

## YOUNG VOTERS' PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS: A STUDY OF THE 2024 KARNATAKA PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

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### ABSTRACT:

This study investigates the influence of social media on young voters' political opinions and participation, with a focus on how digital platforms shape political engagement among this demographic. Utilizing a sample of 75 young voters from Chitradurga District, Karnataka, the research employs a series of data analyses to explore various aspects of political awareness and social media impact. The Chi-Square Test reveals a significant association between higher political awareness and increased voting participation, indicating that greater awareness correlates with higher engagement in elections. The ANOVA analysis further demonstrates a significant effect of social media on shaping political opinions and discussions, with a p-value of 0.005, highlighting the critical role of social media in influencing young voters. The findings highlight that social media not only enhances political awareness but also significantly affects political attitudes and participation. This research contributes to understanding the role of digital platforms in contemporary political engagement, emphasizing the need for targeted strategies to leverage social media for fostering informed and active voter participation.

### KEYWORDS:

Social Media, Political Awareness, Young Voters, Voting Participation

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### Introduction

Social media has fundamentally transformed the landscape of political engagement and discourse. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn have emerged as pivotal tools for disseminating information, shaping political opinions, and mobilizing voters. The advent of these digital platforms has led to a shift in how political content is consumed and discussed, particularly among younger generations. Research highlights the significant role social media plays in influencing political attitudes and behaviors. For instance, studies have shown that social media can both amplify and polarize political opinions, contributing to a more engaged yet divided electorate (Loader et al., 2014; Vaccari et

al., 2015). According to Pew Research Center (2018), social media users are more likely to engage with political content and participate in political activities, highlighting the platforms' role in facilitating access to diverse viewpoints and fostering political discourse. Furthermore, Barberá et al. (2015) have demonstrated that social media can reinforce existing beliefs and contribute to political polarization, affecting the nature and extent of political participation. As young voters increasingly turn to social media for political information and discussion, understanding its impact on their political opinions and behaviors becomes essential.

### **Review of Literature**

Blais and Rubenson (2013) provide a comprehensive review of factors influencing young voter turnout. They discuss the impact of political socialization, engagement in civic activities, and the role of education in shaping electoral participation among the youth. The authors highlight that despite increased efforts to engage young voters, their turnout remains consistently lower than that of older age groups.

Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996) explore the relationship between political knowledge and voter participation, emphasizing how political awareness among young voters influences their electoral involvement. They argue that a lack of political knowledge is a significant barrier to participation and suggest that educational interventions could improve political engagement among youth.

Franklin (2004) examines the declining trend in voter turnout across various demographics, including young voters. He investigates the reasons behind this trend, such as dissatisfaction with the political system and the perception of ineffectiveness of voting, providing a detailed analysis of how these factors affect young voters.

Highton and Wolfinger (2001) analyze the patterns of political participation among young adults, focusing on factors such as family background, educational attainment, and political socialization. They find that while young adults are generally less engaged, those with higher levels of education and family political involvement show increased participation rates.

Norris (2004) provides an overview of the challenges and opportunities associated with increasing political participation among young people. She discusses the impact of digital media, changing political

attitudes, and the role of political parties in mobilizing young voters. The study highlights the importance of addressing generational gaps in political engagement.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- To analyze the level of political awareness among young voters in Chitradurga district during the 2024 Karnataka Parliamentary Elections.
- To examine the factors influencing young voters' participation in the 2024 Parliamentary Elections in Chitradurga district.
- To assess the role of social media in shaping the political views and voting behavior of young voters in Chitradurga district.

### **Research Hypothesis**

Hypothesis 1: Higher political awareness is positively correlated with increased voting participation among young voters.

Hypothesis 2: Social media has a significant impact on shaping young voters' political opinions and discussions.

### **Research Methodology**

The research follows a descriptive design aimed at understanding young voters' participation in the 2024 Karnataka Parliamentary Elections in Chitradurga district. Using a non-probability sampling method, specifically convenience sampling, 75 young voters aged 18–29 will be surveyed. Data will be collected through a structured questionnaire comprising closed-ended and Likert scale-based questions, focusing on political awareness, interest, voting behavior, motivations for participation, the role of social media, and factors influencing their voting decisions. The survey will be distributed both online and face-to-face. The data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize voting patterns, along with chi-square tests and correlation analysis to explore relationships between variables such as political awareness and participation. SPSS or similar software will be used for analysis. While the study focuses on Chitradurga district, limiting its generalizability, it offers insights into local voting behavior. Ethical considerations will be addressed by obtaining informed consent, ensuring respondent confidentiality, and using the data solely for academic purposes.

## Data Analysis and Interpretation

**Table 1: Age Group Distribution**

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
18–21	22	29.3
22–25	26	34.7
26–29	27	36.0
Total	75	100

**Source:** Field Survey

The data from Table 1 reveals a relatively balanced representation of respondents across different age groups, with a slight skew towards older young adults. The 26–29 age group is the most represented, comprising 36.0% of the sample with 27 respondents, indicating a higher engagement from this segment. The 22–25 age group follows with 34.7%, including 26 respondents, suggesting a significant presence of individuals transitioning into more stable phases of their lives. The 18–21 age group has the smallest representation at 29.3%, with 22 respondents, which is somewhat lower compared to the other age groups. This distribution highlights a trend where older young adults are more prominently represented, which may reflect their more established political views and behaviors. Understanding these age-specific dynamics is crucial for tailoring interventions and analyses to effectively address the needs and characteristics of each age group.

**Table 2: Education Level**

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage
Undergraduates	22	29.3
Graduates	27	36.0
Postgraduates	26	34.7
Total	75	100

**Source:** Field Survey

The distribution of respondents by education level shows a diverse educational background within the sample. Graduates represent the largest group, comprising 36.0% with 27 respondents, indicating a significant portion of the sample has completed a bachelor's degree. Postgraduates

follow closely with 34.7%, totaling 26 respondents, reflecting a substantial number of individuals with advanced degrees. Undergraduates make up 29.3% of the sample, with 22 respondents, which is slightly lower compared to the other education levels. This distribution suggests a well-rounded sample with a mix of educational attainments, which is important for understanding how educational background might influence political awareness and participation among young voters.

**Table 3: Political Awareness Levels Among Young Voters**

Awareness Aspect	Frequency	Percentage
Awareness of Election Dates	64	85
Knowledge of Candidates	52	70
Understanding of Voting Procedures	49	65
Familiarity with Political Parties	45	60

**Source:** Field Survey

The data on political awareness among young voters indicates a high level of engagement in certain areas, with 85% of respondents (64 individuals) being aware of election dates, suggesting that a majority are informed about when elections are held. Knowledge of candidates is also relatively high, with 70% of respondents (52 individuals) demonstrating familiarity with the individuals running for office. However, there is a slight decline in understanding voting procedures, with 65% of respondents (49 individuals) having a clear comprehension of the process. Familiarity with political parties is lower, though still significant, with 60% of respondents (45 individuals) aware of the different political parties involved. This indicates that while young voters are generally aware of key aspects of elections, there is room for improvement in areas such as understanding voting procedures and party platforms.

**Table 4: Factors Influencing Voting Decisions**

Factor	Frequency	Percentage
Importance of Political Issues	45	60
Influence of Family and Friends	37	50
Media and Social Media Influence	49	65

Campaign Effectiveness	41	55
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**Source:** Field Survey

The data reveals that various factors play significant roles in shaping young voters' decisions. Media and social media have the greatest influence, affecting 65% of respondents (49 individuals), indicating that digital platforms are crucial in shaping political views among young voters. The importance of political issues is the next most influential factor, impacting 60% of respondents (45 individuals), suggesting that issue-based voting is also significant. Campaign effectiveness influences 55% of respondents (41 individuals), reflecting the role of strategic campaign outreach in voter decision-making. Additionally, 50% of respondents (37 individuals) are influenced by family and friends, showing that personal networks still hold considerable sway in voting behavior.

**Table 5: Motivations for Participating in the 2024 Elections**

Motivation	Frequency	Percentage
Desire to Impact Policy	34	45
Civic Duty	26	35
Support for a Specific Candidate	11	15
Opposition to a Candidate	4	5
Total	75	100

**Source:** Field Survey

The data on motivations for participating in the 2024 elections indicates that the most common reason among young voters is the desire to impact policy, with 45% of respondents (34 individuals) citing this as their primary motivation. This reflects a strong interest in influencing governmental decisions and policies. Civic duty is the second most common motivation, driving 35% of respondents (26 individuals), which shows a sense of responsibility toward democratic participation. Support for a specific candidate motivates 15% of respondents (11 individuals), highlighting candidate loyalty as a factor for some voters. Opposition to a candidate is the least common reason, cited by only 5% of respondents (4 individuals), indicating that negative voting is less prevalent among the group.

**Table 6: Frequency of Social Media Usage**

Social Media Plat-form	Frequency	Percentage	Average Daily Time Spent (Hours)
Facebook	45	60	1.5
Twitter	30	40	1.0
Instagram	41	55	2.0
LinkedIn	15	20	0.5

**Source:** Field Survey

The data on social media usage shows that Facebook is the most frequently used platform, with 60% of respondents (45 individuals) engaging with it and an average daily usage of 1.5 hours. Instagram follows closely, used by 55% of respondents (41 individuals) with the highest average daily time spent at 2.0 hours, indicating that it is a highly engaging platform among young voters. Twitter is used by 40% of respondents (30 individuals) with an average daily usage of 1.0 hour, while LinkedIn has the lowest usage, with only 20% of respondents (15 individuals) spending an average of 0.5 hours per day. These usage patterns highlight the importance of Facebook and Instagram in reaching young voters through social media, particularly for longer engagement.

**Table 7: Impact of Social Media on Political Views**

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Social media influences my political opinions	30 (40%)	22 (30%)	15 (20%)	4 (5%)	4 (5%)
I often dis-cuss politics on social me-dia	26 (35%)	19 (25%)	19 (25%)	8 (10%)	3 (5%)

**Source:** Field Survey

The data indicates that social media has a considerable influence on the political opinions of young voters. A total of 40% of respondents (30 individuals) strongly agree that social media influences their political views, with another 30% (22 individuals) agreeing to the statement, showing that 70% of respondents perceive social media as shaping their political opinions. Meanwhile, 20% of respondents (15 individuals) remain neutral, and only 10% (8 individuals) either disagree or strongly disagree, reflecting minimal resistance to this idea. Regarding political discussions

on social media, 35% (26 individuals) strongly agree that they frequently engage in political discussions, while 25% (19 individuals) agree. An equal 25% (19 individuals) are neutral, indicating that some may be hesitant or less inclined to discuss politics online. Only a small portion, 15% (11 individuals), either disagree or strongly disagree, indicating that a majority of respondents use social media as a platform for political discourse.

### Testing of Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: Higher political awareness is positively correlated with increased voting participation among young voters.

**Table 8:** Chi-Square Test

Particulars	N	df	X <sup>2</sup>	Sig	Results
Relationship Between Political Awareness and Voting Participation	75	2	29.46	0.00001	Significant association between higher political awareness and increased voting participation among young voters.

The Chi-Square Test results reveal a significant association between higher political awareness and increased voting participation among young voters. With a Chi-Square value of 29.46 and a p-value of 0.00001, which is well below the conventional significance level of 0.05, the data strongly supports the hypothesis. This indicates that higher levels of political awareness are indeed positively correlated with a greater likelihood of participating in voting. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which posited no association between political awareness and voting participation, is rejected. The results affirm that increasing political awareness among young voters is likely to enhance their participation in elections.

**Hypothesis 2:** Social media has a significant impact on shaping young voters' political opinions and discussions.

**Table 9:** ANOVA

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares (SS)	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Mean Square (MS)	F-Statistic	P-Value
Between Groups	45.00	3	15.00	5.00	0.005
Within Groups	150.00	71	2.11		
Total	195.00	74			

The ANOVA results for Hypothesis 2, which examines the impact of social media on shaping young voters' political opinions and discussions, indicate a significant effect. The analysis reveals a Sum of Squares of 45.00 between groups and a Mean Square of 15.00, reflecting variability in political opinions and discussions due to differences in social media usage. The F-Statistic of 5.00, coupled with a p-value of 0.005, which is below the significance level of 0.05, confirms that social media has a substantial impact. Consequently, the null hypothesis, which suggested no impact of social media, is rejected. This outcome supports the hypothesis that social media significantly influences young voters' political opinions and discussions, underlining its critical role in shaping political engagement among this demographic.

### **Conclusion**

This study emphasizes the profound impact of social media on young voters' political engagement and opinions. The data analysis reveals a significant correlation between higher political awareness and increased voting participation, affirming that greater awareness often leads to more active electoral involvement. Additionally, the ANOVA results confirm that social media significantly shapes young voters' political opinions and discussions, highlighting its influential role in modern political dynamics. Social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn, serve as crucial tools for political information dissemination and engagement. They facilitate access to diverse viewpoints, contribute to political discourse, and influence voter attitudes and behaviors. Given these findings, it is evident that social media not only enhances political awareness but also plays a key role in shaping and reinforcing political opinions among young voters. These insights suggest that leveraging social media effectively can enhance political engagement and informed participation. Consequently, strategies aimed at utilizing social media for political education and voter mobilization could significantly impact young voters' involvement in the political process. Future research should continue to explore the evolving relationship between digital platforms and political participation to adapt and refine engagement strategies in the digital age.

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