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Media and Education: Waning Gap between Electorate & Politics

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Abstract:
The effort to bring youth into active political participation was made by the previous governments by decreasing the age of voting from 21 to 18 years. This was to ensure that a large section of youths, who were cut-off from voicing their option in government formation, now will have a strong voice in expressing their choice.
The advent of media particularly growth of New Media, social networking and the emergence of number of news channels started providing more and more space for politics. Youth started taking active interest in politics of after the electronic media gadded to exercise their franchisee. The political leaders also realised the importance of wooing the end voters and there by gain political leverages, off late the emergence of social networking sites, coupled with television have greatly increased the intensity of influencing the young minds. This evidences that the gaps have decline the percentage of youth voting in recent election and their participation in Anna Hazare and AAP moments.
In this respective paper an effort as be made for examining how the youths are being drawn into the political arena and their role in the present day politics by Social Networking and Media. This will be done based on secondary data sources and with some case studies.

Keywords: Youth, politics, waning gap, new media

1. Introduction

"Democracy" is a Greek word, meaning rule by the demos, or "people." A country like India, world's largest democratic realm, always been giving a free, fair and celebrated space for its citizen in social and political activity,Vis-a-Vis the modern society have also understood the importance of their responsibility. The real-time example for above statement is unpredicted and remarkable participation rate of 66.38% electorate in 2014 LokSabha elections, ever seen in Indian History. If we look at the reasons for the positive social change, majorly Literacy and E-literacy growth among youth comes to the picture. Handily the media have lessened the communication gap among people in the society.

The opportunities for participation that young people experience in their communities may influence their development and the kind of transitions they make to adulthood. For example, evidence that comes largely from developed countries indicates that youth who participate in communal activities or are connected to their communities are less likely than others to engage in risk-taking behaviours. Moreover, behaviours and attitudes relating to community participation that individuals adopt as young people predict their lifelong civic affiliations and perspectives. (1)

In India, the National Youth Policy 2003 has underscored the role of India's youth in political decision-making, and has argued for greater representation of youth in appropriate bodies as well as more extensive youth participation in the design and implementation of programmes. (2) Indeed, there is a recognition that today's youth, who have better access to skills and information than those of earlier generations, are playing an important role in influencing political processes and the socio-economic development of the country. Everyone has equally understood the importance of youth or productive youth role in political participation. The effort of previous governments, decreasing the age of voting from 21 to 18 years is fruitful; the majority have a strong voice in expressing their choice.

Media and Politics have been a permanent duet for many centuries. The progress in the Literacy and Technology is attracting more number of youth in political participation. Even though the popular traditional tools like Public meetings, Newspapers, Magazines, Radio, Television are variedly used in political campaign a shift from traditional outfit is firm adoption of New Media or Digital Media.

In 21st century, New Media has helped the modern youth to look towards elections very earnestly, the growth of e-literacy and their easy access of new media tools like, Websites, E-mails, IVRS, SMSs, Online Advertising, Blogging, post on Social Networking Sites by both people and politicians have set a new crusade in political partaking. In addition to above, advent of Smart Phones, especially apps on smart phones like Whatsapp, Viberhave made youth to keep more engaged, connected and share information frequently which

have abridged the entire youth fraternity together and raise voice united in any kind of social, economic and political event without geographical discrimination.

With that the emergence of active news channels also started providing more and more space for politics. The visual impact on electronic media & frequent opinion and commentaries on social media, debate on smart phones, the trifurcated hint has made the Youth be more sensitive and active in delivering their social rights.

2. Research Approach

In this study an effort has been made for examining how the youths are being drawn into the political arena and their role in the present day politics by Social Networking and Media. This study is carried out based on secondary data sources and with some relevant case studies.

3. Observations

Children are the future" and "the future belongs to the youth" or even calls to "give youth a voice" are common phrases in popular discourse. Media outlets, political leaders, and children's advocates often encourage the public to view youth as investments in tomorrow—a time when the young will take adults' place in working, supporting families, and serving their communities. This traditional perspective fails to take into account that in many countries, youth are very much active players, contributing to the public good, and having a voice in their communities. This more current view is captured in language describing youth as "assets," "active agents of social change," or "decision-makers," as well as by individuals who are promoting more democratic, inter-generational relationships through "adult-youth partnerships." Such concepts can be traced to both a shift in child and youth studies and to the emerging youth development field.(3)

India is a developing country having the 2nd largest population in the world after China. It is the largest democracy in the world, having the population around 121Crore as per 2011 census and 7th largest country in terms of geographical area. The literacy rate in the country is 74% and e-literacy rate is also in upswing since its inception, presently with 243 million users, among them approximately active on Social Networking Sites are 145.6million in 2015. (4) Among them 60.22 million+follows political parties and 30.49 million+ follow political personalities.(5) Which clearly indicates around 62.55%is actively participating in any one form of social, economic or political activity. Additionally, countries with already recovered economies and increased employment, young people are perhaps socially and politically more active than before due in part to their mobility and increased language and computer skills. (3)To analyse in detail the public participation in politics was analysed after globalisation.
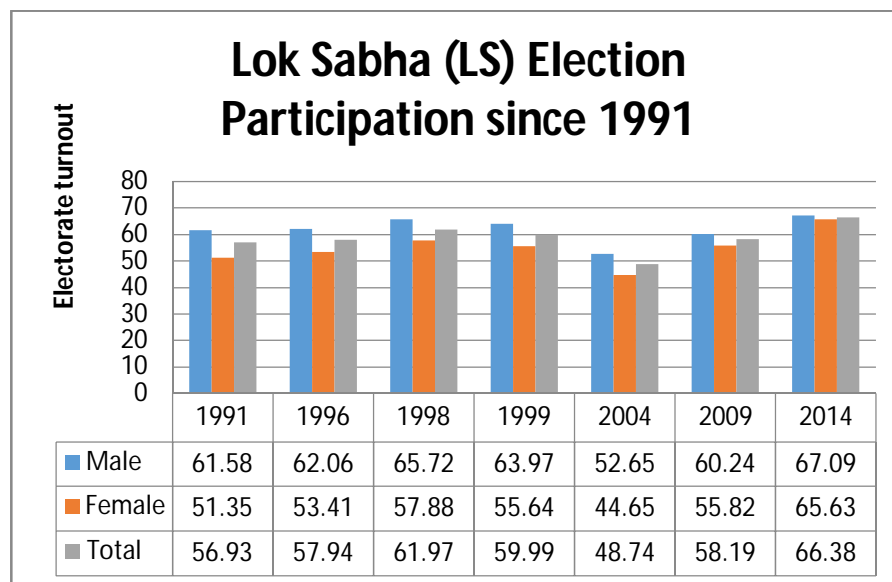
Lok Sabha (LS) Election Participation since 1991

Electorate turnout	1991	1996	1998	1999	2004	2009	2014
■ Male	61.58	62.06	65.72	63.97	52.65	60.24	67.09
■ Female	51.35	53.41	57.88	55.64	44.65	55.82	65.63
■ Total	56.93	57.94	61.97	59.99	48.74	58.19	66.38

Figure 1: Politics and Public Participation after globalisation and in Digital era

In Figure-1: The Turnout for LS 2014 stands at a record high of 66.38%. Electorate in LS 2014 is 83.41crore (including service electors) as against 71.69crore in 2009. The gender gap now stands reduced at 1.46 percentage points against more than 4 percentage points in 2009.
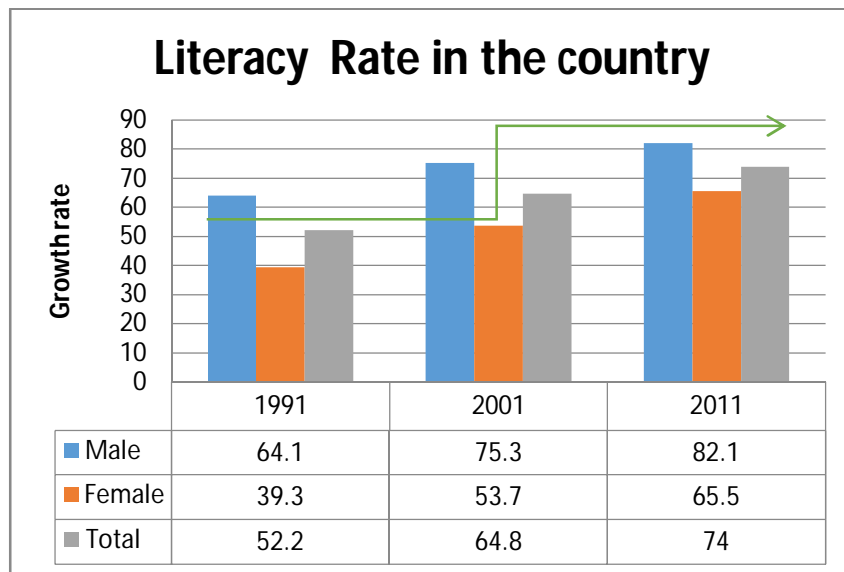
Figure 2: Literacy growth rate after globalisation and in Digital era

In Figure-2: provisional figures of Census 2011, in India 77,84,54,120 persons have been counted as literates. Among all literates, 33,42,50,358 are females, whereas 44,42,03,762 are males. The literacy rate of India in 2011 is 74.0 percent. Literacy rate among females is 65.5 percent whereas the literacy rate among males is 82.1 percent.

Major observations in Figure 1 & 2 are, we find certain commonalities; high literacy rate has hiked the electorate too. Example: 2011census figures states male literacy is high in the country and 2014LS states male participation is high, significantly the same is observed in following years. This clearly signifies there is a direct relationship between Literacy and social responsibilities.
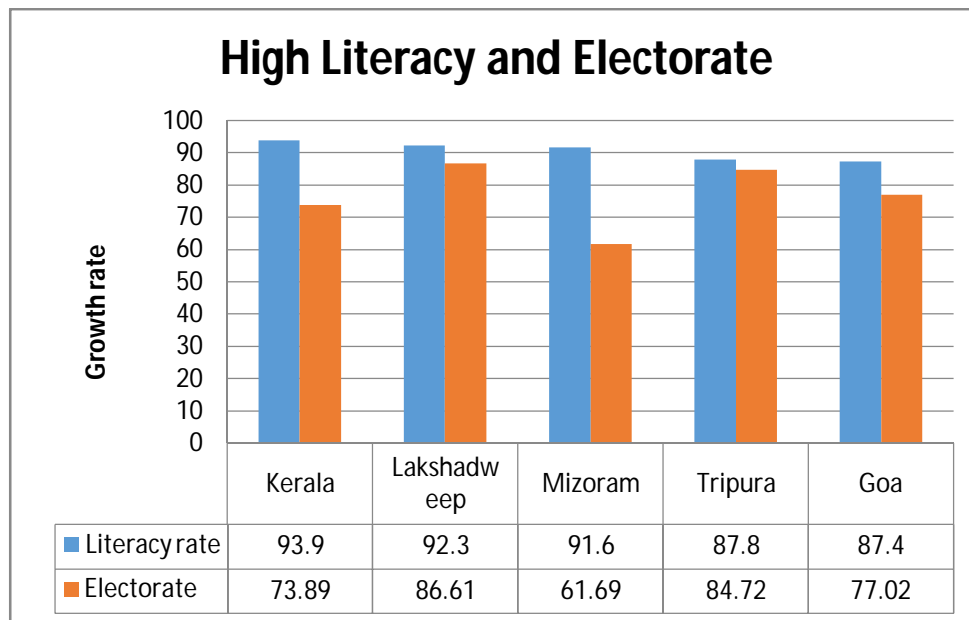

Figure 3: Comparison between High literacy and electorate turnout

In Figure-3: the comparison between High literacy rate and electorate are drawn, In order of higher literacy rates; Kerala, Lakshadweep, Mizoram, Tripura and Goa states hold first, second, third, fourth and fifth positions respectively among all States and Union Territories in the country. Comparatively electorate are significantly higher in high literacy states, Kerala has registered highest registration ever seen in past 25 years, secondly in Lakshadweep Slightly higher than last turnout and higher women turnout. Mizoram significant increase, Tripura Highest ever turn-out, Goa the Highest ever turn-out and higher women turnout for the first time in any LS. This signifies there is a direct relationship between literacy rate and electorate.
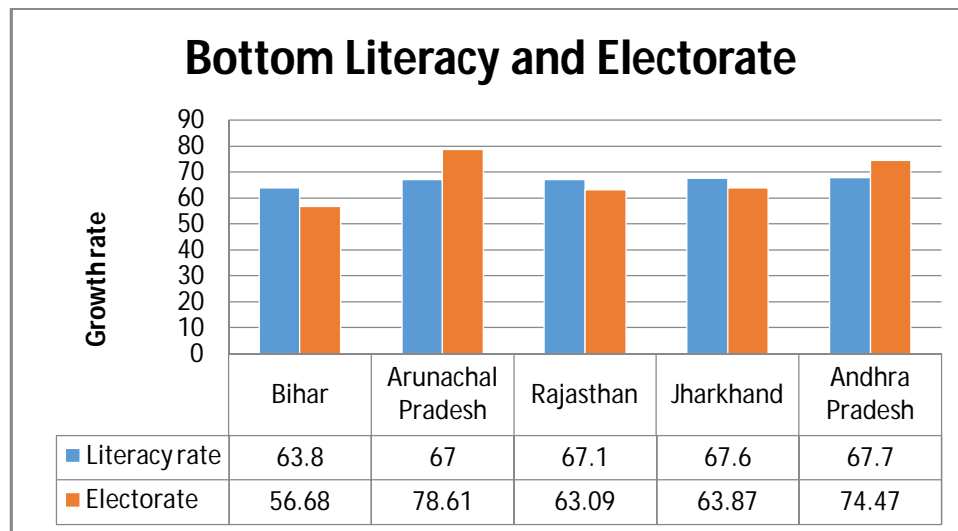
Figure 4: Comparison between low literacy and electorate turnout

In Figure-4: the comparison between Low literacy rate states and electorate are drawn, In order of bottom literacy rates; Bihar, Arunachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Andra Pradesh states hold bottom first, second, third, fourth and fifth positions respectively among all States and Union Territories in the country. Comparatively electorate observations are as follows, In Bihar highest electorate was 64.60 in 1998 and 2014 turnout is 56.28. Other observations in rest states were outwardly same. In Arunachal Pradesh even though overall literacy rate is low, women literacy rate is high 59.6% apparently women turnout in recent 2014 LS is also high 81.02%. This connotes there is a direct relationship between literacy rate and electorate.

Rank	Country	Internet Users	1 Year Growth %	1 Year User Growth	Total Country Population	1 Yr Population Change (%)	Penetration (% of Pop. with Internet)	Country's share of World Population	Country's share of World Internet Users
1	China	641,601,070	4%	24,021,070	1,393,783,836	0.59%	46.03%	19.24%	21.97%
2	United States	279,834,232	7%	17,754,869	322,583,006	0.79%	86.75%	4.45%	9.58%
3	**India**	**243,198,922**	**14%**	**29,859,598**	**1,267,401,849**	**1.22%**	**19.19%**	**17.50%**	**8.33%**
4	Japan	109,252,912	8%	7,668,535	126,999,808	-0.11%	86.03%	1.75%	3.74%
5	Brazil	107,822,831	7%	6,884,333	202,033,670	0.83%	53.37%	2.79%	3.69%

Table 1: E-literacy growth

In Table-1, the Internet Usage survey by internet live stats-2014 is analysed in Indian context, Broadband-internet-connectivity, 10 years ago was considered as a luxury means but today it is a basic necessity among urban youth. It has been widely recognized that the diffusion of the Internet and its associated applications (e.g., e-governance, electronic commerce, e-banking, e-learning etc.) can fuel the growth of a nation's economy. Internet significantly facilitates the process of development of the nations and its citizens in all respects, be it economic, social, or cultural. (5) The developmental changes and advent of mobile/smart phones has set to overhaul the country's digital economy. Cheaper smartphones and a ballooning telecommunications industry have together pushed India to the cusp of digital revolution. Today, India has 243 million internet users – more than the United States and second only to China. This clearly states we are highest but when we look at consolidate value comparing with population rate its only 19.19% of population with internet penetration in the country. Even though the limited number is active, the craze towards political activity is in upswing.

2015 March 19th status			
Social Media Users	**NarendraModi**	**Rahul Gandhi**	**Arvind Kejrival**
Facebook likes	2,80,000,00	3,86,000	64,15,370
Twitter followings	1,80,000,00	12,000	30,96,000
Youtube subscription	24,82,249	2221	10,22,306
Google +	2,482,168	n/a	3,025
2014 Status (5)			
Facebook likes	12,399,400	3,51,000	5,005,786
Twitter followings	3,690,000	N/A	1.600,000
Youtube subscription	1,32,400	2221	N/A
Google +	12,68,380	2118	579+

Table 2: Public Monitor-ship of politicians

Table-2, 'Social Media is the biggest shift since the industrial revolution' says Eric Qualman, Socialnomics. It is the top most activity present on the web. Every global brand has its presence on social media. The above table observation confirms, even after the poll, the craze towards politics is in upswing. Social Media has rapidly grown in importance as a platform for political activities in its different forms. A social media platform, such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube provide new ways to encourage and keeps inspiring citizen get involved in political life and also keeps the citizen updated and aware of the society.

4. Conclusion
In recent years, digital media and networks have become embedded in our everyday lives, and are part of broad-based changes to how we engage in knowledge production, communication, and creative expression. Unlike the early years in the development of computers and computer-based media, digital media are now *commonplace* and *pervasive*, having been taken up by a wide range of individuals and institutions in all walks of life. This implies major changes in attitudes, policies, and social structures similar to the way we are now working to incorporate women's issues and perspectives.

The Internet is an "empowering technology." Since its introduction, the medium is very strong and sensitive, voice for the voiceless, it authorise at every level:

1. Share information - Low cost networking facilitates for easy and faster access of knowledge, outwardly helps for understanding in wider perspective.The service is a boon to current society and lifelong learners.
2. Improve governance – as thetransparency element peeps out, out rightly improve the standard of service,expands access to better quality education, healthcare etc.
3. Improve social conscious and responsibility– As a citizen helps in-depth understanding of a status quo and eventually for change.
4. Improves livelihood –As the exposure leads to grabnew opportunities for bypassed groups, supports every needy (women, the poor, rural populations, children).
5. Introduce economic opportunities. E-commerce, ICT-sector development, etc.

All above factors obviously support for development in society and digital technology horizon is very well understood among all youth in developing nations. The use of social media is significantly complex. Even though use of social media has several challenges such as security, privacy, accuracy at the same time it provides the opportunities for sharing, collaboration, and engagement of users which is provided by the medium of social media. Hence youth verify the information in other medium. Hence an equal, steady and continuous contribution is in demand among youth for a stable environment and to sustain the present status.

5. Suggestion
It's already proved, by proper utilization of Social Networking Sites (SNS), it can lead for victory.Obviously the civic and political awareness is been bloomed by SNS. It's a good indication of growth, but it is also vital to mark that missing out population who are still not drawn in political arena with or without their consent and wish. Even though literacy rate in the country is 74.04%, yet only 19.19% are active with new media. Some measures from both government and quasi-government should be taken to improve the actual status. It is very fortunate that youth are more vigorous in SNS are also taking up the initiative in educating, creating awareness, additional signifies the participation of every citizen will ensure the countries overall development in terms of Economic, Social, Political streams. As mentioned below if some measures are taken to improve voting rate. It would sprightly raise the democratic flag in the country.

6. How to Improve Voting Rate
1. Compulsory voting: system in which electors are obliged to vote in elections or attend a polling place on voting day. If an eligible voter does not attend a polling place, he or she may be subject to punitive measures such as fines or community service.
2. E-Voting: If circumstance does not favour visiting polling booth, the E-voting should be encouraged, which is alreadyvery popular in many countries, as a security measure, face recognition software can be used as an aid.
3. Compulsory Registration: Ease of voting registration with online registration and compulsory registration, as a campaigns drive in colleges will help or motivate considerable.

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