory emphasizes on the social communication supported by new media technologies, such communication are very interactive in nature which generally share social feeling and issues. The concept of public sphere is well suited here as it motivates the regional and local people to interact and act on the social online discussion which ultimately form a networked society commonly called as a public sphere. Castells suppose that the media is crucial in maintaining the communal and social hegemony to ensure political participation at different level in the social structure. Besides, Castells (2005) pointed out that the users are very common using new media and social media, it means, the more they engage in personal interaction in all areas of their lives."

Castells gave his thoughts on the media and political mobilization that the social media makes people act more politically. Baran and Davis (2006) proposal on the main proposal of the media systems dependency theory, "the people in the present society are very much depend on the new media and social media for all kinds of information and communication on new media is very much influence the human life their attitude and expressions.

Ball-Rokech and DeFleur (1976) argued that the more the media's dependence on a specific theme and communication, the more the possibility that the message is to change the public's emotions, expressions, and attitude. Model dependence theory can also help us understand the theory of media determinism developed by Marshall McLuhan (1964). He wrote: "the impact of technology does not occur in the degree of idea or concepts, but also change the social relationship pattern and criteria of observation normally and without confrontation."

With regard to the theory of networked individualism, social media have a feature to engage the people in a personal way to increase the person's participation in the social sphere. The individual networked approach clearly indicates the role of every person in the political action by the means of social communication. According to this approach, on social media, where the emphasis is on the motivation for private participation and enhance the wider political and social contexts. In this regards, the political action and social organizations enhance and the broader positioning of political activities which influence the peoples action and communicates to others through social platforms.

The cognitive engagement theories (CET) which point out the power of the individual are well stated to show people's participation in politics. The theory of cognitive

mobilization essentially meant that political commitment had contributed to a better education of young people who had enriched the information. The central element of the CET is that political participation is the product of individual education, access to Information, political information, political interests and satisfaction with politics. The present theory also shows that the people constructive mobilizations are linked with the social awareness about the people's right to information, political socializations and political knowledge. The acquisition of knowledge is due to the social interaction and social communication which results consumption of information. The social media are the main factor behind the present social communication for political knowledge which add power to the interest among young people and ultimately leads to a stronger participation in political life.

#### **4. Study Design and Methods**

##### **4.1 Study Region and Sampling Procedure**

University of Delhi has been selected purposefully as the research location for the data collection as the university is very active and sensitive politically. University of Delhi North Campus is prime place for the research as the students are well familiar with the concept of politics of social media. The research has been conducted through questionnaire with the students of age group 20-25 years of age. Using random selection, the study has been conducted on the students of the University of Delhi. Among them, 71.5% respondents were male and 28.5% were females. We carried out a survey method using sample size 150 students. An open and close ended structured questionnaire was taken into consideration. The format of questionnaire was divided into three sections such as demographic, social networking, political activity. The questionnaire was arranged keeping the study objectives in mind.

#### **5. Results and Discussions**

##### **5.1 Background of the Information**

From the study, it has been noticed that all the respondents have accounts on the social media and their favorite social media was Facebook. Besides, some of the respondents (12%) also admitted that they are active on Twitter. It was very noticeable that most of the respondents were very active in political activities and share political message very frequently on the Facebook. Around 89% said they use Facebook daily and share active post related to university activity on a regular basis. The study concluded that 46.9% like political discussions and 28.6% of regularly comments on the post related to the political issue. Similarly, 22% commonly ignore the political debate on the Facebook, but they are interested in many non-political ideas, concepts and images.

##### **5.2.Linkage of Social Media Websites with Political Issues**

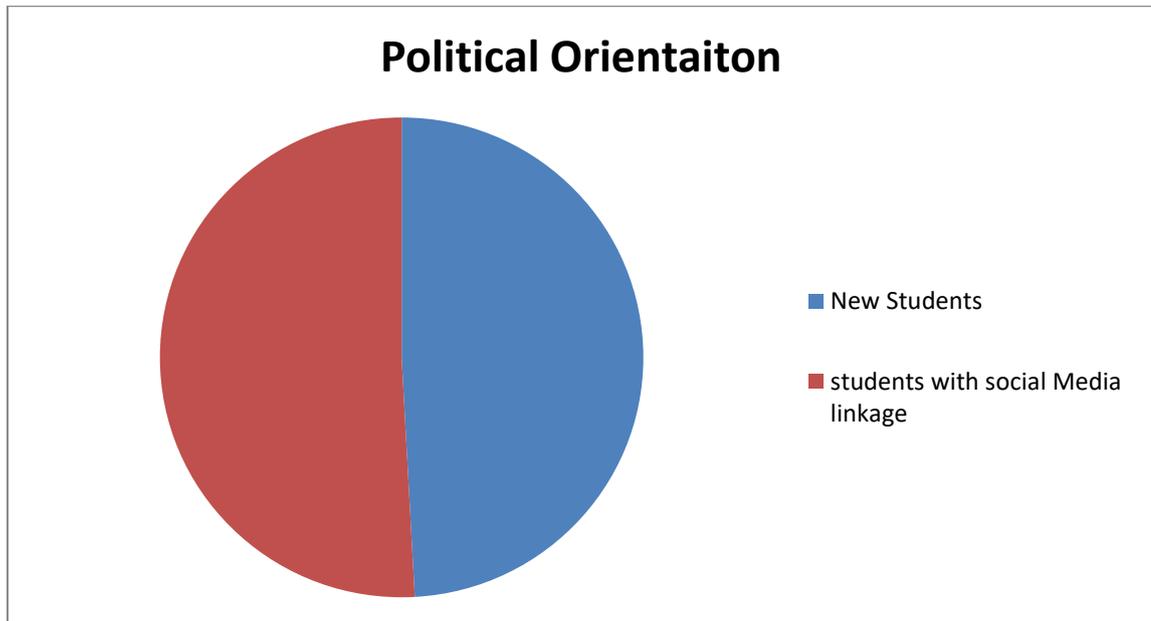
As already mentioned, the study will focus on the context of social media, political participation, political debate and policy analysis. The analysis shows that the highest percentage (94.5%) uses social media for the message used to mobilize the people politically related to the political topics or events, because they have more interest in political questions. This result is clearly concerned to use the insignificant link to social media, especially Facebook and political involvement or political concern. Although more than three quarters (77.3%) of respondents are constantly talking to

their Facebook friends (FB) and 72.7% update the Status and comments of other things, most Facebook users are more prone to political and interest issues. In the present study, around 69% of members are involved in the Facebook group, where political issues were discussed and 72.8% of respondents said they were engaged in conversation related to political scenario and issues, where political issues were mentioned. Around 20% admitted that they have political orientation and they analyze all the issues in political point of view and 43% of social media users are very much interested in learning political information. On the other hand, The other hand, collected data focuses directly on the fact that most users of Facebook are interested in Politics than other social networks. Research Data shows that that 65.8% look for news or political status, and 61% of the share or status of politics in the comments, as 60% is more or less the support of some political figures. More than sixty percent (62.6%) of users indicated that the more the use of the social media is associated with political purposes and it is useful to know the current situation and in support of these 59% agreed with the statement that it is possible to know the contemporary organization. In this context, 40% agree and 4.55% of respondents agree that Facebook is very effective in increasing political awareness and political news and comments.

As already mentioned, the study focused on the role of social media in political participation, and political discussion. The analysis of the data indicates that the highest percentage (94.5%) FB posts of the respondents use information related to political events and themes. The social media is a real public sphere which is reachable to all the sections of society. This result clearly shows that the social media is very popular with youth. The students of Delhi university closely uses social media for political mobilization. Around 78% of respondents are constantly discussing their Facebook friends (FB) and 72.7% are updating their status and commenting on various topics, most Facebook users are indifferent to political issues and interests.

### **5.3. Use of Social Media in Political Participation**

The research statistics also indicate more satisfactory and positive attitude towards political activity, so that up to 65% of the respondents gained political knowledge and 56% respondents agree on the use of social media on the development of information about politicians, social media. The data also reveal that respondents agree on the facts that Online activity have a great impact on offline political demonstrations. Research statistics stated that around 43.6% of respondents motivate people to participate in political events, so contact a politician, a political group activism and the political Demonstration. As it is well marked that most of the new students (i.e. around 82%) do not belong to any political party and have no information on political issues and activism, but due to the intense action and promotion of such issues and effective marketing of political comments from political leaders in social media plays a very influential impact on students' emotions and sentiments, the percentage was found as around 88% were having political orientation and behavior. Such promotions give rise to a political opinion and political comment in students' mind.



In fact, the use of social media is very helpful in maintaining strong political activity and added power on political topics such as politics, people, social chain, political mobilizations in order to increase the voice against the inequality of the law, to know the politicians, and at the meeting. On the contrary, the use of social media is directly related to active mobilization in political exertion, the motivation of political managers, group participation and membership in a political party.

#### **6. Conclusion**

The use of social media is so prevalent that its main objective is to expand the social connectivity in the society. As mentioned, the present research was mainly focused on the students, the social media is not only responsible for the promoting the communication skills for socioeconomic development in younger generations, but also to raise awareness of social-political, including political knowledge, political motivation and participation in the political activities. In a general sense, social media has a great power to shape peoples perception on political commitment. The Internet mediated communication, mainly connect people virtually and provides a valuable platform for online social interaction. The present analysis pointed out that there are a close connection between online activities and offline activities. The social media certainly have a role in political mobilization and engagement, in addition to the function of the political debate and engagement on Facebook cannot be ignored. The social media provides a platform for protest activism against the various social and political issues. In this study, researchers pointed out the significance of social media in creating a emotions in students' mind for social reformation and motivate them to act for the social good. The study also pointed out that in the present scenario, where the spread of the message plays a very decisive role in the formation of social sentiments in the mind of university students.

The present analysis shows that, those students, who are more active on social media are more active in political gathering. This means the social media makes people active and more interactive. Using Facebook, apparently, increases the awareness, political action, information on the political situation, to participate in the political

events and create a core sense of political rights and intense logics for political works. Internet or online communication is a great social link with others to motivate political interaction, action and reactions. Lastly, it can be concluded that social media is very effective in managing the university students and add power to the political mobilization.

**Reference:**

1. Manuel Castells (2012); Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age, 2nd Edition; Polity press
2. Bert Klandermann, The Social Psychology of Protest; Current Sociology; 2013
3. Boyd D., Can social networking sites enable political actions: International
4. Castellan, Abad and Silla, The influence of familiarities on group members' group atmosphere and assertiveness on uninhabited behavior through three different communication media, computer in human behavior, 2000.
5. Charlie Beckett, The truth about Twitter, Facebook and the uprisings in the Arab world, The Gardiain; Feb 25,2011
6. Chien Chou and Ming - Chun Hsiao (2000); Internet addiction, usage, gratification, and pleasure experience: the Taiwan college students' case; Journal of Computer and Education, 2000
7. Christian Fuchs, Systemic Practice and Action Research; The Self-Organization of Social Movements. 2006
8. D. Ferguson & E. Pierce, The World Wide Web as a Functional Alternative to Television; JBEM; 2010
9. D. S. Mostafa, Popular Protest Music and the 2011 Egyptian Revolution; PMC, 2011
10. David D Kirkpatrick and David E. Sanger, A Tunisian- Egyptian Link That Shook Arab History, The New York Times, 2011
11. Denise Matthews a and Lynne Schrum, New Media and Education; NSU Florida, 2003
12. Dhruvi Shah; News bureau; Arab Spring: 'It was the first time I felt I belonged',26<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2011.
13. E. Hargittai, Digital Na(t)ives? Variation in Internet Skills and Uses among Members of the "Net Generation", 2010.
14. Rachna Mehta, Padmavati, the Legendary Woman, From Real to Reel Life (A Historic-Analytical Perspective); Shrinkhla Ek Shodhparak Vaicharik Patrika, 2018
15. Rajesh K., D. Thapa, Social media as a catalyst for civil society movements in India: A study in Dehradun city; New Media & Society; Sage Journal, 2014
16. Ramya Sreenivasan, The Many Lives of a Rajput Queen: Heroic Past in India C. 1500–1900. University of Washington Press., ISBN 978-0-295-98760-6., 2007
17. Ravi Singh, Role of social networking sites in Indian politics; International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Research, 2016