

# Can social media become a governance tool in India?



## THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION OF TODAY

Social media tools enable the "aam Aadmi" to interact directly not just with his friends but even with the prime minister of the country. Social media has made it possible to have Amitabh Bachchan or Narendra Modi on your friends' list. The IT revolution has also broken the monopoly of the state over information and has become a powerful and popular tool for communication. Politicians are accordingly learning the art of using technology/social media to connect with the people.

Social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter offer users platforms where they can come and share their daily life experienced with the like-minded people (this is perhaps the reason why most of us add our friends on Facebook, and not our parents). Social media sites, in the last few years, have broken all records of popularity. People seem to be crazy after these sites. A virtual world is now active on these sites. And, this gives businesses a chance to invade and find their prospective customers there. Social Media optimization does this job in a planned and effective manner.



### ELECTIONS 2014 – A NEW BENCHMARK IN INDIAN POLITICS

In 2014, if there was a virtual election done on social media i.e. facebook, twitter, Narendra Modi and BJP would have won it by even a bigger margin than their 2014 victory. The opposition was non-existent. Congress and the rest were just not present...or they did not consider social media important enough. How wrong they proved to be. Most analysts believe that the crucial difference between Modi and Rahul Gandhi and the rest was how he projected himself, not only outside but also on the virtual world.

Modi is huge on facebook and twitter. He has close to 15 Million fans and after US president Barak Obama, Modi is the second most popular politician across the world.

The opposition seems to have understood the message now. Although Rahul Gandhi is still to appear on Twitter, he is represented through his office on the

medium. Sonia Gandhi recently congratulated her IT Team for doing excellent work.

## **ROLES AND DUTIES OF THE GOVERNMENT**

The below mentioned is what is expected of a government in power:

1. To Construe good policy for empowerment of public.
2. To Launch various schemes for different sectors.
3. To from a more perfect Union.
4. To establish Justice.
5. To insured domestic Tranquillity.
6. To provide for the common defines.
7. To promote the general welfare.
8. To secure the blessings of Liberty.
9. To create interactive platform between government and public.

## HURDLES:-

The following are some of the limitations faced by different media:



## NEWSPAPER:

- Short life: unlike television, news is restricted to an article or a day.
- Low quality colour reproduction: you cannot get the live action or reality picture.
- Not demographically selective: you might want focus on a certain region which newspapers might not be able to give.
- Cannot deliver sound and motion: if you want video, you might have to go to the internet or television

## RADIO:

- Short life: unlike television, news is restricted to an article or a day.
- No visuals: rely on voice

- Cannot provide details: Often restricted by time slots
- Cannot deliver sound and motion: if you want video, you might have to go to the internet or television

## RALLY:

- Limited access: message passed to number of people present
- Time consuming: no short and sweet summary. People have to listen for hours.



## WHY SOCIAL MEDIA IS IMPORTANT?

Today everyone is on social media. Your parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, nephews, neighbours, teachers, colleagues, people you like, people you want to

avoid. It is as good as the real world. Which makes it the perfect place for everyone who are concerned with businesses, politics and people in general.

Today you want to spread out the right message to the target audience and social media helps you do that. The political parties would want to tell you why you should vote for them, Pepsi wants to tell you in 140 characters what's so good about its latest version, Priyanka Chopra wishes you can watch her latest movie, Star TV hopes you can check out the latest episode of its shows. They all want you and the best way they can do that is be present where you are. On the Social Media.

## **HOW THE MINISTRY WORKED BEFORE**

When one talks about the functioning of the government, thoughts such as slow, lot of paperwork, bureaucracy, red-tapeism, many hurdles all come to mind. Such was indeed the scenario. Simple things took months and years to get done. India is rated as one of the poorest in the world on the scale of doing business. Chalta hai attitude was common because this was the government and people couldn't be fired from their jobs. Worst of all was the under-the-table dealings which was also shown through multi-crore scams especially when the UPA worked. People were tired and frustrated of all this and that's why they brought a change in the government. Modi promised change.



# THE MODI CHANGE: HOW MODI IS MINGLING

## POLITICS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

If someone asks you to name the schemes and policies of the previous government, you might draw a blank. But if you are asked, what Modi has done you can say a lot. Reason? Because Modi knows that the people of India must be continuously informed about what he and the Government are upto.

Here below are some unique things about Modi and social media:

- Modi sends on an average 12 tweets a day.
- He tweets about new policies and any positive changes which have come up.
- He has tweeted about matters ranging from Jan Dhan Yojna to congratulating sportspersons on their achievements.
- Modi has also interacted with foreign prime ministers and presidents through twitter.
- He loves selfies, and his selfies are loved by the social world. His last selfie with the Chinese President was a social media rage.
- Even his state and administrative bodies under him have become very active on facebook and twitter.



## Government is real working on social media

Social Media	Narendra Modi	Rahul Gandhi	Arvind Kejriwal
Facebook	28,899,158 likes	384,380 likes	6,428,019 likes
Twitter	12.9M followers/8,325 Tweets	119k followers/1,417 Tweets	4.69M followers/8,379 Tweets
Google Plus	2,695,873 followers	1,619 followers	395 followers
YouTube	250,152 subscribers/ 33,805,412 views		2,087 subscribers

These are the results for government and politics.

**EFFECTS ON RETWEETS**  
*Government & politics*  
How adding specific elements increased percentage of retweets by area

14%

Video URL

14%

Quote

16%

Digit

30%

Hashtag

62%

Photo URL



GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

## Facebook Has Changed Politics



Want to know how the 2012 presidential election is shaping up? Check your Facebook page. Ever since the so-called "Facebook election" of President Obama in 2008, the social media giant has been a political reference point for citizens, politicians and media alike. And judging from its recent actions, Facebook intends to have a major impact on the November election.

In the past year, Facebook has formed its own political action committee to strengthen its ties to Washington, D.C., and has announced two new politically themed apps. The "MyVote" app, created in partnership with Microsoft and Washington State, gives Facebook users the opportunity to register to vote online and review useful voter information. The "I'm Voting" app, a joint collaboration with CNN, allows users to publicly commit to vote, identify preferred candidates and share their political views with friends.

But make no mistake about it: The powers that be at Facebook are not driving political change in a vacuum. Facebook's 900 million-plus users deserve the lion's share of the credit for profoundly altering political processes not only in the United States but also abroad. Here are six ways that Facebook and its

users have forever changed the "face" of politics.



### **1. Make Politics and Politicians More Accessible**

Since the advent of Facebook, the general public is more connected to politics than ever before. Instead of watching TV or searching the Internet for the latest political news, Facebook users can go directly to a politician's fan page for the most up-to-date information. They can also interact one-on-one with candidates and elected officials about important issues by sending them private messages or posting on their walls. Personal contact with politicians gives citizens more immediate access to political information and more power to hold lawmakers accountable for their words and actions.

### **2. Allow Campaign Strategists to Better Target Voters**

Because politicians are more accessible to the public via Facebook, they receive almost immediate feedback about their stances on the issues from supporters and opponents. Campaign organizers and strategists track and analyze this feedback with social intelligence apps like Wisdom, which identify the demographics, "Likes," interests, preferences and behaviors of politicians' Facebook fan bases. This information helps campaign strategists target specific groups to rally new and existing supporters and raise funds.



### **3. Force Media to Provide Reflective Coverage**

Communication between politicians and the public on Facebook obliges the media to take a backseat in the reporting process. In an effort to reach a larger audience and speak directly to supporters, politicians often subvert the press by posting messages on their own Facebook pages. Facebook users see these messages and respond to them. The media must then report on public response to a politician's message rather than on the message itself. This process replaces the traditional, interrogatory reporting of the press with a reflective style of coverage that requires the press to report on trending issues instead of new stories.

### **4. Increase Youth Voting Rates**

By providing an easy, immediate way to share and access campaign information and support candidates, Facebook has increased the political mobilization of young people, in particular students. In fact, the "Facebook effect" has been credited as a major factor in the historic youth voter turnout for the 2008 presidential election, which was the second largest in American history (the largest turnout was in 1972, the first time 18-year-olds were allowed to vote in a presidential election). As young people intensify their participation in the political process, they have a greater say in determining the issues that drive campaigns and make the ballots.



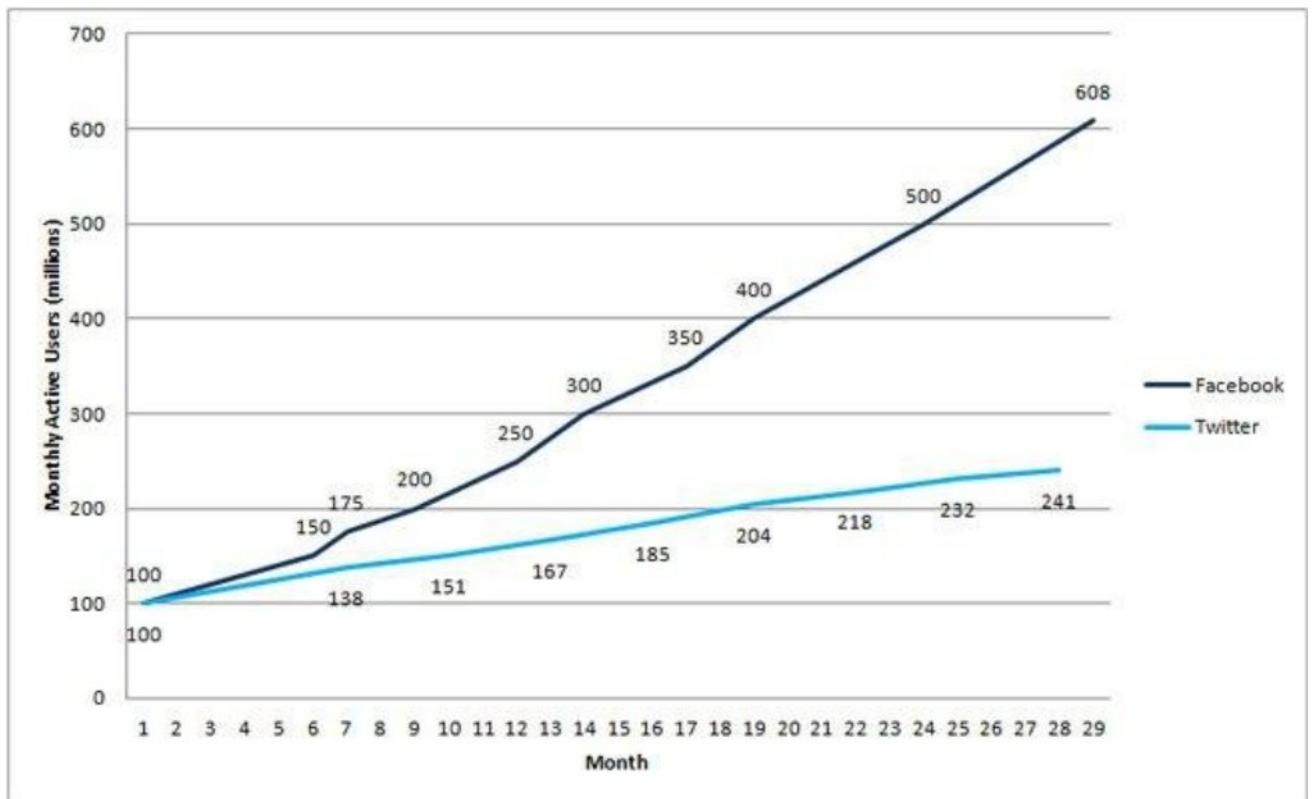
Screenshot courtesy of Facebook © 2012

## 5. Organize Protests and Revolutions

Facebook functions not only as a source of support for political systems but also as a means of resistance. In 2008, a Facebook group called "One Million Voices Against FARC" organized a protest march against FARC (the Spanish acronym for the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia) in which hundreds of thousands of citizens participated. And as evidenced by the "Arab Spring" uprisings in the Middle East, activists used Facebook to organize inside their own countries and relied on other forms of social media such as Twitter and YouTube to get the word out to the rest of the world. In this way, users in authoritarian nations can engage in politics while evading state censorship.

## 6. Promote World Peace

Although Facebook actively promotes peace on its Peace on Facebook page, the over 900 million people who comprise this global community are playing a significant role in breaking down borders between nations, religions, races and political groups. As Facebook users from different countries connect and share their views, they're often surprised to learn how much they have in common. And in the best of cases, they begin to question why they were ever taught to hate each other in the first place.



Graphic of facebook vs. Twitter in one month

## Conclusion

Social media is an extremely enormous and effective tool for governance.

Now that you know that you do know something about social media, and you also know that no one knows what's next , come join us! See you on Twitter and facebook. As a communications expert, all this excites me. Social media provides new opportunities to communicate and to connect.