ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN ACTIVATION OF YOUTH IN POLITICS: A CASE STUDY OF DISTRICT KHANEWAL

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ABSTRACT- *The objective of this research paper is to analyze the role of social media in activation of youth in politics. For this purpose, we collected data from 250 students and teachers randomly from of three Colleges of District Khanewal. SPSS software was used for analysis of data. According to results 58.5 percent respondents stated that social media plays an effective role in politics while 41.20 percent respondents denied about any role of social media in politics. Chi square results (value 2.313) also show the effectiveness of social media in activation of youth in politics. We suggest that the youth should enhance their education, awareness and skill to play its effective role in politics because they are future leaders.*

Key Words: *Social Media, youth, political awareness, education level, job status.*

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1. I. INTRODUCTION:

Social media is a very popular way of communication and information in young generation of Pakistan. Social media is used to remain interconnect with each other. Facebook, Twitter & WhatsApp are commonly used to share the ideas, upload videos and to comment their views freely on any issue of society. Presently Social media became a staple need for successful politics. Now a day's political parties are running their own media cells to launch their campaigns on social media to aware the people about their party agendas, manifesto and they use many tactics to convince the people in their favor because it is a quick way of feedback. Presently young generation is more interested in politics and politically active than earlier due to the social media. Social media gave them sense and power of decision to voting and people are getting influence by other social media users. Because everything is open in front of everyone, especially on Twitter and Facebook. Young generation is enhancing the span of thinking due to involvement in social media. In this research we will know that either social media is a cause of activation of youth in politics or not. Today the concept and the role of media in politics are too different than a decade ago. Thirteen years ago before starting of Facebook there were mainly two media Electronic and Print, both were mainly used in political campaigns but with the inception of social media a lot of new trends and revolution has been took place in the society. Social media changed the concept of political campaigns. Social media plays the main role to update the youth about agendas of political parties and current scenario of local, National, and International politics. A number of different studies have been carried out on this issue in different parts of the World and in such areas of Pakistan. Our present study examined the use of social web with different aspects to gain the solid results.

According to Martin (2011) Pakistanis are active users of Twitter and Facebook in the world. Calculation of Facebook users is double as compare to our

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neighbor country. More than 4 million users of Facebook are in this country and 20 million users become active daily on social networks, which is quadruplicate than the whole population of Singapore country. As per Karamat & Farooq (2016) social media is a podium for young generation to be a part of current political situation or to be political supporter through this media. It is a way to share the information and express their political thoughts. It keeps aware, that is going on all around the World.

1.1. Types of Social Media:

Social media is an internet based media that enable the people to share information, data, pictures, videos and other expressions by social media applications (Kietzman et al, 2011). Social media applications are used to interact with other users through online internet service. Users can create their profiles, upload their pictures, videos, data and to make online friends (Obar et al, 2015). Social media is an online platform to share the information in groups and individuals. Even user can comment and share the other's shared information. It creates links with other profiles. (Boyd et al, 2007).

1.1.2 Facebook:

Facebook is a renowned application which allows authorized users to make their profiles, upload information like pictures, videos, text messages and to remain in contact with friends and family members. It has lot of different functions. It is source to share posts and even upload classified ads to sell and purchase items. It allows members to make contact, interact with each other, to advertise an event, to invite someone and to create and promote a public page. It is also commonly used for online chat and text messages.

1.1.3Twitter:

Twitter is an American based online social media application on which users upload their pictures and interact with other fellows via written messages that is known as tweet. Twitter is mostly used by celebrities like actors, sports stars and

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politicians to remain in circle of their fans. Initially Tweets were not allowed more than140 characters, but on November 7, 2017, this value was doubled for all languages except Korean, Japanese and Chinese. Authorized users can post tweets, but those who are not registered can only read. Twitter is mostly considered secure than other social media applications ("Tweeting Made Easier" Retrieved November 7, 2017).

1.1.4 WhatsApp:

WhatsApp Messenger is free online messaging and voice messaging service owned by Facebook (Metz & Cade, 2016).The application runs from a mobile device though it can also be used from desktop computers. This service requires users to provide a standard registered SIM number. Actually users can only communicate with other users in groups or individually ("Building for People and Now Businesses".WhatsApp.com).

1.1 Statement of the Problem:

Social media like Facebook, Twitter & WhatsApp is excessively being used by young generation. Youth is mostly spending their time on social media to remain in touch and to share the information with each other. Social media is raising awareness among people regarding every issue even it is social or political. Especially, this media transformed the politics & it is excessively used for political campaigns. It is a way to get advantageous information. The abovementioned problem statement denotes the base of this study. To what extent does the use of this media in Politics to activate the youth for their right decision to voting? Our main research problem is 'Role of social media in activation youth in politics'.

1.2 Objectives of the study:

The objectives are stated as under: -.

(i). To determine the social media's role in activation of young generation in politics.

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(ii). To explore whether, the level of education does have an impact on youth political participation in politics.

(iii). To investigate whether, the job status of social media users has an influence on youth's political engagement.

1.3 Research Questions:

(a). Does social media play an effective role in activation of youth in their activation in politics?

(b). Does level of education play an effective role in youth participation in politics?

©. Does job status of users play any role in youth's engagement in politics?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Facebook is playing a prime role in elevation of political participation by sharing opinions, suggestions and ideas on any matter related to politics. Argumentation and sharing of ideas and criticism on any political issue denotes the interest of youth in politics. Facebook provides a suitable atmosphere for self-expression. Facebook is presently advanced growing social network with option of group discussion as it provides reality based atmosphere of group discussion for youth. Study discovered the significant correlation between sharing of political opinions on Facebook in diverse ways and its role in motivation of young generation for politics. As per study people were mobilized and activated for political participation in general Election 2013 (Masiha et al.,2018).

With the recent advancement in the features of social media applications have made it more convenient for users. Social media has changed the modes of involvement and contribution of public in politics. Users are more interested in politics now. Because social media has provided an opportunity to keep the users aware with political matters and updates. Users are well aware from the challenges of political field. Many different studies revealed the positive and effective role of social media for awareness and engagement of users in politics. It increased the

interest and diverts the attentions of society towards political matters. It is necessary to discuss that the above mentioned opinions are may be correct but these platforms may be used both in constructive and an unconstructive way due to thinking, ideas & mentality level of users (Molaei, 2017).

Modi used twitter to access directly youth and voters first time in election campaign. In August 2012, when he was endorsed by the Bollywood star Ajay Devgan, then he decided to follow the different celebrity accounts, including megastars Amitabh Bachan and Rajni Kanth. Modi created affiliation with these celebrities by the use of twitter and his tweets were severely retweeted among his millions of followers. He constantly tweeted on youth's subject matters and interests to attract them. He also tweeted about Indian Cricket team captain Dhoni, as "Captain cool," and shows his affiliation with cricket to grab the cricket fans. Modi during his political campaign constantly released different hash tags purposing nationalistic appeal and development of the country (Pal et al., 2016).

According to Karamat & Farooq, (2016) social media is a podium for young generation to be a part of current political situation or to be political supporter through this media. It is a way to share the information and express their political thoughts. It aware what is going on all around in the world in the field of politics.

Khan & Shahbaz, (2015) stated that in a present era social media applications are being commonly used by the political parties for the promotion of their party agenda & to attract the youth. Social media is an easy way to remain in touch with political affairs without any physical moment. Due to the adoption of new technology a lot of new trends have been introduced in politics which changed the overall strategy of political campaigns. This community based media is much popular in the whole world and it is considered as a vital mean of communication & political campaigns.

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Youth is an asset of any country which can put their positive efforts in the progress of their country (Naz, et al., 2014). Youth's political participation is necessary for progress of democracy. Media plays an important role to engage the youth in political activities. After analyses of data the researcher resulted that mostly people like to watch News channels and spend their mostly time in watching talk shows. Because it plays a significant role in creating awareness, entertain as well as educate the youth.

Ali et al., (2013) either utilization of media stimulates the political Awareness or not? One other important thing is to know the correlation between media, political data and political Awareness. As per finding of this study, T.V is popular source of information and awareness among people. Political talk shows are well liked by the users. This study concluded that people depend on media to get information and media mould the public opinion by setting its own agenda.

Social media enabled the users to contact with each other individually or in shape of groups. User's approach towards the social media sites is impossible without internet. Users can access to the social media by using their computers, laptops or smart phones and they can download any type of information, videos or document as same they can upload or share any type of information with each other which they want. Social media is extremely useful platform by which organizations, groups and individuals can share their opinions & content. They can bring pervasive changes to communication among organization, groups and individuals (Kietzmann et al., 2011).

Hamilton, (2011) argued that, networking media has revolutionized the conception of elderly media. Presently Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp are being used by our society as a tool of communication. Above mentioned media has changed the political operations in the whole world. In USA in election year it's use increased by political parties and political members to activate their agents. A research was done to recognize the impacts of social networking applications on

the political activities of youth. Study concluded that abovementioned media has huge impacts on young voters.

Diana et al., (2011) investigated that social media introduced the new trends, which improves the patterns of political campaigns. Social media involvement increased intensely in 2008 presidential election of USA. It created the awareness among USA's population in this election. Social sites performed a significant role in Obama's victory as a president in 2008 USA elections.

Lewis, (2010) found that community who are the users of the interactive media they are not only the ordinary users but they also producing some piece of information. YouTube, Facebook & Twitter provide an opportunity to disseminate and pass the information everywhere in the country and the World.

Medvic, (2011) divided current media into three development stages. The 1st stage started in early 1990s, it was prominent for the entertainment media structure & mature communication tools in the political field. 2nd phase began in the mid 1990's, new inventions like internet and e-mail concept provided a new platform for politics. Last phase permits a higher level of interactivity among each other due to the social media application like Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp etc. In 2nd stage users could only give remarks on journalist's online articles but in recent phase people can produce their own data by using it.

According to Okorie & Tunji,(2011) study that, the young community use interactive media regularly in an   active way. One half of the young generation between the ages of 12 to 17 years logs on social media on daily basis. One fourth logs on a lot of time in a day and rest of log on at least once in a day and some log on it mostly 5 days in a week. A study revealed that modern media advances and speed up the democratization techniques and involve in scuffle the people against the Authoritarian governments (Aday et al., 2010).

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Mizzera & Sial, (2010) say that currently Pakistani media is the under control of corporate and business community which use media for their own interests and change the realities to protect their business and their political goals. Even these owners are no longer media persons themselves.

Mc Comb & Shaw, (1972) indicated that media creates an approach among people about which issue is much important. Media consistently focus on any issue to mould the public opinion in its favor or against. Media set their own agendas to change the public opinion. Mass media is an image of the whole society and the media of any country is a representative of that country. The study proved that the media plays an important role in formation of mind and to influence the society.

The United States Institute of Peace, (2011) said in its report that, News media is helping the people in their voting decision. Media empowers the common people in their voting decision and to enhance their awareness level. Media urged them to participate in politics and realize them power of their vote. A lot of different techniques are being used by media to influence them by uploading of pictures or videos on Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp etc.

According to the latest studies there are two types of political participation: Offline & online participation. In Online participation a user interacts with other users by getting information, searching the web pages, joining an online political group and sharing his/her ideas & opinions. Due to the cost required these two types should be judged separately. By considering the cost-effective feature of online political types, people who normally could not participate in political activities due to the cost issues, may participate in politics over the internet by sending emails to politicians and public officials (Jung et al., 2011).

Richey, (2008) described the effects of social media sites on political acquaintance & on voting decision in the USA National Presidential election of

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year 2008. Data gathered by using the autoregressive theory and NES data from the size of 2000 sample. He resulted that social networking sites affects the voting decisions because one network member influence the other members which cause of change in social behavior.

Owen, (2008) described that the new technology revolutionized the media also. Due to adoption of social media our youth has become advanced now. New trends have been introduced in the field of politics. Total shape of political campaigns has been changed due to the keen interest of users. It has made visible every political event to its users. Social media is exploring everything in front of everyone. Facebook is an outstanding forum for political purpose. Everything can be shared on it like pictures, videos and audio. People can share it, comment on it and freely express their feelings and ideas. This shared information influences the other users and encouraged them to participate in political programs. Presently social media is a necessary tool for successful politics.

Sanson, (2008) argued that online tools like Facebook is commonly used by the young generation and resulted that "Facebook has the power to activate the users. It is an easy way of broadcasting of messages in seconds. It is performing a big role in politics. Politicians observe the whole situation and participate in dialogue with young generation that was not possible before it. It is concluded that people are more politically active by the use of Facebook & Twitter. Online media is an easy and fast way of sending, sharing and getting information across the world.

2.1 Distinction of this study:

It is the first study on above mentioned topic in District Khanewal. It is a specific study relevant to above mentioned area which provided a chance to know the level of interest of young community in political affairs, and how much people are interested in political activities due to engagement in social media. This study

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has clarified the relationship between social media & activation of youth in politics. We also correlated the social media role with the level of education and job status of users to determine the effects of social media on users. We chose Facebook, twitter, WhatsApp as social media applications in our research work to get our required data. This study provided us information about, which social media application is mostly used and which is considered as a credible source of news updates. This study is a source of information for policy makers and political groups, how to use this mode of media in right direction to achieve the goals.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Basically this research is a quantitative in nature and well-structured questionnaire has been used for data collection.

3.1 Population:

Universe for this research is Khanewal and population of this study is 250 students, 196 male and 54 female students from 18-25 years of age group and from different level of education. The researcher selected different colleges of district Khanewal those were one from private sector and two from Govt. sector, where the sample of different intellectual level was taken. Researcher took sample from Govt. Post Graduate College Khanewal, Govt. College for Women and Punjab College. 250 respondents were selected for data collection.

3.2 Sampling:

250 students and teachers were selected (196 males and 54 females) through random sampling technique from Govt. Post Graduate college of Khanewal for boys, Government College for Women Khanewal and Punjab collage both for boys and girls.

3.3 Type of Data:

Primary data was used in this study. Well-structured Questionnaire used as a tool of research for data collection.

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3.4 Selected variables:

The following were selected variables of the study:-.

i. Dependent variable:

Political Awareness is a dependent variable because it varies according to change in independent variable's values.

ii. Independent variables:

● Social media ●Level of education ●job Status.

3.4 Hypothesis of Study:

We have developed the following hypothesis:

H^0: Social media plays an effective role in activation of youth in politics

H^1: Social media does not play an effective role in activation of youth in politics

H^0: Education level of social media users have a great influence on participation of youth in politics.

H^1: Education level of users does not have a great influence on participation of youth in politics.

H^0: Job status of social media users have a great impact on participation of youth in politics.

H^1: Job status of users does not have an impact on participation of youth in politics.

3.5 Analytical techniques:

Likert scale and Chi squares were used to draw the results.

4. DATA ANALYSIS:

Data analyses have been done through SPSS software. Data analyses have been showed in the following figure.

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Table 1: Socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents (n=250)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Age Group			Gender		
18-21 Years	99	39.6	Male	196	78.4
22-25 Years	151	60.4	Female	54	21.6

Results show that 39.6% respondents fall in the age group of 18-21 years and 60.4% respondents fall in the age group of 22-25 years. 78.4% respondents are male and 21.6% are female.

Table 2: Family type of respondents (n=250)

Family Type		
Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Nuclear	156	62.4
Joint	75	30.0
Extended	19	7.6

As per results 62.4% respondents belong to nuclear family, 30% joint and 7.6% belong to extended family system.

Table 3: Job status of respondents (n=250)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Unemployed	13	5.2
Employed	46	18.4
Student	141	56.4
Own Business	50	20.0

According to statistical data 5.2% respondents are unemployed, 18.4% employed, 56.4% are students only and 20% respondents have their own business setup.

Table 4: Education level of respondents (n=250)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Education level of respondents		
Matriculate	19	7.6
F. Sc	42	16.8
Graduate	129	51.6
Masters	53	21.2
M. Phil	7	2.8

This study revealed that, 7.6% respondent's education level is Matriculate, 16.8% are the students of F. Sc and 51.6% respondent's level is Graduate. 21.2% are the students of Masters and 2.8% respondent's level is M. Phil.

Table 5: Time spending on different social media applications (n=250)

Variable	Frequency	%	Variable	Frequency	%	Variable	Frequency	%
Time spending on face book in a day			Time spending on WhatsApp in a day			Time spending on twitter in a day		
< 30 minutes	10	4.0	< 30 minutes	11	4.4	< 30 minutes	8	3.2
31 minutes – 1 hour	20	8.0	31 minutes – 1 hour	17	6.8	31 minutes – 1 hour	15	6.0
1 – 02 hours	33	13.2	1-2 hours	30	12.0	1 – 2 hours	36	14.4
3- 4 hours	69	27.6	3-4 hours	55	22.0	3-4 hours	51	20.4
5-7 hours	64	25.6	5-7 hours	63	25.2	5-7 hours	71	28.4
> 7 hours	54	21.6	>7 hours	74	29.6	> 7 hours	69	27.6

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As per results, respondents who spend their time < 30 minutes on Facebook are 4.00%, 31minutes-1 hour are 8.0%, 1-2 hours are 13.20%, 3-4 hours are 27.60%, 5-7 hours are 25.60% & >7hours are 21.60% and the respondents who spend their time < 30 minutes on WhatsApp are 4.40%, 31minutes-1 hour are 6.80%, 1-2 hours are 12.00%, 3-4 hours are 22.00%, 5-7 hours are 25.20% & >7hours are 29.60%. The respondents who spend their time < 30 minutes on Twitter are 3.20%, 31minutes-1 hour are 6.0%, 1-2 hours are 14.40%, 3-4 hours are 20.40%, 5-7 hours are 28.40% & >7hours are 27.60%.

Table 6 Social media plays an effective role in politics (n=250)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	147	58.80
No	103	41.20

This study revealed that, 58.80% respondents responded that social media plays an effective role in politics and 41.20% respondents replied that social media does not play an effective role in politics.

Table 7: Role of qualification in politics

Variable	Frequency	%	Variable	Frequency	%
I considered myself, sound qualified for participation in politics.			I think that, I'm much aware of politics and govt. than most of the people.		
Strongly Agree	76	30.4	Strongly Agree	101	40.40
Agree	69	27.6	Agree	54	21.60
Neutral	75	30.0	Neutral	40	16.00
Strongly Disagree	10	4.0	Strongly Disagree	33	13.20
Disagree	20	8.0	Disagree	22	8.80

The data in the table shows that30.40% respondents are strongly agreed to considered themselves sound qualified for participation in politics, 27.60% are agree, 30.00% are neutral, 4.00% are strongly disagree & 8.00% are disagree and 40.40% respondents strongly agree with that they are much awared of politics and govt. than majority of the people. 21.60% respondents are agreed with it. 16.00% are neutral, 13.20% are strongly disagreed & 8.80% are disagreed with above mentioned statement.

4.1 Hypothesis Testing:

Hypothesis 1:

H^0: Social media plays an effective role in activation of youth in politic

H^1: Social Media does not play an effective role in activation of youth in politics

Table 8: Active participation in politics due to effect of social media

Do you actively participate in politics through social media	Social media plays an effective role in politics		
	Yes	No	Total
Yes	83	68	151
No	64	35	99
Total	147	103	250

Chi square Value (X^2): 2.313   Degree of freedom (df): 1   Significance level: .129

Chi square test was used for the both variables. The result shows that chi square value is 2.313which is higher than given table value at degree of freedom 1, with significance level of .129. Therefore, null hypothesis "Social media plays an effective role in activation of youth in politics" is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

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Hypothesis 2:

H^0: Education level of social media users have a great influence on participation of youth in politics.

H^1: Education level of social media users does not have an influence on participation of youth in politics.

Table 9: Effective role of social media in politics

Level of education	Social media plays an effective role in politics		
	Yes	No	Total
Matriculate	1	18	19
F. Sc	14	28	42
Graduate	91	38	129
Masters	35	18	53
M. Phil	6	1	7
Total	147	103	250

Chi square Value (X^2): 44.305. Degree of freedom (df): 4. Significance level:.000. The value of chi square is 44.305 which higher than its table value at degree of freedom 4 with level of significance .000. Therefore, the null hypothesis "Education level of social media users have a great influence on participation of youth in politics" is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 3:

H^0: Job status of social media users have a great impact on participation of youth in politics.

H^1: Job status of social media users does not have an impact on participation of youth in politics.

Table 10: View of different class about the role of social media in politics

Job Status	Social media plays an effective role in politics		
	Yes	No	Total
Unemployed	7	6	13
Employed	22	24	46
Student	83	58	141
Own Business	30	20	50
Total	142	108	250

 Chi square Value (X^2): 2. 010.Degree of freedom (df): 3 Significance level: .570
The value of chi square is 2.010 which is lower than its table value at degree of
freedom 3 with level of significance .570. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis
"Job status of social media users does not have an impact on participation of youth
in politics." is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected.

5. FINDINGS AND RESULTS:

It is resulted that social media have a great impact on young generation's
participation in politics. Social media urged them to participate and play role in
politics. It plays an effective role in involvement of youth in politics. It has
increased the awareness level among youth and diverts the attention of youth
toward political activities. It has activated the youth for participation in politics.
Emerging trends of latest social media applications has changed the strategies of
political campaigns. Social media is imparting such information which draws the
attention of users towards social and political matters. Most of the users consider
that the social media is a credible and most important source of information
because information is available everywhere even in traveling, in offices or at
home. Social media has pushed the youth to discuss regarding social and political

issues and for their possible solutions. Students who spend more time on social media they more share the photos, video links about political parties and they are much active and aware about politics. Students, their education level is high they have great influence in political participation because they are more aware with latest modern technologies, so they can evaluate the political leaders with different angles on the basis of information. Majority of the respondents considered that they are more updated regarding political matters and government issues than most of the people. Majority of the respondents think that they are more capable to contribute in politics. It is a notable responsibility of the social media because think and to understand regarding any matter is the first phase towards its solution. It has become a best place for the people to share and explain their thoughts & ideas. But on the other hand job status of any respondents has no such impacts in activation of young generation in politics that depends on their level of education and their engagement in political matters.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS:

We would like to make the following recommendations on the basis of our findings and conclusion: -

► Youth should participate in the politics to introduce the new trends and directions for more and more achievement for the country because youth is considered an invaluable asset of any country who can change the destiny of any nation.

► Youth should use social media for the right purpose not only to criticize someone's personal issues. We should criticize but for the gentle and constructive purpose.

► Youth should focus on their education, they should increase their level of education has direct relation with political activities. Social media makes us able to think and change the attrited patterns of politics.

► Youth should put their efforts to change these patterns because think and understand about any issue is the first phase towards its solution. Government also should take some steps to keep the media in control to avoid from its hazards in future due to the unnecessary and unauthentic available data on social sites.

► Users of social media should also avoid from uploading the unauthentic information and should avoid from character assassination of any person on basis of incredible news sources. They should also avoid from sharing immoral and tempered data of politicians and their private matters.

7. LIMITATIONS OF STUDY:

● It was very difficult task to convince the students to fill the questionnaire.

● Mostly female students were reluctant & hesitant to give the information about their political activities and demographic data so female respondents are less in numbers.

● It is limited to Facebook, Twitter & WhatsApp. There are also some other platforms of social media.

● Expected limitation is that respondents might unsuccessful to give the correct information because they belong to local and small city of Pakistan and they were scared about why this personal information is extracting from them.

● This study is purely for academic purpose. To complete the study in given time frame and to make the expenditures convenient we kept the sample size in normal range.

8. FUTURE DIRECTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH:

Further research need to be conducted in terms of day by day changes in technology. The new trends of communication are being introduced so there is a need of more research work in this field of study to evaluate the new trends techniques in political field. Results of this study declared, there is a connection between social media and youth's activation in politics. This will indicate that the

engagement of people groups in term of race might be diverse to those of others. It will therefore be indispensable to target the different population groups with different techniques. This research has been conducted in a specific area of Pakistan where literacy rate of people is high and communication facilities are easily available therefore this type of study should be conducted in other less developed areas. This study is confined to three social media applications like Facebook, Twitter, and whatsApp, therefore in future further studies should be conducted with other social media applications.

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CONTRIBUTION OF AUTHORS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST

This research work was carried between collaboration of two authors.

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