Social Media as a Platform for the Promotion of Civic Engagement

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Abstract: This is a cross sectional study determining the usage of social media by volunteers. The focus of the research is to define the role of social media in promoting civic engagement. For the purpose of the research, sample of 300 volunteers was selected from the Tricity; Chandigarh, Panchkula and Mohali. SPSS is used for statistical analysis of the raw data. The research starts with determining the 'purpose' of internet usage in respect of civic engagement and in 'general'. Non- parametric chi- square revealed that majority of volunteers use internet for 'communication' in respect of civic engagement. When it comes to the 'general' usage of internet most of the respondents are using it again for 'communication'. It was hypothesized that 'purpose' of internet usage is associated with the 'adoption of social media for civic engagement'. Disproving this hypothesis, chi-square notifies that there is no association between purpose of internet usage and adoption of social media for civic engagement. Respondents were also asked to mention the most used social media tool for civic engagement. Data shows that out of 300 respondents, 213 are using 'social networking sites' for civic engagement. Therefore, the purpose to use various social media tools for seven different civic activities was determined. Results revealed that for every civic activity volunteers are using 'social networking sites'. At the end, respondents were asked to rate the different features of social media those have promoted as well as deterred their civic engagement. Friedman test proved that 'ease of using' social media has initiated volunteers to use it for civic engagement. Whereas 'anonymity of identity' on social media has discouraged volunteers most to use this medium for civic engagement. The current study found that majority of volunteers are not using social media for civic engagement because of their 'lack of knowledge' to deal with new technology. Results of the current study are provided with supportive and contradicting review of literature.

Keywords: Volunteers, Civic Engagement and Social Media

INTRODUCTION

The current study concentrates to determine the role of social media in promoting civic engagement viz. volunteerism. **Reference 1** defined civic engagement the ways in which citizens participate in the life of a

community in order to improve conditions for others or to help shape the community's future. The present study focused on the volunteers specifically because they play a major role in the development of the society. The decision of Indian Planning Commission in their twelfth five year plan (2012- 2017) to collaborate with volunteers in almost every project proves that Government of India need volunteers to complete their projects. Indian Planning Commission has included volunteers as partners in projects related to 'economic sector, social sector and sustainable growth' such as seed production projects, programmes of provision of rental/ social housing stock for the migrant population, linking science and technology with society, launching clean India campaign, youth development activities such as vocational training, entrepreneurship development, counselling and career guidance, animal welfare, agriculture, education, collecting recyclable material, health services, etc.

On January, 2015 Planning Commission of India was replaced by NITI Aayog. NITI Aayog also issued a Social Sector Service Delivery Good Practices Resource Book in 2015. In this book NITI Aayog has discussed various projects in which it seeks the help of volunteers. This book was even prepared with the help of an NGO named 'One World Foundation India (OWFI). It is a New Delhi based NGO and its team helped Planning Commission and UNDP to prepare this report. NITI Aayog has also installed a different portal for NGOs for the transparency of utilization of funds granted to NGOs. Aayog has also issued separate guidelines for NGOs which says that NGOs must sign up for the NGO- Partnership (NGO- PS) portal of NITI Aayog and declare all details related to their organization. This clarifies that Government want every NGO and volunteers to stay connected to the Government as well as general public through internet.

So, many things have changed after the invention of internet. Before the emergence of social media the scene was that to collect support and donations volunteers had to go door to door and gather the support such as Mahatma Gandhi did during Salt March in 1930s. Now social media has made it easier because one needs to sit in front of computer and press few buttons to start a civic campaign. Zapatista movement in Mexico (1998) witnessed the significance of new technology because volunteers used email to plan and organize this movement. This was the first movement in which activists used internet and they fought for democracy by using email, faxes and other telecommunication systems and converted their protest into a 'netwar'. This movement happened many years ago and with the passage of time many social media tools have been invented such as social networking sites, video and photo sharing sites, etc. Volunteers have used these tools to plan, organize and coordinate collective actions. In this way social media has converted users into activists.

Literature has also revealed that social media and civic movements are so connected to each other that the absence of one leaves other meaningless. **Reference 2** while discussing the importance of social media said, "the role that social media played in the Egyptian uprising is striking. Social media brought to the Egyptian people a sense of self- empowerment- through the capacity to speak and assemble- that was previously not there. Recently, social media had a similar impact in Tunisia, Libya, and Iran. This moment in history serves as a prompt to think critically and broadly about the role that social media can and should play in developing nations (p.187). Even **Reference 3** found that internet is a facilitator of economic, professional and social success of individuals and communities by providing access to valuable information. **Reference 4** indicated participation barriers among young people's civic engagement. These barriers are related to language, content disbelief, privacy on social media and times issues.

For the purpose of the current research 300 volunteers from tricity; Chandigarh, Panchkula and Mohali were interviewed. The research starts from determining the purpose of internet usage in general and in respect of civic engagement. Factors deterring/ promoting online civic engagement were also determined such as purpose of internet usage and different features of social media. The purpose of internet usage includes information, communication, persuasion and entertainment purpose. The current study has also determined the use of social media tools for different civic activities. These activities are related to the planning, organizing and coordinating civic actions. The current study has also analyzed that which feature of social media proved to be an impetus or deterrent in civic participation of the volunteers. Then reasons of non- usage of social media for civic engagement were also asked from respondents.

HYPOTHESES

H_a 1.a: Internet is used for communication purpose most in general

H_a 1.b: Internet is used for communication purpose most in respect of civic engagement

H_a 2:   As compare to other purposes, internet usage for information results into online civic engagement.

H_a 3.a: Volunteers use social networking sites most for civic engagement.

H_a 3.b: Social networking site is used most to disseminate information regarding any civic issue

H_a 4.a: The feature of 'Promotion of group has encouraged respondents the most for using social media for civic engagement.

H_a 4.b: The feature of 'Credible people in the virtual world' has discouraged respondents the most for using social media for civic engagement.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section explains the tools of data collection and analysis methods.

i)   **Primary Data:** The type of data collected is primary data obtained from volunteers.

ii) **Methods of Data Collection:** The data collection tool is a questionnaire comprising of both open ended and close ended questions.

iii) **Universes and Sampling Design/ Framework:** 300 volunteers were interviewed. These volunteers were selected from Chandigarh, Panchkula and Mohali using the method of non-probability sampling such as Judgment and Snowball Sampling.

iv) **Data Analysis:** The collected data was analyzed by using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) for associations and correlations. Statistical tests such as chi- square, non- parametric chi- square and Friedman was used for data analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

H_a 1.a: Internet is used for communication purpose most in general

The first hypothesis deals with the purpose of internet usage in general. It was assumed that respondents use internet most for communicating with others. This communication is not related to any civic activity. It may happen with any friend, colleague or family member. Other than internet respondents were asked to

mention the main purpose of using different media such as telephone, face to face communication, print media, radio and television. They are given four options of purposes such as information, communication, entertainment and persuasion. Non- parametric Chi- square is used to execute this hypothesis. Statistical analysis has given p value= .000 for every media. So, when p value< .05, it leads to the acceptance of alternate hypothesis and rejection of null hypothesis. Acceptance of alternate hypothesis means that every media is used for specific purpose. Analysis proved that the first hypothesis is statistically significant because majority of the respondents used internet for 'communication'. Results related to other media are demonstrated in Table 1 given below.

Table 1
Usage of different media for specific 'purpose' in general

Purpose of media usage	Type of media	Observed Frequency
Information	Print Media	251
Entertainment	Print Media	49
Information	Television	67
Communication	Television	2
Entertainment	Television	222
Information	Radio	15
Entertainment	Radio	82
Information	Internet	78
Communication	Internet	113
Entertainment	Internet	88
Information	Telephone	148
Communication	Telephone	84
Entertainment	Telephone	68
Information	Face to Face Communication	31
Communication	Face to Face Communication	94
Entertainment	Face to Face Communication	173
Persuasion	Face to Face Communication	2

Table 1 given above clearly shows the results regarding the purpose of different media usage in general. Highest observed frequency for every media signifies the maximum usage of that media. Non-parametric chi- square proved that majority of the volunteers are using telephone and print media to obtain 'information'. For instance some people read newspaper (print media) to obtain information regarding the current happenings in the society. Telephone is used to know about the upcoming events in the office, class schedule in college or decide the venue of vacations. Television, radio and face to face communication are used most for 'entertainment'. When the entertainment usage is concerned it includes the gossiping over an issue through face- to- face communication, watching soap operas on television and listening music over radio. Volunteers were also asked whether they use radio to send message to the dear ones but most of them neglected. Data also revealed that 268 volunteers are of young age in the sample and most of them use television to watch soap operas and comedy shows. Internet is used most for 'communication'. This communication happens to discuss the personal as well as professional matters.

While reviewing literature, it was found that many researchers have also tried to determine the purpose of media usage. For instance **Reference 5** found that internet even fulfills the informational need of the users. Similarly **Reference 3** also said that internet is a facilitator of economic, professional and social success of individuals and communities by providing them valuable information. This research also revealed that internet empowers people by connecting them with each other and whole society. Then **Reference 6** said that news consumption on internet may help foster a healthy democracy. Other than internet social media such as facebook and twitter also has the potential in building a stronger democratic society by expanding the discussion networks of individuals.

Reference 7 compared old and new media and found that face- to- face communication is used most for staying in touch while telephone for exchanging time- sensitive information because telephone facilitates synchronous communication across distances. It was also found that new media is considered more appropriate for exchanging information. Then **Reference 8** discussed the power of internet utilized well by farm women. This research paper discussed the initiatives taken by farm women of Australia that how they used internet and created an association named 'Australian women in Agriculture' (AWIA), a group of 600 village women. Researchers said that these village women used internet for different purposes such as maintaining long distance contacts and to conduct meetings. Many users also found problem with this medium such as subscription of newsletters fill the email with dozens of unnecessary posts.

H_a *1.b: Internet is used for communication purpose most in respect of civic engagement*

This hypothesis analyzed the usage of different media for specific purpose i.e. information, communication, entertainment and persuasion. The activities related to four purposes are civic activities such as obtaining information from print media regarding any civic issue, using internet to coordinate with other volunteers and using radio and television for advertising the civic cause. Non- parametric chi square is used to execute this hypothesis. Statistical analysis has given p value= .000 for every media. It means that alternate hypothesis is accepted in case of print, television, telephone, internet, radio and face to face communication. This proves that all these media are used most for specific purpose. Analysis proved that internet is used for 'communication' purpose by volunteers. Thus H_a *1.b* is significantly proved. Results in detail are discussed in table 2 given below.

Table 2
Usage of different media for specific purpose in case of civic engagement

Purpose of media usage	Type of media	Observed Frequency
Information	Internet	6
Communication		146
Persuasion		120
Information	Telephone	16
Communication		273
Entertainment		2
Persuasion		6
Information	Face to Face Communication	10

contd. table 2

Purpose of media usage	Type of media	Observed Frequency
Communication		239
Entertainment		1
Persuasion		50
Information	Print Media	121
Communication		16
Entertainment		1
Persuasion		140
Information	Television	15
Communication		59
Entertainment		3
Persuasion		130
Information	Radio	4
Communication		65
Persuasion		103

Non- parametric chi- square was used to determine the main purpose of using internet, telephone, face to face communication, print media, television and radio. Statistical analysis proved that telephone and face to face communication is used most for 'communication'. Volunteers said that they use telephone to discuss the upcoming events. Similarly, face to face communication is done to plan the upcoming events and where they lack in previous events.

Analysis revealed that print media is used most for 'information' because of highest expected frequency. Most of the volunteers use print media to obtain information regarding the recent events so that they can connect to society and perform well while dealing with public. Both television and radio are used most for 'persuasion' means to persuade people to join their civic group/ cause. Volunteers advertise their cause via television and radio. When it comes to internet, results proved majority of volunteers use it most for 'communication' and least for 'information'. Internet usage for communication includes future planning of the events and getting in touch with other volunteers, stakeholders and general public. Even **Reference 9** has also discussed the benefits of internet for civic issues and social movements. Researcher said that it is only after the emergence of internet that structure of social movements has changed because now people can gather, send and share information wherever and whenever they want. In this way internet helps people in making a social movement successful because without internet it is not possible to gather the support of millions of people.

H_a2: As compare to other purposes, internet usage for information results into online civic engagement.

The current study hypothesized that internet usage for information aware the respondents about the problems and ongoing issues of the society. So, when a person encounters with the problem of other people, he will try to solve their problem. It was also assumed that using internet for 'entertainment' discourages online civic participation. Chi- square was used for statistical analysis. It disproved this hypothesis by proving no association between purpose of internet usage and online civic engagement. Results related to this hypothesis are demonstrated in Figure 1 given below.
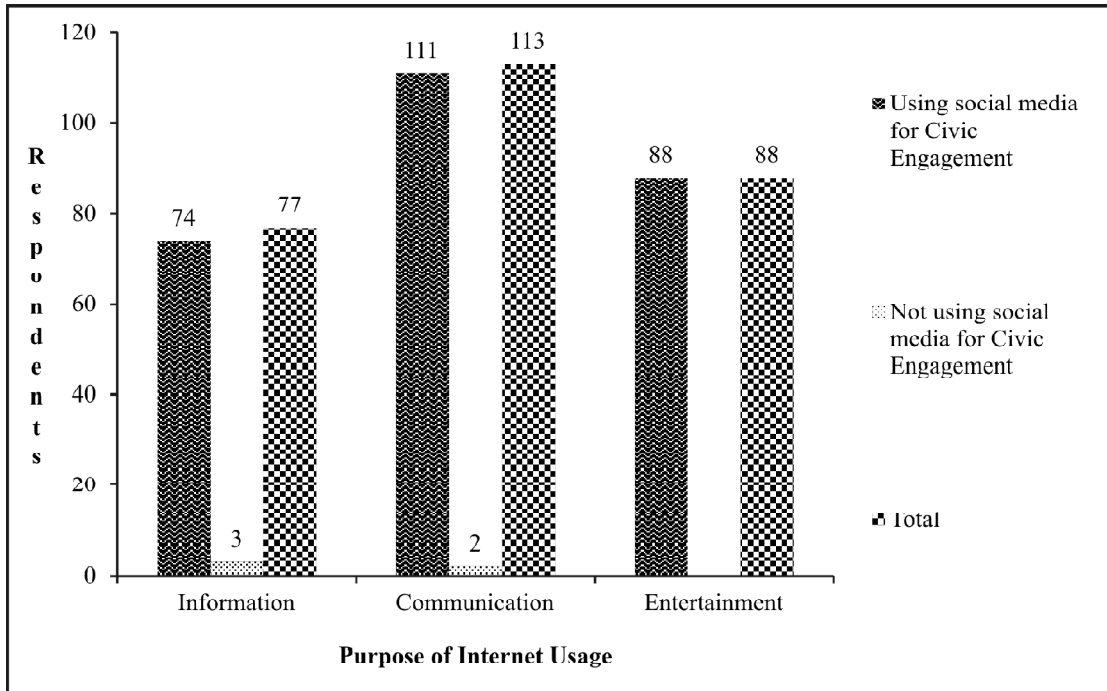
Figure 1: Association between purpose of internet usage and adoption of social media for civic engagement

Chi- square was used to determine the association between purpose of internet usage and adoption of social media for civic engagement. It has given p value= .171 which lead to the acceptance of null hypothesis and rejection of alternate hypothesis. It means that there is no association between two variables because p value > .05. Even figure 1 clearly proves that it does not matter whether a volunteer is using internet for information, communication or entertainment. In all cases most of the internet users are using social media for civic engagement.

Some previous researchers have also found the association between purpose of internet usage and civic participation. Such as **Reference 10** found that internet usage for information exchange gives more opportunities of civic participation. Researchers also found that spending more time in watching television results in lowering the level of civic participation. Then **Reference 3** said that access to the internet complements community participation while non-access results into social isolation. The reason is that internet enables its users to access more information regarding communities. Similarly, **Reference 6** also found that introverts used social media most for civic engagement. On the other hand, **Reference 11** conducted the research to know whether media involvement has any relationship with social trust and volunteering. Media involvement in this study means watching news over the internet especially in crisis situations like disasters. Results revealed that people get motivated by reading or watching news if they do not get stressed from the news coverage. Thus reading and watching news on internet increases their level of civic participation. Opposite results were found in case of Television because internet gives its users the freedom to choose the content and television does not.

On the contrary, **Reference 12** found that using internet for entertainment purpose discourages civic participation while informational usage is promoting civic participation. Then **Reference 13** also

found that internet users those have watched/ read news online actually participated most in community activities as well as donated to charitable institutions. Researcher said that internet has not only allowed its users to share ideas but help them to stay up to date. Thus watching/ reading news has enhanced their understanding of the current events and helped them interpretating it correctly. Similarly, **Reference 14** also found that using social networking sites for discussions and knowledge is positively linked to community service (civic participation). Research also revealed that students those have used social networking sites for playing games participate more in community service because they get connected to each other while playing games. Thus social networking sites served as a platform to mobilize people. Even **Reference 6** said that social media usage also contributes to civic engagement. Apart from purpose of media usage **Reference 15** found that more time a person spends online, the more he will engage in prosocial activities.

H_a3.a: Volunteers use social networking sites most for civic engagement.

Simple frequency method is used to execute H_a3.a. Data revealed that out of 300 volunteers, 213 are using social network sites for civic engagement. Thus H_a3.a is proved true. Results regarding every social media tool are discussed in figure 2 given below.
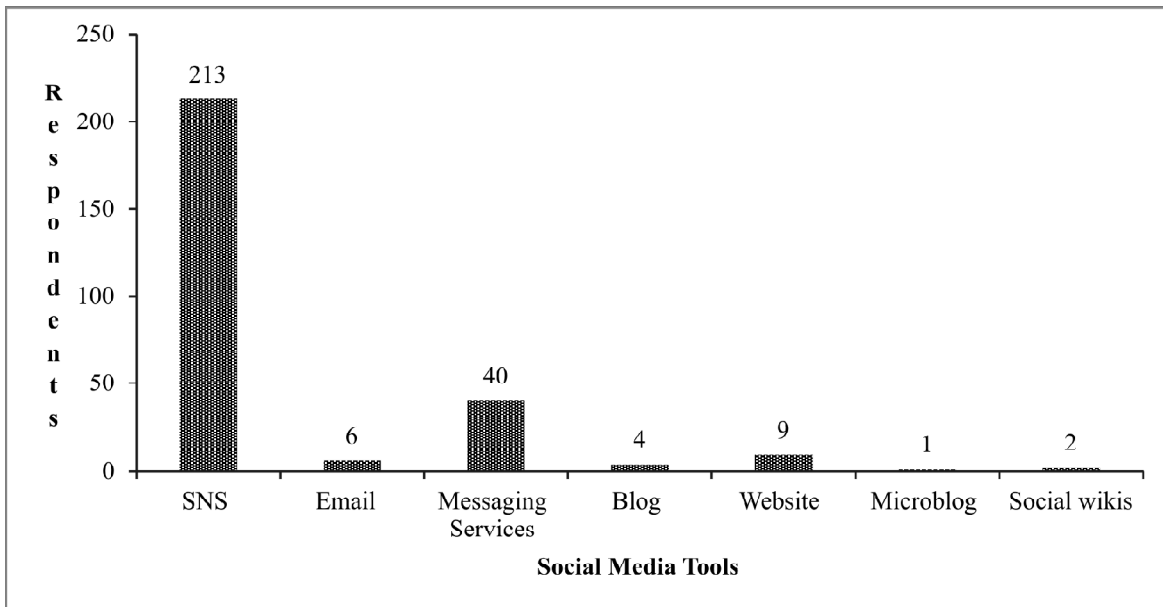

Figure 2: Usage of different social media tools for civic engagement

Figure 2 clearly shows that most of the volunteers use 'social networking sites' for civic engagement than any other social media tool. Data revealed that microblogs, social wikis, blogs, email and websites are used only by few volunteers. Some previous researchers have also conducted the studies to determine the most used social media tools for civic engagement. Such as **Reference 16** conducted the research to determine the power of blogs, websites and text messages to boost the civic actions. Researcher has done a case study of civic protest spurred by decision of the Supreme Administrative Court to strip a territory in Bulgaria of its status as a protected natural reserve. Results revealed that for the first time in Bulgaria new media such as blogs, websites and online forums came to the fore as ready- to- hand tools for civic speaking and organizing. With these tools, a generation of young people demonstrated their ability and

resolve in making their voices heard by the powerful. **Reference 14** also found that students used most blogs, bulletin board system and social networking sites such as facebook, Myspace and Xiaonei for volunteering. Then **Reference 13** found that those write blogs actually reported higher level of civic engagement because writing blogs itself is time consuming, demands efforts and a work of dedication. On the other hand, usage of social networking sites does not contribute to volunteering because people often share videos, photos, etc. with each other rather than sharing relevant information

$H_a 3.b$: *Social networking site is used most to disseminate information regarding any civic issue*

Simple frequency method is used to execute $H_a 3.b$. Results demonstrated in Table 3 proved that Social networking site is used most 'to disseminate information regarding any civic issue'. Thus $H_a 3.b$ is proved true. Data also revealed that volunteers use social networking site most for every civic activity such as to obtain information regarding any civic issue, to receive donations from foreign country, to receive donations within country, to support a civic cause within country, to support a civic cause outside country and to gather support for a civic cause.

Many researchers have also determined the purpose of social media by volunteers. For instance **Reference 17** discussed the role of social media in Egyptian revolt for freedom. Egytians' used social media for connectivity and to dissemination information. Researchers found that Facebook played important role in drawing global attention. Facebook became the channel of communication between activists. It is because of the easy access of the social media that young activists pronounced themselves as "the Facebook Generation". Then **Reference 18** said that during social movement internet is a very useful tool for information dissemination, information retrieval, discussion, opinion polling, etc. Researcher found that some organizations during Dutch women's movement used bulletin board, virtual communities and websites to plan and organize collective action. Further **Reference 19** have examined the case study of the Association for the Taxation of financial transactions for the Aid of citizens (ATTAC) to know the potential of internet in initiating and saving the democracy. Researchers found that new technology is not replacing the traditional media such as leaflets, rallies and debates. Even it enhances the performance of organizers because they use it to collect support, mobilize people, gather and send information and acquire the skill of experts. ATTAC also used internet to spread information regarding their mission, organize meeting, to register new comers and to attract professionals. So, by using social media so extensively they have become a network of experts. Members of ATTAC said that internet has proved as a tool for the diffusion of protest for them.

Table 3
Using social media tools for different purpose

Social Media Tools→ Activities→	Blog	Email	Media Sharing Site	Micro blog	Discussion forum	Website	Social Wikis	R.SS feeds	Messaging services	SNS
To obtain info.Regardingany civicissue	1	3	5	2	6	37	73	1	40	107
To disseminateInfo.regardingany civicissue	4	12	3	0	5	27	25	0	86	109
To receivedonations fromforeigncountries	3	45	1	3	6	26	0	0	12	69
To support a civic cause within country	3	7	2	5	4	16	2	0	49	184
To support a civic cause outside country	4	13	1	6	2	22	3	0	37	159
To gather support for a civic cause	3	6	10	4	1	10	4	0	73	166
To receive donations within country	2	51	5	3	2	24	0	0	32	100

Table 3 given above clearly demonstrates the usage of different social media tools for civic activities. Even **Reference 20** also discussed the usage of social media tools for equivocal tasks such as to recruit, communicate and motivate volunteers. Researcher found that non- profits used 'blogs' for voluntary recruitment rather than 'website'. Blog is also used to inform volunteers regarding the schedule of activities. Email was found a very useful tool for volunteer recruitment and communication. On the other hand, social networking sites were not used for communication rather it proved as an effective tool to recruit volunteers. Then **Reference 21** conducted the research to know the purposes to use the e-mail by an environmental activist group, Ecodefense. Researcher found that e- mail was used for taking democratic decisions, to obtain and distribute information, to maintain connections inside and outside the country and to generate the activism at both national and international level. Other than e-mail, listserve was used most because it allowed others to see the communication between two members.

H_a *4.a: The feature of 'Promotion of group has encouraged respondents the most for using social media for civic engagement.*

H_a *4.b: The feature of 'Credible people in the virtual world' has discouraged respondents the most for using social media for civic engagement.*

The focus of the current study is to determine the use of social media for civic engagement. In this context, the research has analyzed that which feature of social media which has proved as the major impetus and deterrent for civic engagement. Friedman is used for statistical analysis. Analysis show that 'ease of use' has highest mean rank and 'anonymity of identity', the lowest mean rank. The highest mean rank of 'ease of use' means that majority of respondents consider it as a major impetus feature. On the other hand, the lowest mean rank signifies 'anonymity of identity' as the main deterrent feature. Thus both H_a *4.a* and H_a *4.b* are disproved. Results regarding different features of social media are demonstrated in figure 3.

Figure 3 shows the results regarding 16 different features of social media. Many previous researchers have also determined that which feature of social media encourage and discourage civic participation. Such as **Reference 22** said that visitors of chat rooms do not trust others and feel uncomfortable in revealing information to others. Anonymity in the chat rooms lowers the level of trust and thus civic participation. Similarly, the current study has asked about 'anonymity of identity' and 'credible people in the virtual world' from respondents.

Reference 23 has conducted the research to know whether email lacks paralinguistic language such as gesture, inflection, pronunciation, vocal expression, etc. Results revealed that it becomes difficult to convey impressions in electronic forms because email is inherently ambiguous than telephone. This particular feature of social media is covered as 'emoticons as a helpful feature to express emotions' and 'sense of existence of the person to whom you are talking'.

Reference 24 has also discussed the disadvantage of new technology. Researchers said that collective action organized by using it lacks leadership. The example of it is 'battle in seattle' in which people from different nations fought for human rights, women's issues and to save environment. They used e-mail and chat rooms to self- organize their actions and protested against the policies of the World Trade Organization. Even then their collective action lacked financing, leadership, decision making and recruitment. Researchers said that there is no doubt that ICT diminishes the cost of searching for information, communicating and
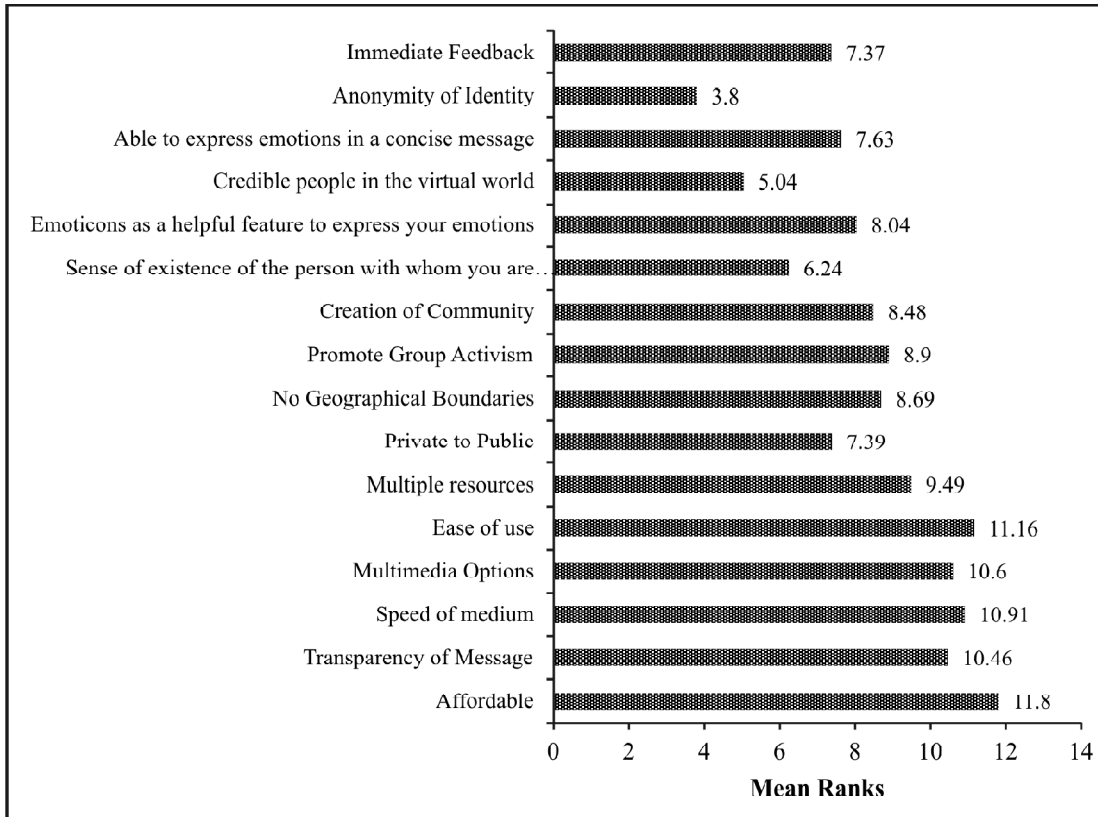
Figure 3: Features of social media promoting/ deterring civic participation

to coordinate the group. New technology has also solved the problem of private to public boundary crossing, helped people to develop collective identities and identify a common concern. To verify these results, the current study asked volunteers that to what extent 'creation of the community', 'promotion of group activism, 'private to public boundary crossing' and 'no geographical boundaries' as features of social media have encouraged them for civic participation.

Reference 25 compared two forms of CMC such as instant messaging and communication without webcam. Researchers defined self- disclosure' as the disclosure of relationships, love, physical appearance, secrets, etc. The comparison between text only and face- to- face communication revealed that self- disclosure is high in text based CMC rather than face- to face communication. CMC also leads to higher levels of perceived feelings of similarity and self- disclosure. **Reference 26** found that it is the perception of avatars only which gives people a sense of social presence both of themselves and others. The body is actually the nexus of communication. In virtual world the body in form of avatar becomes the tool where and body is also the tool in real life also. The perception of the bodily presence is dynamic, ever- changing and oscillating because the attention of the respondent is not totally focused on the task. Considering this perspective, volunteers in the current study were asked whether 'sense of existence of the person to whom you are talking' and 'emoticons as a helpful feature to express emotions' has encouraged their civic participation.

Some researchers have also discussed the benefits of social media for volunteers. Such as **Reference 27** found that emergence of new technology has changed everything such as now people can organize

collective actions very easily. Internet has removed the cost of internal communication and social media allow individuals to share their opinions with others especially within a group. Due to internet information across nations can be easily accessed and all kind of online platforms make collective actions (social movements, membership of interest groups, inter- organizational relationships or electronic communities) more efficient by removing the communication cost and facilitating easy organizing options. Similarly, **Reference 28** has also analyzed the website of one campaign to know the way organizers have used web 2.0 features. Analysis revealed that with the help of website, organizers have saved the efforts of volunteers and maximized their efficiency by providing them an online platform. **Reference 29** tried to determine whether group heterogeneity eases the task of collective action. Results revealed that groups with more social ties among their members support more collective action. So, if the resources and interests are homogenous in a group then more people are there to organize the group activities. Even the connection between well- connected organizers is must in a group so that one organizer can inform others about the campaigns or other activities.

Reference 30 examined the contribution of computer- mediated communication in enhancing offline social movement protest events. Researcher has compared two movements FanFest (an environmental protest happened in Rumania) and 'the camp for climate action' (a protest camp against carbon pollution). Comparison between two movements revealed that level of offline civic participation in FanFest was four times lower than the camp for climate action. The main reason was that 96% volunteers of climate camp were using internet. Research revealed that CMC enabled volunteers organized offline participation easily because online they can discuss the future plans without interruption. **Reference 9** has also highlighted the need of media to circulate the information and gather support for a social movement. History of social movements has proved that movements those did not get the support of people actually failed in their mission. So, in this case internet proved to be very useful for social movements because it is fast, cheap, provide information to anyone without the limit of time and space, facilitate coordination between participants, etc.
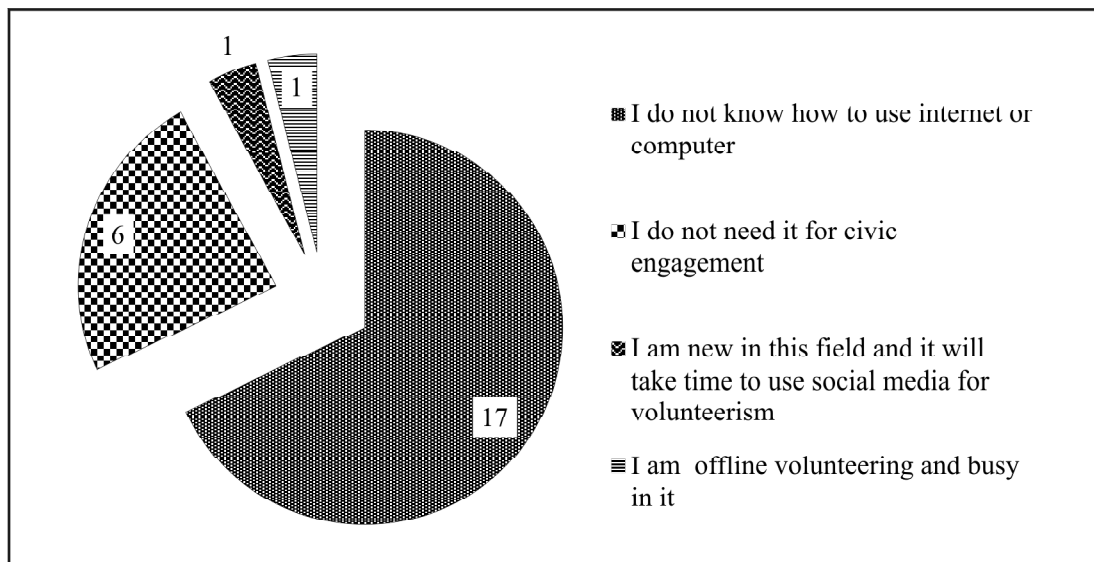

Figure 4: Reasons defined by non-users of social media for civic engagement

Reference 31 discussed the richness of new media on the basis of feedbacks. Two types of feedbacks were discussed; concurrent and sequential feedback. Concurrent feedback is provided simultaneously with the delivery of the message and it provided with different forms of non- verbal gestures such as head nods and very brief messages (e.g. 'uh', 'huh'). Results revealed that immediacy of feedback would lead to better performance and richer media also supported quicker decisions. On the other hand, use of leaner media resulted in slower performance. Keeping in view the above mentioned studies, volunteers were asked to mention the extent to which 'ease of use', 'multimedia options', 'speed of the medium', 'transparency of the message', 'multiple resources' and 'affordability' as the features of social media encouraged for civic participation.

Volunteers those were non- users of social media asked to mention the reason of non- usage. Simple percentage method revealed that out of 300 respondents 275 are using social media for civic engagement and 5 do not use it. Figure 4 shows that most of the non- users said that they do not use social media because of lack of knowledge to deal with new technology.

CONCLUSION

The current study aimed to determine the role of social media in diminution and proliferation of civic engagement. For the purpose of the research 300 volunteers from Tricity; Chandigarh, Panckhula and Mohali were surveyed. They were asked to rate the different features of social media in promoting their civic participation. Statistical analysis proved that some features of social media deters while others encourages the civic participation. For instance ease of use, affordability, speed of the medium and multi-media options are some features those encouraged volunteers most to use this medium for civic engagement. Results also highlighted that 91% volunteers are using social media because of its affordability, speed, ease of use and convenience in sending the messages. On the other hand, anonymity of identity, lack of credible people in the virtual world and absence of sense existence are some features those deterred the civic participation of volunteers. Volunteers those were non- users of social media also mentioned some reasons for non- usage such as lack of knowledge to deal with technology, usage of other media for civic engagement, etc. The research has also highlighted the fact that some tools of social media are more popular among volunteers such as social networking sites (facebook), messaging services (Whats App) and email. Among all the social media tools volunteers used social networking site most for every kind of civic activity. When it comes to the purpose of internet usage, results proved that majority of the respondents use internet for communication in general and in respect of civic engagement. So, overall the results proved that only features of social media have encouraged volunteers most to use this medium for civic engagement.

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