Effectiveness of Face Book in Increasing Political Interest among Youth

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ABSTRACT

Today, when the world is becoming a small village due to super fast Communication technologies, concept of new media is not so new as many newest technologies join under it every day. Increasing internet uses in different ways and the emergence of a form of e-communication like social media is often taken as synonymous to new media. It has changed the way of communication and given the people a new platform through which individuals and communities share, create, discuss and modify user-generated content. We can say that it has changed the traditional way of public discourse as well as the concept of public sphere. According to a global digital measurement & analysis firm 'comscore' report, India is the 3rd largest country in terms of internet users in the world; and it is projected to become the world's largest Facebook user country by 2016. Well, politics has never been the topic of interest, especially among youth. Then why, these days, every political party and leader is trying to gain attention on social media? We have several examples, like the statements of India's current Prime Minister Narendra Modi and former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh on importance of social media in election campaigning for attract Youth. So, now the youth. in India is taking interest in politics through their status updates and comments, chatting with their friends, reading and writing blogs, liking pages and pictures, following communities, joining groups, making their points of view about politics. This research paper attempts to study facebook as a tool or medium of public discourse. The three objectives of the paper are: 1) To study the role of Facebook in the changing attitude of youth towards politics.2)Study of the status of discourse on Facebook about politics among the youth.3)Study of the role of Facebook in making a subject like politics popular among youth.

Keywords: Face book, Youth, Political interest, Changing Attitude.

1   INTRODUCTION

An Egyptian Internet activist Wael Ghonim famously said "If you want to liberate a society just give them the Internet".

This is true as the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India has pegged the number of internet subscribers in India at 164.81 million as of March 31, 2013; and 120 million people are facebook users. In India, social media is a rapidly growing form of public communication that has changed the ways of public discourse. These days, people talk with each other about many issues without meeting or spending their time and money on phone calls. Through social media, internet gives people a new, cheap, fast and comfortable platform for discourse. This is a fact that politics has never been the topic of interest, especially among youth, but this is also a known fact that social

media is very popular among youth. And, this is the newest that politics is becoming interesting for discussion among youth and Facebook plays a crucial role in changing view regarding politics. We can understand political importance of Facebook by the news that in 2011 Facebook had formed its own political action committee to strengthen its ties with Washington, D.C., and had announced two new politically themed apps 'My Vote' and 'I'm Voting'. In the words of Ravi Shankar Prasad, "The power of social media cannot be denied and political leaders will be forced to take the demands of young India into consideration." Under the social media, facebook is becoming very popular social networking site. So, in elections, now, all political parties are trying to reach out to the most of the people relevant to their purpose. According to the social networking giant's top Indian trends of 2013, BJP's Prime Ministerial candidate Narendra Modi is the most talked about person on facebook in India, beating likes of cricketing legend Sachin Tendulkar. So, we can know about the political parties and candidate's activity on facebook. About social media, Prashant Bhusan and Kumar Vishwas said, "Internet and social media not only enhance accountability, democratizes communication but also allows new political formations such as ours, to leapfrog the support base in the absence of traditional cadres."

Why facebook? Because facebook is the fastest growing social networking site and its CEO, Mark Zuckerberg, has announced a historic milestone of one billion facebook users in the world; and according to a The Hindu report, in the general elections in mid 2014, the number of Indian users of social media networks, largely on facebook, had touched 120 million, with above the half of its users being young or youth.

1.2   REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to Andreas Kaplan and Michael Hadean in Face mash Creator Survives Ad Board, "Social media is a group of internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content." As commonly we can say that social media as the part of new media, is a two way street that gives you ability to communicate too.

Sarah Phillips wrote about the history of facebook in "A Brief History of Facebook" (the Guardian) that it was the social networking website launched in 2004 exclusively for Harvard students.

Andy Furlong gave some important definitions of youth given by world's organizations as UN, UNESCO, etc. In Youth Studies: An Introduction. According to UN,"Youth" are people between 15 to 24 years of age. UNESCO says that "Youth is a more fluid category than a fixed age group."According to the Commonwealth, "Youth means every person between the age of 15-35 years."According to African Youth Charter, "Youth means every person between the age of 15-35 years."In India's Draft National Youth Policy (NYP) 2012, youth is a person between the age of 16-30 years.

2.   OBJECTIVES

1) To find the role of facebook in changing attitude of youth towards politics.

2) Study of the status of political discourse among youth on facebook.

3) Study of the role of facebook in making a subject like politics popular among youth.

3   Methodology

This research applies the random sample survey method. It uses cluster sampling as a part of the complex random sampling design and lottery method.

3.1   Study Area

The study field or the sample unit for the research is Dehradun city whence were selected four universities/colleges by using lottery method. So, were selected two colleges DAV, DVS, and two universities Graficera University, Doon University.

3.2   Sample Size

The sample size here is 200. These are the post-graduate level students of the age between 21 to 25 years. First only post-graduation level classes were selected. These were then divided year basis. It means in all the four Universities/colleges were identified 127 post-graduation classes which were all under 2 years programme. So, there were total 254 post-graduation classes of one year. These were further divided into 12 clusters (21 classes in 10 clusters and 22 classes each in the rest two clusters).From these 12 clusters, eight clusters were randomly selected by lottery, then were selected 25 random samples from each clusters by using lottery method again. So, there were a total of 200 samples from 8 clusters from all the post-graduation level classes in the selected Universities/colleges.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Q 1) Role of facebook in changing youth's attitude towards politics :
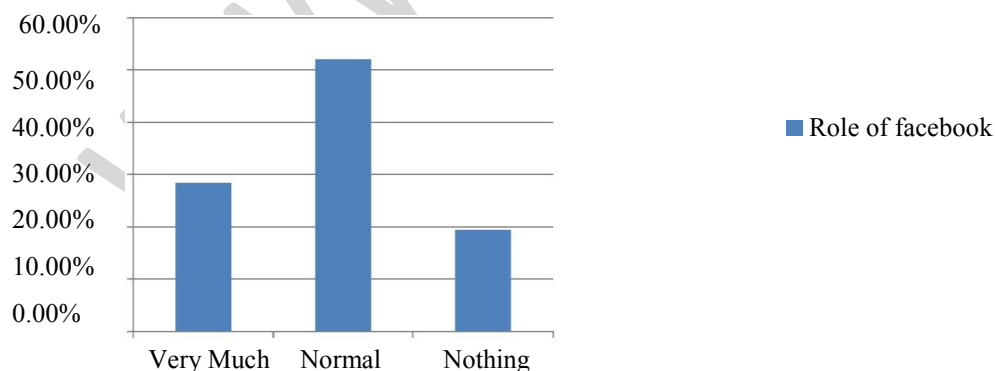
Figure 1 : Data presentation of role of Facebook in changing attitude towards politics

The first question was to know the attitude of youth, that what they think about the role of facebook in changing their attitude about politics. As we have seen that the data we have got,

only 28.5 per cent (57) students thought that facebook played a big role in changing their attitude towards politics, whereas 52 per cent (104) students thought it was quite normal and only 19.5 per cent (39) students said that the facebook had no role in changing their attitude towards politics.
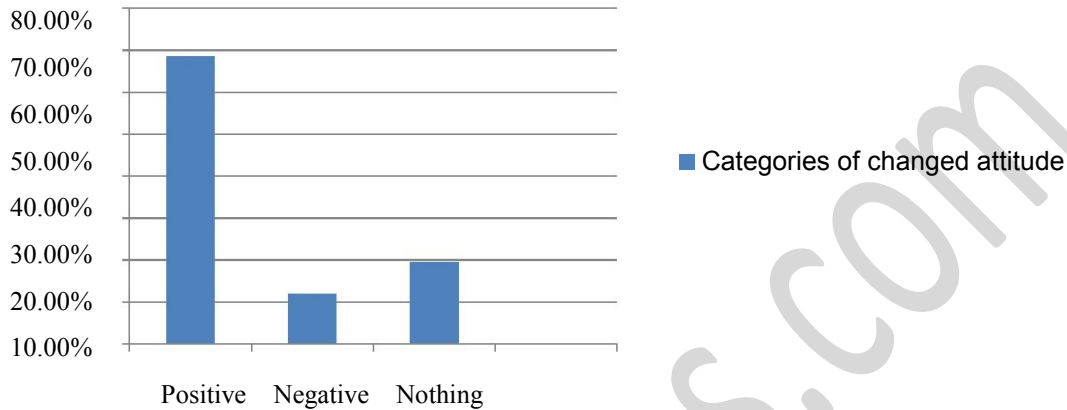
Q2) This change is :

Figure 2: Graph presentation of the data under categories of changed attitude

The second question was about the change (attitude towards politics) which takes place due to facebook whether it is positive or negative or nothing. As we can see the data, 19.5 per cent (39) students feel that this change is neither positive nor negative but 68.5 per cent (137) of the students really agree with the fact that facebook has brought a positive changes among youth so they don't think that politics is a bad thing and now they better discuss about the politics and related. According to 12 per cent (24) students, this change is negative because political news and views on facebook have negative impact on them.

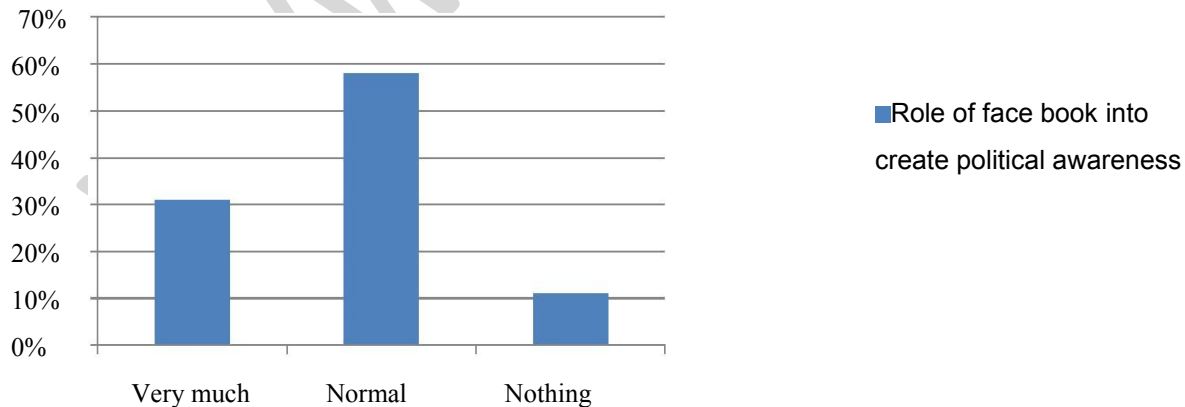## Q3) Role of Face book in to create politics awareness among youth :

Figure 3: Graph presentation of role of Face book to create political awareness between youth

Political awareness is different from political attitude. Awareness is knowing about what politics is – about the political atmosphere, one's society, state, country or the world. About the role of

facebook in creation of political awareness,58 per cent (116) students responded that it is normal, 31 percent (62) identified it as very much and 11 per cent (22) responded as 'nothing', meaning that facebook has played no role in the political awareness of the youth.

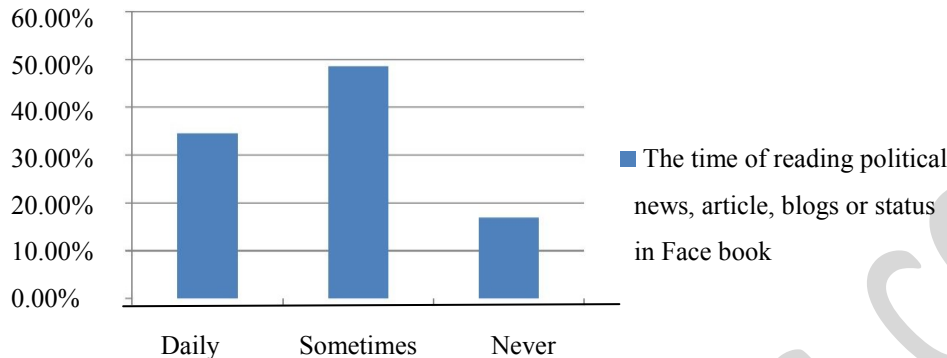**Q4) Status of reading political news /article/blogs on facebook :**

Figure 4: Graph presentation of the time of reading political news, article, blogs or status on facebook

The fourth question was related to the status of public discourse.48.5 per cent (97) of the respondents replied that they read political news or article or blogs or status on facebook sometimes whereas 34.5 per cent (69) students agreed that they read political news or article or blogs daily. Only 17 per cent (34) students informed that they never do such things on facebook.

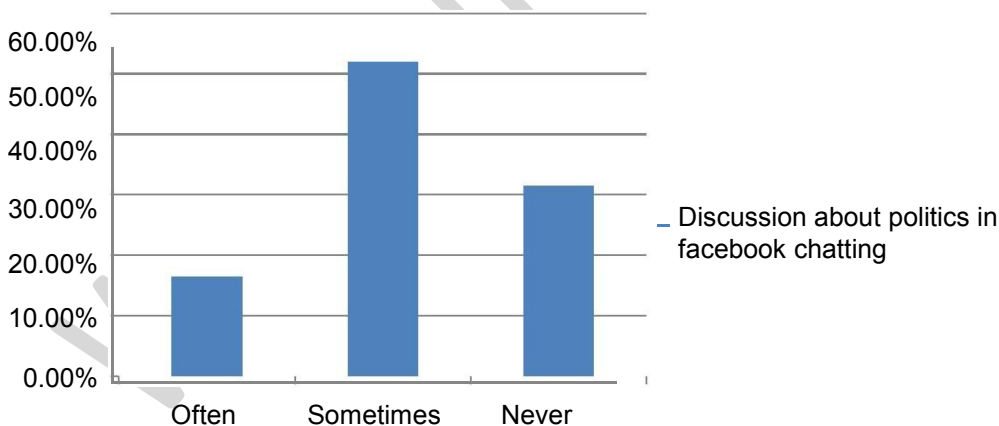**Q5) Discussion about politics during facebook chatting :**

Figure 5: Graph presentation of the frequency of political based chatting on facebook

These days, facebook chatting is very popular means of discourse, especially among teenagers and youth. This study wants to know whether youth use facebook chatting to discuss about politics; if yes, then when. The data obtained says that 52 per cent (104) students discussed about politics while facebook chatting sometimes whereas 31.5 per cent (63) students never discussed about it while chatting on facebook. Only 16.5 per cent (33) students often discussed on political

issues and news while facebook chats.

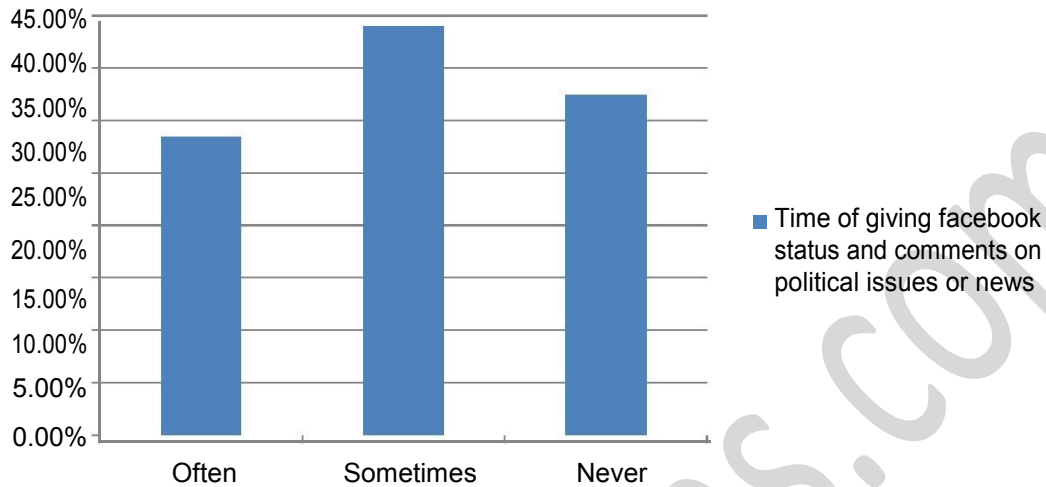**Q6) Given Face Book status or comment related to political issue :**

Figure 6: Graph presentation of the time of giving Face book status and comments on political issues or news

The sixth question enquired about the habit of young facebook users and their interest in updating facebook status and writing comments related to politics. Updating status or writing comments is a part of discourse through facebook. Such activity on political issues or news shows user's attitude towards politics. In response to this question 39 per cent (78) students replied that they sometimes write political comments or update their status with political news, 32.5 per cent (65) students never did so, while 28.5 per cent (57) of them accept that they often updated their status or wrote comments related to politics

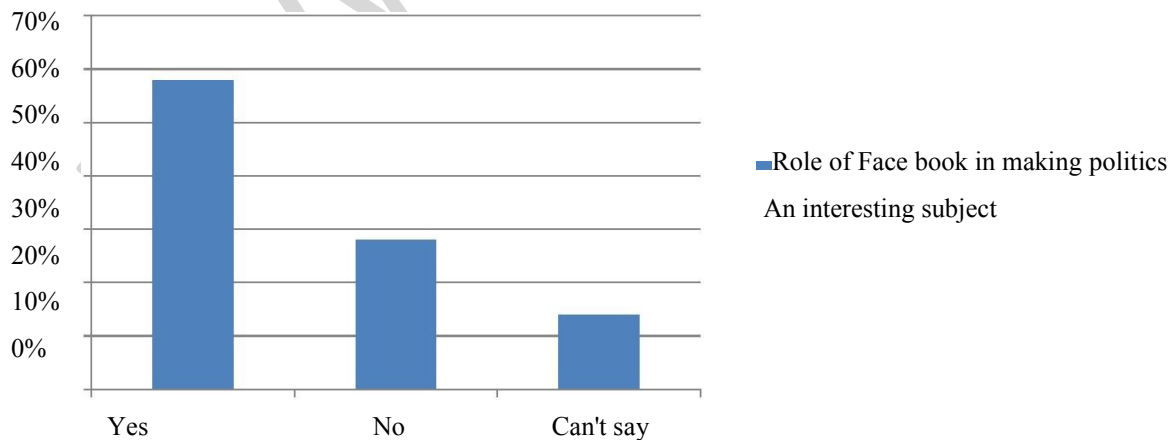**Q7) facebook makes politics an interesting subject :**

Figure 7: Graph presentation of the data face book has made politics interesting topic.

This question intended to know what do youth think about the role of facebook as it made an arid subject like politics interesting. This is an acceptable statement /proposition that politics is not the subject of everyone's interest. Well, this paper is not discussing about this statement here. Among the respondents, 58 per cent (116) accepted that facebook made politics interesting, 28per cent (56) replied negative (no) and held that it facebook had no such influence; whereas 14 per cent (28) of the sample students had no idea on the same question.

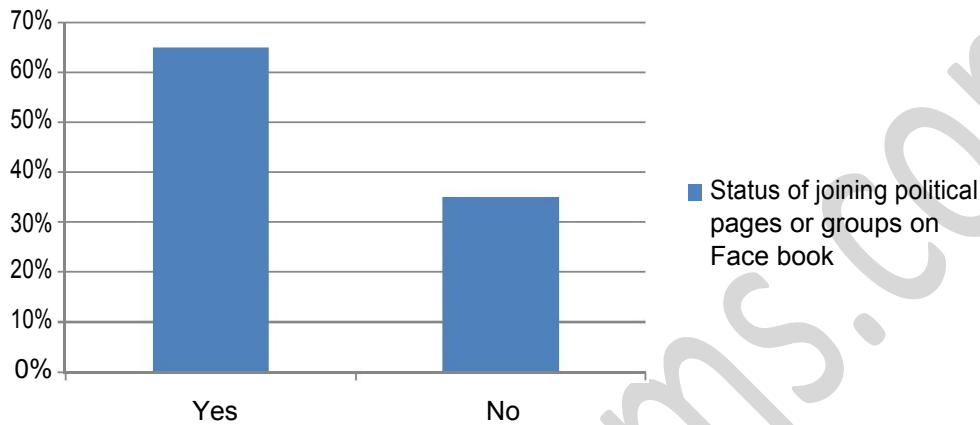**Q8) Status of joining Face Book Pages or Groups related to Politics :**

Figure 8: Graph presentation of the status of joining political pages or groups on Face book

In the answer of eighth question 65 per cent (130) students replied that they join or like political or political news related pages, blogs or communities while 35per cent (70) students responded that they never join that kind of facebook pages or groups or communities.

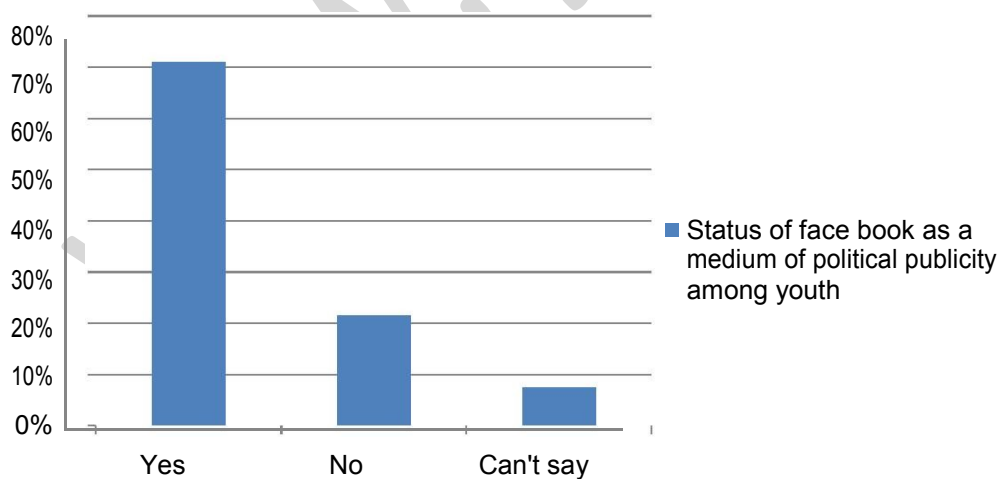**Q9) Facebook as a successful medium for Political Publicity :**

Figure 9:Graph presentation of the data of status of face book as a medium of political publicity among youth

When we asked this question to our samples, if they think facebook was a successful medium for political publicity (or political propaganda) among youth, 71 per cent (142) students replied in affirmative whereas only 7.5 per cent (15) students did not have any idea on that; and 21.5 per cent (43) students replied in negative.

Q10) Face Book has managed to develop political understanding among youth :
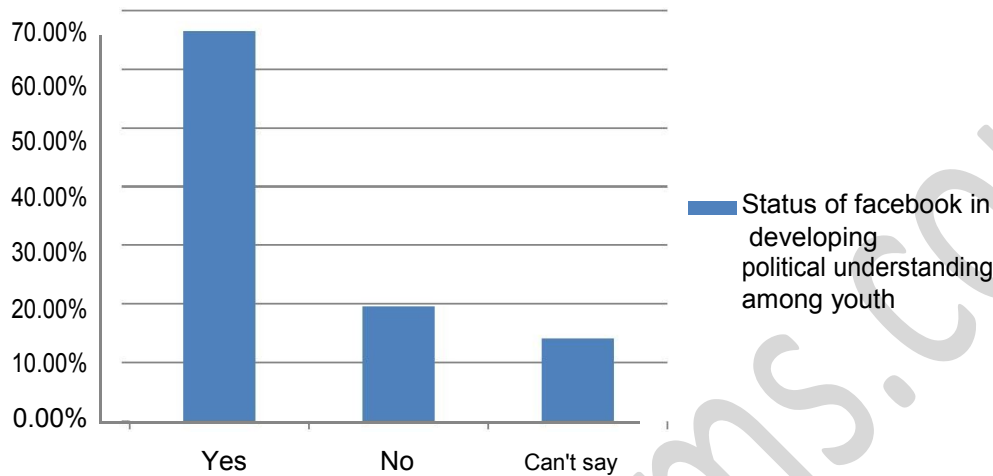

Figure 10:Graph presentation of the data of status of facebook in developing political understanding among youth.

The tenth question was about the facebook's success as a medium of public discourse that creates or develops political understanding among youth. Here, political understanding means; give facebook comment, status or joining political communities or pages by the youth on the base of their understanding level of any political issues. 66.5 per cent (133) student users accepted facebook as a medium of developing political understanding among youth whereas 19.5 per cent (39) of them were not agreeing with this; and 14 per cent (28) had no idea on that.

5   CONCLUSION

After analyze the data we can say that facebook becomes a successful medium in the change of youth attitude towards politics and most of the students accept that this change is positive. The study also indicates that facebook plays normal role to create political awareness among them. But if we see facebook as a medium of public discourse, students not often but sometimes read, write or comment or discussed in chatting on the political issue or politics. After that the second big percentage of the students accept that they daily or often read, write, comment or discussed in chatting on politics. This study shows that facebook makes politics an interesting subject and it become a successful medium of political discourse which is developing political understanding among youth. As the study shows that facebook firstly provides a platform to youth where they can freely discuss, comment and give their opinion on the political subject. One of the main

Page 20

reasons of the social media (Facebook,Twitter,WhatsApp,etc) is so popular now across the world is; advent of mobile connectivity. It's no longer necessary to be wired in order to participate online and perhaps that's why the election commission of India had called for a meeting with websites to discuss the use of social media by political parties and candidates and special preferred company. We can say that now youth is taking politics more serious than before but in interesting way of facebook.

Findings

1) Facebook has changed the political attitude among the youth that is positive.

2) In creating political awareness among youth, Facebook can become a successful tool as it has managed to make politics an interesting subject for youth.

3) Facebook has given the youth a platform where they can discuss frankly on any topic.

4) Political parties have been successful in reaching out to young people through facebook.

5) The increasing use of social media in elections in India and its influence on the results and the electoral process have led the responsible institutions to recognize its increasing use; and the prospects of more use in the future..

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