

## **USE OF NEW MEDIA FOR POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT AND NEED GRATIFICATION**

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### **Abstract**

This paper analyses the usage and impact of new media in e-politics with the focus on the impact in terms of their need gratification of the potential voters. The nature of need gratification as also its association with demographics for use of New Media was determined. It turned out that cognitive need of potential voters is best fulfilled with use of New Media for political purpose. The user respondents were asked five sets of four statements to determine their key needs assumed to be fulfilled through use of New Media through the online campaigning. These include cognitive, social integrative, personal integrative, escapism and affective needs.

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### ***Keywords:***

New media;  
Online campaign;  
elections;  
voters;  
online engagement.

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## **1. Introduction**

Prospective users have been making increasing use of new media for getting political information and also engaging with their fellow visitors to the online posts and sometimes with the political candidates as well. In case of the northern state of Punjab and the adjoining union territory of Chandigarh, the per capita income is relatively high – Punjab ranked 15<sup>th</sup> and Chandigarh 4<sup>th</sup> (2019, Per Capita). Punjab has over 13.46 million internet users out of which 4.71 million are rural and 8.75 million users are urban Sehgal, M. (2017, January 24). More than one crore voters fall in the age group of 18-35, of which 35 lakh use internet, Sehgal, M. (2017, January 29).

## **2. Methodology**

For the study, data has been collected through a survey of potential voters with questionnaire posted through e-mail and personal administration. The questionnaire comprised open-ended and closed-ended questions and also included scales for psychographic profiling and Likert scales framed for determining attitudes such as the use to which the potential voter puts online presence of politician and impact of the online campaign on him. A survey of 150 potential voters was conducted in Punjab and Chandigarh.

## **3. Findings**

### **3.1. Nature of Need Gratification**

Among the five top statements given below, three pertained to fulfillment of information seeking or cognitive need and one was about social integrative need. It is based on mean ranks of statements (Refer Table 1).

8.1d. Helps gather information for offline discussions

8.1b. Gives details of campaign schedule

8.1a Helps make an informed choice of candidate

8.4c. Getting to know of friends who also support same politician

8.1c. Gives details of policies of politicians

The term uses and gratification (U&G) is deep rooted in mass communication research and goes back to Herzog's (1940) study, which was given new dimensions by Katz et al. (1974) and Palmgreen et al. (1985) focusing on the traditional media such as television. Ruggiero (2000)

argues that the contemporary and future models of U\$G theory must include concepts such as interactivity, demassification, hypertextuality, and asynchronicity. Affective needs (just like cognitive needs) can be satisfied with mere passive online participation exclusively by reading or looking at content online with minimal interaction with a candidate's page, says Esposito (2012). The creation of content on social media sites leads to psychological empowerment that is associated with uses and gratifications and the offline participation of users in civic and political processes (Leung, 2009). Past researchers like Ancu, M., & Cozma, R. (2009) have found that by visiting MySpace profiles of 2008 primary candidates source of political information mainly by the desire for social interaction with other like-minded supporters, followed by information seeking, and entertainment. It has been established in the past that the number one use of the Internet for political purposes is information seeking or surveillance (Garramone et al., 1986a; Garramone, Harris, & Pizante, 1986b; James, Wotring & Forrest, 1995; Kaye & Johnson, 2002; Pew, 2006, 2008a; Ancu, M., & Cozma, R. (2009).

Four of the bottom of the list, five responses pertains to tension release or escapism need and one is to do with social integrative need. Since use of political mobile (gaming) apps was not that popular during the election even though such apps featuring national leaders like Narendra Modi were launched, proposed fulfillment of the tension release needs from these was rare. Escaping from reality with civic activism was an option that the online channels provided but not many respondents admitted to be indulging in pseudo activism. Also, from the start of the campaign in January, 2014 one major trend was that of politicians' new Facebook pages, no matter how active they were on their Facebook accounts. It was imperative for the candidates of AAP, who were either new to politics or has switched over from other parties to have fresh Facebook pages. In such a scenario, the concept of getting a sense of achievement by becoming Facebook 'friends' with the politician became suddenly outdated.

8.5b. Tension release playing political mobile games

8.5a. Escaping from reality with pseudo activism

8.5 d. Getting over guilt about not discharging civic duties

8.5c. Escaping from dull routine with political rhetoric and mudslinging

8.3b. Being online 'friends' with politician who shares your ideology

Adding a new dimension to New Media's political use, researchers like Loader, B. D., & Mercea, D. (2011) have talked about the playful repertoires of innovative YouTube videos, mobile texting language, protest music, and the celebration of trivia as the new-age aspects of political expression. This could gratify not just the producer's tension release need but also lead to fulfillment of his personal integrative need when he gets appreciation for the content.

*H1): Cognitive need of potential voters is best fulfilled with use of New Media for political purpose.*

The data supports the hypothesis as the mean ranks of statements about the five needs shows that a statement pertaining to cognitive need have the lowest rank (7.15). The Chi Square value of 428.518 with degree of freedom (df) at 19 and p-value of 0.000 was less than 0.05 and therefore significant. The statistical test used to establish the trend was Friedman test.

**Table 1: Ranking of statements pertaining to Need Gratification**

| Statements | Mean Rank |
|------------|-----------|
| 8.1a       | 7.57      |
| 8.1b       | 7.15      |
| 8.1c       | 8.09      |
| q8.1d      | 6.75      |
| q8.2a      | 9.96      |
| q8.2b      | 9.53      |
| q8.2c      | 10.92     |
| q8.2d      | 12.14     |
| q8.3a      | 10.45     |
| q8.3b      | 12.73     |
| q8.3c      | 10.40     |
| q8.3d      | 11.53     |
| q8.4a      | 9.46      |
| q8.4b      | 9.66      |
| q8.4c      | 8.05      |
| q8.4d      | 10.50     |
| q8.5a      | 13.87     |
| q8.5b      | 14.78     |
| q8.5c      | 13.20     |
| q8.5d      | 13.26     |

## 3.2. Extent of need gratification

### 3.2.1. Cognitive Needs

*Statement I: New Media helps make an informed choice of candidate*

76.7% of user respondents found New Media as a viable source of information about the candidate 'always' (32.8%) or 'frequently' (44%) while 7.8% were undecided and 15.5% disagreed (12.9% 'disagree' and 2.6% 'strongly disagree') with the statement.

For any keen potential voter, New Media channels do bring in a lot of information that not just update him about the policies and programmes of the candidate or the party that he supports but he can also draw comparisons between the available options. With the emphasis of politicians more on supplying information to the potential voters in the format and language that suits a majority in a given constituency, New Media content did help voters in fulfilling this need to a large extent.

*Statement II: Gives details of campaign schedule*

82.8% of user respondents got updates on campaign schedules of candidates 'always' (35.3%) or frequently (47.4%) even as only 1.7% were undecided and 15.5% (11.2% 'disagree' and 4.3% 'strongly disagree') replying in the negative. It was one objective of the online campaign that was achieved to a large extent as WhatsApp groups, SMSes and most of the Facebook posts of politicians were about informing potential voters about campaign schedules so that the party volunteers and other staunch supporters could contribute to the offline campaign as well.

*Statement III: Gives details of policies of politicians*

72.41% of user respondents got details about the policies of politicians (32.8% 'always' and 39.7% 'frequently'), while 6.9% were undecided and 20.7% disagreed with the statement (14.7% 'disagree' and 6% 'strongly disagree'). Potential voters had the option to access New Media channels like political blogs and websites to know in detail the policies of candidates of their parties. To put across the message in an appealing way, potential voters were fed key points of the candidate or party's stand on various issues in the form of short clips posted on the website or posters circulated on WhatsApp or Facebook pages.

*Statement IV: Helps gather information for offline discussions*

A high 84.5% of user respondents found New Media tools beneficial in gathering political information that could be share in offline discussions while 6% were undecided and 9.5% of

them disagreed with the statement (7.8% 'disagree' and 1.7% 'strongly disagree'). (Refer Table 2). Apart from getting information directly from the politician on his online pages or that of his supporters or the party, the potential voters also had the advantage of getting to know the views of fellow visitors. Awareness about the counter view of the rival politician/party or their supporters also gave an advantage to the voter to build up his own arguments during the course of offline discussions. Specific New Media tools like political blogs and news portals also had detailed analytical pieces on the political going-ons at the local and national level.

**Table 2: Cognitive needs fulfillment of voters**

| Statements | Cognitive Needs |    |   |    |    | Total |
|------------|-----------------|----|---|----|----|-------|
|            | SA              | A  | U | D  | SD |       |
| A          | 38              | 51 | 9 | 15 | 3  | 116   |
| B          | 41              | 55 | 2 | 13 | 5  | 116   |
| C          | 38              | 46 | 8 | 17 | 7  | 116   |
| D          | 45              | 53 | 7 | 9  | 2  | 116   |

### 3.2.2. Affective Needs

#### *Statement I: Entertained by media spectacle*

62.1% of user respondents 'strongly agreed' (12.9%) or 'agreed' (49.1%) with the statement, 12.9% were undecided and 17.24% disagreed with it (13.8% 'disagree' and 3.4% 'strongly disagree'). Traditionally, entertainment has been a part of the campaign and politicians would keep slots for singers and dancers at mega rallies to keep the supporters engaged. As the campaign goes online, a conscious effort is made to hold the voters' attention by sending entertaining content amidst serious messaging. Most of the posts are usually user-generated content such as parody songs in praise of a candidate or campaign anthems especially got sung by parities from singers supporting their campaign.

#### *Statement II: The electoral frenzy keeps me engaged*

69.8% of user respondent were of the view (12.9% 'strongly agree', 56.9% 'agree') that the online electoral frenzy kept them engaged during the course of campaigning even as 12.9% were undecided and 17.24% said they disagreed with it (13.8% 'disagree' and 3.4% 'strongly disagree'). It was not just volunteers of political parties spending several hours circulated content

on WhatsApp and Facebook; even the sympathizers of parties and candidates closely following the events were kept busy by the online campaign.

*Statement III: Gives me hope with politicians promising change*

53.45% of user respondents got a sense of hope from their online engagement as 14.7% said they 'strongly agree' and 38.8% 'agree' with the statement, 11.2% were undecided and 35.34% (25.9% 'strongly disagree' and 9.5% 'disagree') said it did not work with them. The thrust of campaigns by challengers like AAP was to bring in 'revolution' or change in the political system and a section of those following the online campaign were influenced with the slogans for change that were used to cash in on the anti-incumbency sentiment at the Centre or in the state.

*Statement IV: Sense of being alive with spoofy content, political mobile games*

43.1% of user respondents agreed with the statement (8.6% 'strongly agree' and 34.5% 'agree'), while 17.2% were undecided and 39.7% were not in agreement (27.6% 'disagree' and 12.1% 'strongly disagree'). Most of the spoofs and satirical posts were part of the user-generated content that was made to go viral on WhatsApp and Facebook. On the other hand, the potential voters had the option to download gaming apps featuring politicians on their smart phones for sheer entertainment. The hustle bustle of the campaign did bring in a sense of being alive as certain politicians like AAP's Mr Bhagwant Mann used appeals of humour and satire in his speeches and online posts to connect with potential voters.

**Table 3: Affective need fulfillment of voters**

| Statements | Affective Needs |    |    |    |    |       |
|------------|-----------------|----|----|----|----|-------|
|            | SA              | A  | U  | D  | SD | Total |
| A          | 15              | 57 | 18 | 21 | 5  | 116   |
| B          | 15              | 66 | 15 | 16 | 4  | 116   |
| C          | 17              | 45 | 13 | 30 | 11 | 116   |
| D          | 10              | 40 | 20 | 32 | 14 | 116   |

### 3.2.3. Personal Integrative Needs

*Statement I: Receiving encouraging response to posts that validate your stand*

54.3% of user respondents were of the view that positive response to their online posts acted as an encouragement (18.1% 'strongly agree' and 36.2% 'agree'), 16.4% were undecided and 29.3% replied in the negative (21.6% 'disagree' and 7.8% 'strongly disagree'). This phenomenon can be seen in light of the Spiral of Silence Theory and when a post is 'liked' and appreciated with positive comments on a New Media channel, it comes as a morale booster and the initial apprehensions about making a public comment are laid to rest.

*Statement II: Being online 'friends' with politician who shares your ideology*

37.07% of user respondents agreed with the statement (10.3% 'strongly agree' and 26.7% 'agree') while 10.3% were undecided and 52.6% said it did not work with them (42.2% 'disagree' and 10.3% 'strongly disagree'). Even though it was rare for potential voters to interact directly with political leaders on their online pages, being online friends with them on Facebook adds to the voter's profile, especially if he is a part of the party's cadres or a full-time volunteer. Similarly, a politician following a potential voter or supporter too is seen as an accomplishment and in case it happens to be a tall leader, Twitterati even mention it in their introduction, eg, "Followed by Narendra Modi."

*Statement III: Venting emotions by supporting/opposing political issues*

64.7% user respondents agreed (10.3% 'strongly agree' and 26.7% 'agree') with the statement that they can use New Media to vent emotions about political issues, 8.6% were undecided and 26.7% were in disagreement (19% 'disagree' and 7.8% 'strongly disagree'). A sizable percentage of potential voters used the New Media channels to complain about missing infrastructure in their area, besides general issues like corruption and price rise, as part of their expression of support or opposition for a political leader. At the same time, there are also potential voters who felt strongly about a particular issue and the stand taken by parties on it. This option of venting emotions online was particularly suitable for those not happy with the ruling party or alliance.

*Statement IV: Safe outlet with no repercussions*

45.5% of user respondents felt that New Media channels were a safe outlet to express themselves politically, 21.6% were undecided and 31.9% did not agree (25.9% 'disagree' and 6% 'strongly disagree'). Unless potential voters post slanderous comment on politicians or fellow visitors, New Media channels is an ideal platform for expressing their views with no repercussions. Trolls on Twitter often go without facing any action even when they cross the line. There have only been



a few cases where politicians have reacted strongly to New Media posts by making a formal police complaint.

**Table 4: Personal Integrative need fulfillment of voters**

| Statements | Personal Integrative Needs |    |    |    |    |       |
|------------|----------------------------|----|----|----|----|-------|
|            | SA                         | A  | U  | D  | SD | Total |
| A          | 21                         | 42 | 19 | 25 | 9  | 116   |
| B          | 12                         | 31 | 12 | 49 | 12 | 116   |
| C          | 12                         | 63 | 10 | 22 | 9  | 116   |
| D          | 10                         | 44 | 25 | 30 | 7  | 116   |

### 3.2.4. Social Integrative Needs

*Statement I: Sense of bonding with fellow supporters*

68.10% of user respondents did feel a sense of bonding with fellow supporters of a politician or party (17.2% 'strongly agree' and 50.9% 'agree') while 5.2% of them were undecided and 26.7% did not agree (19% 'disagree' and 7.8% 'strongly disagree'). The popularity of Facebook communities and WhatsApp groups can be attributed to sense of bonding fostered among potential voters sharing common ideologies or supporting the same party of candidate. The levels of bonding vary from one-off retweeting post by a fellow Tweeter user with the common hashtag to support party to regular interactions from other voters on a Facebook or WhatsApp group.

*Statement II: Share user-generated content like photos and videos*

64.7% of user respondents agreed with the statement (19.8% 'strongly agree' and 44.8% 'agree') even though 6.9% were undecided and 28.4 % (24.1% 'disagree' and 4.3% 'strongly disagree') did not agree. User generated content tends to score over the formal posts of parties in being more relatable for potential voters as it is created by one of them. It usually has elements of humour or sarcasm to put across the political messaging in a light-hearted way. Such content come in handy for politicians as they can promote it without actually being held responsible for any derogatory overtones therein. Describing production of user-generated content by citizens, Papacharissi (2010) says that the citizen-users have the option to participate in campaigns whilst simultaneously enjoying television and/or chatting with family from home. The independent citizen operates as the accident journalist, engaging in information-gathering by whim and

consequently, the user generated content presented via citizen media or blogs may pluralize the news agenda.

*Statement III: Getting to know of friends who also support same politician*

78.4% of user respondents were of the opinion that New Media helped in getting to know of friends who also support same politician (21.6% 'strongly agree' and 56.9% 'disagree'), only 2.6% were undecided and 18.10% were in disagreement (15.5% 'disagree' and 3.4% 'strongly disagree'). Potential voters supporting a candidate or party were brought together in two ways - either they were added to a WhatsApp group or broadcast list based on their missed calls or online registration with the campaign team or they themselves sent requests to join a Facebook community. Resultantly, many of them stumbled upon friends and acquaintances who supported the same candidate. When a potential voter clicked on the people who had 'liked' a particular post of politician's Facebook page, he would get to know of other friends in the list. Tapping on the details of a Facebook group and checking out the 'followers' of a politician were other ways of finding out people who supported the same politician.

*Statement IV: Share problems with other visitors to online pages*

52.6% of user respondents agreed that New Media can be useful in sharing problems with others (15.5% 'strongly agree' and 37.1% 'agree'), 15.5% were undecided and 31.9% did not agree with it (28.4% 'disagree' and 3.4% 'strongly disagree'). New Media channels provided potential voters a platform where they not only made an attempt to seek promises from politicians for redressed of their problems, they also generated a debate by sharing their problems with other visitors. Unlike Twitter, a majority of the WhatsApp groups or Facebook pages have members from a particular area or community and this results in others reacting to a problem shared by a member.

**Table 5: Social Integrative Need fulfillment of voters**

| Statements | Social Integrative Needs |    |    |    |    | Total |
|------------|--------------------------|----|----|----|----|-------|
|            | SA                       | A  | U  | D  | SD |       |
| A          | 20                       | 59 | 6  | 22 | 9  | 116   |
| B          | 23                       | 52 | 8  | 28 | 5  | 116   |
| C          | 25                       | 66 | 3  | 18 | 4  | 116   |
| D          | 18                       | 43 | 18 | 33 | 4  | 116   |

### 3.2.5. Tension Release Needs

#### *Statement I: Escaping from reality with pseudo activism*

31.03% of user respondents agreed (3.4% 'strongly agree' and 27.6% 'agree') that New Media helps in escaping from reality, while 16.4% were undecided and 52.6% (36.2% 'disagree' and 16.4% 'strongly disagree') are of the view that this was not true. It was another function of the online campaign that worked at the psychological level, giving the potential voters a channel to escape from reality with a sense of achievement that they were contributing to society with online civic engagement. In cases where the activism was limited to online activities only, it could be seen more in terms of 'clicktivism,' where potential voters opted for the easier option of contributing to the electoral process from the comfort of their living rooms.

#### *Statement II: Tension release playing political mobile games*

Only 22.4% of user respondents (5.2% 'strongly agree' and 16.4% 'agree') with the statement even as 12.9% are undecided and 65.5% were in disagreement (41.4% 'disagree' and 24.1% 'strongly disagree'). As part of the campaign frenzy, the potential voters also had the option to download political mobile games on their smart phones to use these as stress busters. Though the trend is not as common, the political games have the advantage of being more topical and the potential voters opting for these could masquerade as someone keeping abreast of what is in on the Internet than someone going in for any other mobile game. Apart from the Theory of Fandom, the process also involves playfulness. Past researchers have looked at New Media's playful aspect. "There are many ways in which we can see the media as being sites for play, both in their text and in the responses that those texts engender" (Silverstone, 1999: 59-60). Matt Hills has argued that play is at the core of fan activity, for instance remixing and remaking content: "It is important to view fans as players in the sense that they become immersed in noncompetitive and affective play" and that this playful attitude can explain fans' creative engagement and emotional attachment (Hills, 2002:112).

#### *Statement III: Escaping from dull routine with political rhetoric and mudslinging*

36.2% of user respondents agreed (4.3% 'strongly agree' and 31.9% 'agree') that online campaigning helped in escaping from dull routine, 10.3% were undecided and 53.4% did not agree with it (37.9% 'disagree' and 15.5% 'strongly disagree'). While there are genuine supporters on politicians who want to counter criticism with logical arguments, cyberspace also has

potential voters trying to entertain themselves by indulging in political rhetoric and mudslinging. These were users who not just took pot-shots at rival politicians but also took on visitors from the other sides with caustic remarks.

*Statement IV: Getting over guilt about not discharging civic duties*

33.6% of user respondents agreed (6.9% 'strongly agree' and 26.7% 'agree'), even as 10.3% were undecided and 53.4% were in disagreement (37.9% 'disagree' and 15.5% 'strongly disagree'). Past research has pointed to a dip in levels of political engagement, especially among young adults. In such a scenario, the online campaign gives the potential voters an option to give an impression that they are contributing to the campaign process and therefore discharging their civic duties.

**Table 6: Tension release need of votes**

| Statements | Tension release Needs |    |    |    |    |       |
|------------|-----------------------|----|----|----|----|-------|
|            | SA                    | A  | U  | D  | SD | Total |
| A          | 4                     | 32 | 19 | 42 | 19 | 116   |
| B          | 6                     | 19 | 15 | 48 | 28 | 116   |
| C          | 5                     | 37 | 12 | 44 | 18 | 116   |
| D          | 8                     | 31 | 16 | 45 | 16 | 116   |

### 3.3. Demographics and Need Gratification

*H2 (46): Education, of all the demographics, is most associated with need gratification from use of New Media.*

The data failed to support the hypothesis as Chi Square value of 5.633 with degree of freedom (df) at 4 and p-value of 0.221 is more than 0.05 and therefore insignificant. In fact, none of the demographics have any significant association with need gratification. The statistical test used to establish the association was Chi Square.

**Table 7: Significance levels of association between demographics and need gratification**

| Demographics | p-value    |    |         |
|--------------|------------|----|---------|
|              | Chi-square | Df | p-value |
| Age          | 3.670      | 4  | .537    |
| Gender       | 3.144      | 2  | .184    |
| Income       | 13.694     | 8  | .075    |
| Occupation   | 11.048     | 10 | .303    |
| Education    | 5.633      | 4  | .221    |

### 3.3.1. Age and Need Gratification

37.5% of user young adults ( $\leq 25$  years) have high levels of need gratification, but a majority of users across age groups have medium levels of need fulfillment through political use of New Media - 62.5% for the young adults, 63.1% in the 26-40 years group and 66.7% for those aged more than 41 years. There were no users among young adults or the 26-40 years group with low gratification levels.

**Table 8: Age and Need Gratification**

| Age       | Need Gratification |        |      | Total |
|-----------|--------------------|--------|------|-------|
|           | Low                | Medium | High |       |
| $\leq 25$ | 0                  | 15     | 9    | 24    |
| 26 - 40   | 0                  | 41     | 24   | 65    |
| 41+       | 1                  | 18     | 8    | 27    |
| Total     | 1                  | 74     | 41   | 116   |

### 3.3.2. Gender and Need Gratification

38.3% of user men have high levels of need fulfillment with New Media, which was more than 28.6% of user women with high levels. A majority, however, has medium levels of fulfillment for both genders - 61.7% for men and 74% for women. There was none among men with low levels of gratification while there was only one woman in this category.

**Table 9: Gender and Need Gratification**

| Gender | Need Gratification |        |      | Total |
|--------|--------------------|--------|------|-------|
|        | Low                | Medium | High |       |
| Men    | 0                  | 50     | 31   | 81    |
| Women  | 1                  | 24     | 10   | 35    |
| Total  | 1                  | 74     | 41   | 116   |

### 3.3.3. Income and Need Gratification

50% of user respondents with  $\geq 25,000$  income have high level of need fulfillment while an equal number of users in this category fall in medium gratification category. Likewise, 45.5% of users with income between Rs 5, 0001 and 1, 00,000 have high and medium gratification each.

70.6% of the highest income group (1, 00,001+) have medium level and no user in three categories - no income, less or equal to Rs 25,000 and 25,001-50,000 had low levels of need fulfillment using New Media.

**Table 10: Income and Need Gratification**

| Income         | Need Gratification |        |      | Total |
|----------------|--------------------|--------|------|-------|
|                | Low                | Medium | High |       |
| No income      | 0                  | 23     | 9    | 32    |
| <= 25000       | 0                  | 11     | 11   | 22    |
| 25001 - 50000  | 0                  | 23     | 11   | 34    |
| 50001 - 100000 | 1                  | 5      | 5    | 11    |
| 100001+        | 0                  | 12     | 5    | 17    |
| Total          | 1                  | 74     | 41   | 116   |

### 3.3.4. Occupation and Need Gratification

50% of the user professionals have high need gratification from political use of New Media while an equal percentage of users in the category had medium levels. Among user students, the highest 73.3% of users had medium levels of need fulfillment and it was 57.1% for small enterprise, 70.6% for government employees and 70% for those into other occupations. There were none among the user students, homemakers, professions and small enterprise owners with low levels of need gratification.

**Table 11: Occupation and Need Gratification**

| Occupation       | Need Gratification |        |      | Total |
|------------------|--------------------|--------|------|-------|
|                  | Low                | Medium | High |       |
| Student          | 0                  | 22     | 8    | 30    |
| Homemaker        | 0                  | 3      | 2    | 5     |
| Professionals    | 0                  | 15     | 15   | 30    |
| Small Enterprise | 0                  | 8      | 6    | 14    |
| Govt. Service    | 1                  | 12     | 4    | 17    |
| Others           | 0                  | 14     | 6    | 20    |
| Total            | 1                  | 74     | 41   | 116   |

### 3.3.5. Education and Need Gratification

43.1% of user graduates had high need gratification while the percentage was lesser for other categories - only 15.4% for those who have passed Class 12th or less and 31.1% for post graduation or higher degree. At the same time, maximum users across educational qualifications had medium levels of gratification and the highest was for those with Class 12th or less at 84.6%. There was an only one user respondent in the most educated category with low levels of need fulfillment and none for the other categories.

**Table 12: Education and Need Gratification**

| Education            | Need Gratification |        |      | Total |
|----------------------|--------------------|--------|------|-------|
|                      | Low                | Medium | High |       |
| Class 12th           | 0                  | 11     | 2    | 13    |
| Graduate             | 0                  | 33     | 25   | 58    |
| Postgraduate & above | 1                  | 30     | 14   | 45    |
| Total                | 1                  | 74     | 41   | 116   |

## 4. Conclusion

On the basis of the findings, it can be safely said that what essentially began with intent to fulfill cognitive needs of voters resulted in engaged citizens seeking gratification in different ways – bonding with fellow visitors (social integrative needs), contributing to the political discourse (personal integrative needs), venting pent up emotions (affective needs) and even seeking entertainment with mobile games and spoofs (tension release needs).

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**Annexure: Questionnaire****8. How is your usage of New Media helping in fulfilling your needs as a potential voter?**

Express your degree of agreement or disagreement with the following statements

*SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, U-Undecided, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree*

SA   A   U   D   SD

8.1a Helpsmake an informed choice of candidate

8.1b. Gives details of campaign schedule

8.1c. Gives details of policies of politicians

8.1d. Helps gather information for offline discussions

8.2a. Entertained by media spectacle

8.2b.The electoral frenzy keeps me engaged

8.2c. Gives me hope with politicians promising change

8.2d.Sense of being alivewith spoofy content, political mobile games

8.3a. Receiving encouraging response to posts that validate your stand

8.3b. Being online 'friends' with politician who shares your ideology

8.3c. Venting emotions by supporting/opposing political issues

8.3d. Safe outlet with no repercussions

8.4a. Sense of bonding with fellow supporters

8.4b. Share user-generated content like photos and videos

8.4c.Getting to know of friends who also support same politician

8.4d. Share problems with other visitors to online pages

8.5a. Escaping from reality with pseudo activism

8.5b. Tension release playing political mobile games

8.5c. Escaping from dull routine with political rhetoric and mudslinging

8.5 d. Getting over guilt about not discharging civic duties

*(Groups in Q 8 with four statements in each <=7, 8-13, >=14; Total Q 8<=33, 34-67, >=68)*

|  | SA | A | U | D | SD |
|--|----|---|---|---|----|
| 8.1a Helpsmake an informed choice of candidate                           |    |   |   |   |    |
| 8.1b. Gives details of campaign schedule                                 |    |   |   |   |    |
| 8.1c. Gives details of policies of politicians                           |    |   |   |   |    |
| 8.1d. Helps gather information for offline discussions                   |    |   |   |   |    |
| 8.2a. Entertained by media spectacle                                     |    |   |   |   |    |
| 8.2b.The electoral frenzy keeps me engaged                               |    |   |   |   |    |
| 8.2c. Gives me hope with politicians promising change                    |    |   |   |   |    |
| 8.2d.Sense of being alivewith spoofy content, political mobile games     |    |   |   |   |    |
| 8.3a. Receiving encouraging response to posts that validate your stand   |    |   |   |   |    |
| 8.3b. Being online 'friends' with politician who shares your ideology    |    |   |   |   |    |
| 8.3c. Venting emotions by supporting/opposing political issues           |    |   |   |   |    |
| 8.3d. Safe outlet with no repercussions                                  |    |   |   |   |    |
| 8.4a. Sense of bonding with fellow supporters                            |    |   |   |   |    |
| 8.4b. Share user-generated content like photos and videos                |    |   |   |   |    |
| 8.4c.Getting to know of friends who also support same politician         |    |   |   |   |    |
| 8.4d. Share problems with other visitors to online pages                 |    |   |   |   |    |
| 8.5a. Escaping from reality with pseudo activism                         |    |   |   |   |    |
| 8.5b. Tension release playing political mobile games                     |    |   |   |   |    |
| 8.5c. Escaping from dull routine with political rhetoric and mudslinging |    |   |   |   |    |
| 8.5 d. Getting over guilt about not discharging civic duties             |    |   |   |   |    |