

# Quick Survey to study the “Impact of Social Media on youth” during the ensuing Indian General Elections 2009

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Prime Point Foundation ([www.prpoint.com](http://www.prpoint.com)) is a non-profit public trust promoting communication awareness. As part of the awareness programme, the Foundation announced an on-line survey to study the impact of ‘social media’ on youth during the General Elections 2009.
- 1.2 An online-questionnaire was prepared and the link was circulated through various groups on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2009. The survey was closed on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2009, as already announced. The respondents were asked to give their views without identity.

## 2 Sample size

- 2.1 218 persons responded. Based on the ip address, the duplicate entries were eliminated. 203 responses were found eligible for study. 51 Female (25%) and 152 Male (75%) have registered their views anonymously.
- 2.2 Out of this 203 respondents, 147 (72%) were of less than 35 age group; 49 (24%) were in the age group of 35 to 60; 7 (3%) respondents were above 60.
- 2.3 Out of the 203 respondents, 40 (20%) were first time voters. It is also said that 15 to 20 % of the total voters in India are the first time voters. Interestingly, our sample size also reflects the similar position.
- 2.4 Since we were watching the pattern from the sample size of 100, this sample size is sufficient to understand the perception more broadly.

## 3 Impact of Mobile phones

- 3.1 The respondents were asked to give their views whether the campaigns and messages through mobile phones will have an impact on the young voters.
- 3.2 117 respondents (58%) feel that campaigns through mobile phones will have an impact. This trend is seen in the age groups of (a) less than 35 and (b) 35 to 60 also uniformly.

## **4 Impact of Social Media**

- 4.1 The respondents were asked to give their perception as to whether social media like blogs, social networks like face book, orkut, etc. will have any impact on the youngsters.
- 4.2 28% of the respondents feel that social media will have heavy impact, while 49% feel moderate impact. 22% feel that social media may not have any significant impact. The same pattern is seen in the age groups (a) less than 35 and (b) 35 to 60 also.

## **5 Party preference**

- 5.1 The respondents were asked to specify to which political party they would vote. The choices given were (a) Congress alliance, (b) BJP alliance, (c) Third Front, (d) Not yet decided and (b) I would not vote. We had earlier advised only the eligible Indian voters to take the survey.
- 5.2 We were following the trends and patterns closely at different levels. We found neck to neck preference for Congress and BJP from the respondents, with the difference of one or two percentage points only. Both Congress and BJP are preferred by 22 to 24%. Around 6 to 8% prefer Third Front.
- 5.3 Significantly 35 to 37% of the respondents have not yet decided their preference. 43% youngsters in the age group of less than 35 and 20% of 35-60 age group have not yet decided their preference.
- 5.4 Around 12% have indicated that they would not vote.

## **6 Conclusion**

- 6.1 Out of around 700 million voters in India, Internet users are only around 10%. Out of this, social media users will be significant. Many of the opinion makers, young journalists are using social media. Though social media will not have any direct impact on the masses, the messages are likely to reach the masses through mainline media. During the General Elections 2009, social media will have 'moderate impact' to influence the young social media users.
- 6.2 Since India has a mobile population of more than 350 million, the campaign through mobile phones also will be having significant impact.

- 6.3 Presently, both BJP and Congress are equally preferred by the internet users (22 to 24%). Significantly large section of youngsters (43%) has not yet decided their preference.
- 6.4 When compared to the total electorate in India, the voters using internet and social media may be small. But this population has the capacity to influence the other general population through mass media and word of mouth, mobile phones.
- 6.5 The information given above are only broad indicators as at the end of Feb 09 and they cannot be considered as absolute.
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