

The Political Demography of Generation Z: Electoral Behaviour, Digital Engagement and the Restructuring of Democratic Participation in India

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Abstract

The Indian general elections of 2024 represented a critical juncture in the nation's democratic trajectory, underscoring the ascendant influence of Generation Z within the electoral matrix. With a registered electorate of 968.8 million citizens, the demographic composition has shifted decisively toward younger cohorts, necessitating a re-evaluation of traditional political behaviour models. This paper provides an exhaustive analysis of Gen Z voting behaviour, synthesizing empirical data from the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS)-Lokniti surveys, Election Commission of India (ECI) reports and the International Labour Organization (ILO). The analysis investigates the paradox of high digital political engagement contrasting with stark formal registration deficits. Furthermore, it examines the transition from identity-based sociological determinants to rational-choice pragmatism, driven by acute crises in youth unemployment and inflation. The research highlights the epistemological vulnerabilities introduced by unregulated digital ecosystems, including the proliferation of misinformation and algorithmic polarization. By mapping national vote share distributions and profound regional divergences, this study illuminates the complex hybridization of the contemporary Indian youth voter, offering critical insights into the future restructuring of democratic participation and institutional accountability in the Global South.

Keywords: Gen Z, Election, Voting Behaviour, Social Media, Digital Awareness

Introduction

The democratic architecture of India is currently undergoing a profound demographic and technological transition. Acknowledged as the world's largest electoral democracy, India concluded its eighteenth general election between April 19 and June 1, 2024. This monumental logistical exercise involved a registered electorate of 977.9 million citizens, representing approximately 70 percent of the total population, with an ultimate participation of 642 million voters. Within this vast electorate, the demographic distribution highlights a critical realignment: the undeniable ascendancy of Generation Z (Gen Z) as a decisive and transformative electoral force. Broadly categorized as individuals born between 1997 and 2012, this cohort comprises the first truly digital-native generation to participate in the Indian democratic process. In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the 18 to 29 age bracket constituted a highly influential bloc, encompassing over 215 million eligible voters, of which approximately 18.4 million were anticipated to be first-time participants.

The integration of Gen Z into the electoral calculus introduces unprecedented complexities into the academic study of voting behaviour. Historically, electoral politics in India has been heavily mediated by traditional sociological variables, most notably caste, religion, language and regional identity. However, the contemporary Gen Z electorate operates at the volatile intersection of deeply entrenched social hierarchies and modern, digital-first information ecosystems. This generation is characterized by widespread internet penetration, acute political awareness facilitated by social media and a growing propensity to evaluate political platforms based on governance outcomes, macroeconomic opportunities and social justice rather than inherited partisan loyalties.

Despite possessing immense numerical strength, the political influence of this demographic is complicated by structural paradoxes. While young voters demonstrate unprecedented levels of digital activism, participating vigorously in online political discourse, hashtag campaigns and virtual mobilization, systemic barriers such as urban mobility, bureaucratic hurdles and political apathy have resulted in stark registration deficits. Electoral data revealed that only about 38 percent of eligible first-time voters had formally registered to vote ahead of the 2024 national elections. This vast disparity between digital engagement and formal electoral participation forms a central inquiry of contemporary political science.

This paper provides a comprehensive, empirical examination of Gen Z voting behaviour in India. By synthesizing theoretical frameworks of political behaviour with contemporary socioeconomic realities such as the acute crisis of youth unemployment, the proliferation of digital misinformation and shifting sub-national dynamics, the analysis maps the contours of a new, hybridized Indian voter whose choices are actively restructuring the nation's democratic order.

Theoretical Frameworks Governing Youth Electoral Behaviour

To rigorously deconstruct the voting behaviour of the Gen Z electorate, it is necessary to examine their political choices through established paradigms of political science, adapting these classical theories to the empirical realities of a digitally saturated, post-liberalization India.

The Sociological Paradigm: The Evolution of Identity Politics

The Sociological Theory of Voting Behaviour postulates that electoral decisions are fundamentally shaped by an individual's social environment, emphasizing the deterministic role of collective group affiliations such as family, caste (*biradari*), religion and regional identity. Historically, Indian elections have relied heavily on the micro-targeting and mobilization of these collective identities. While early modernization theories suggested that urbanization, increased educational attainment and technological exposure would gradually dissolve caste-based voting, empirical evidence from recent elections indicates that identity politics has not been erased but rather recalibrated.

Among Gen Z voters, the sociological paradigm operates with significantly more nuance than in previous generations. Young voters are increasingly exposed to multicultural and globalized environments through educational institutions and digital media, fostering a worldview where diversity is a daily reality rather than a distant ideological abstraction. However, localized sociological realities persistently intersect with modern aspirations. For example, in the state of Bihar, where nearly 58 percent of the population is under the age of 25, caste identity continues to intersect deeply with economic mobility. Political parties recognize this dual reality, often fielding candidates who satisfy local caste arithmetic while simultaneously promoting youth-centric policies, such as the Mukhyamantri Nishchay Swayam Sahayata Bhatta Yojana (an unemployment stipend) or the establishment of skill universities, to appeal specifically to the Gen Z demographic. Thus, sociological factors act as a baseline cognitive filter through which young voters evaluate the rational economic promises of political candidates.

The Psychological Paradigm: Charisma, Leadership and Credibility

The Psychological Theory shifts the analytical focus to internal cognitive processes, emphasizing long-term party identification, ideological alignment and candidate perception. For Gen Z, traditional party loyalty, often inherited unquestioningly from family structures, is demonstrably weakening. It is increasingly being replaced by a performance-based evaluation of political leaders. This generation places a high premium on authenticity,

transparency and effective communication, frequently leveraging digital platforms to scrutinize political rhetoric.

The 2024 elections demonstrated the enduring, yet evolving, power of candidate perception. Over the past decade, the incumbent Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) heavily leveraged the personal charisma and leadership image of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Pre-poll surveys indicated that the 'Modi guarantee' continued to resonate strongly among young voters, with a significant segment preferring his centralized leadership over opposition alternatives, equating it with national stability and civilizational pride. However, the psychological attachment to charismatic leadership is increasingly tested by cognitive dissonance arising from personal economic distress. When a charismatic leader fails to alleviate immediate material anxieties, such as job scarcity or localized corruption, the psychological bond weakens, leading to voter volatility and the fracturing of previously monolithic voting blocs.

The Rational Choice Paradigm: Issue-Oriented Pragmatism

The Rational Choice Theory, rooted in the Downsian economic model of democracy, conceptualizes the voter as a utility-maximizing actor who evaluates political options based on cost-benefit analyses of policy outcomes. This theory is profoundly applicable to the educated, urbanized and digitally connected segments of Gen Z. Unburdened by the historical loyalties of their parents, young citizens increasingly operate as independent, issue-oriented voters.

For the contemporary Indian youth, rational choice is overwhelmingly defined by economic survival, human capital development and the integrity of public institutions. Educational quality, examination integrity, skill development and inflation control are the primary metrics by which incumbent governments are judged. When political parties fail to deliver on these pragmatic metrics, rational choice dictates a shift in electoral allegiance, a dynamic that profoundly influenced the electoral margins in the 18th Lok Sabha elections, particularly in states experiencing high levels of agrarian and industrial stagnation.

Demographic Dynamics and the Registration Paradox

While the discourse often focuses on the voting choices of Gen Z, an equally pressing concern is their absence from the formal electoral rolls. High levels of digital political discourse do not organically translate into electoral participation, revealing a profound paradox in youth democratic engagement.

State-Level Demographic Distributions

The distribution of the youth electorate across India is highly uneven, reflecting broader demographic transitions across different states. Data compiled by the Election Commission of India for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections highlights the significant variance in the proportion of electors within the 18 to 29 age cohort across various jurisdictions.

State / Union Territory	Share of Electors in Age Cohort 18–29 Years (%)
Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu	38.80%
Meghalaya	36.01%
Arunachal Pradesh	34.12%

Bihar	22.80%
Uttar Pradesh	21.19%
Maharashtra	19.82%
Tamil Nadu	19.43%
NCT of Delhi	18.89%
Kerala	18.04%
All India Average	22.78%

Data derived from the Election Commission of India Atlas 2024

This data illustrates that while the national average of the youth electorate stands at 22.78 percent, regions with younger populations, particularly in the Northeast and specific Union Territories, possess a much higher concentration of Gen Z voters. Conversely, states further along in their demographic transition, such as Kerala and Tamil Nadu, exhibit a lower proportion of voters in this age bracket.

The Registration Deficit and Urban Apathy

The most glaring manifestation of the participation gap is the critically low rate of voter registration among eligible first-time voters. Out of an estimated 49 million eligible citizens aged 18 to 19, only approximately 18 million (38 percent) were officially registered on the electoral rolls leading into the 2024 national elections.

A geographic analysis of this registration deficit reveals concerning disparities that challenge the narrative of a universally engaged youth demographic.

State / Union Territory	Registration Rate of First-Time Voters (18–19 Years)
Telangana	67%
Jammu and Kashmir	62%
Himachal Pradesh	60%
Odisha	49%
West Bengal	48%
Kerala	38%
Maharashtra	27%
Uttar Pradesh	23%

NCT of Delhi	21%
Bihar	17%

Data reflects reported registrations for first-time voters prior to the 2024 General Elections

States with massive youth populations and decisive political weight, such as Bihar (17 percent) and Uttar Pradesh (23 percent), exhibited exceptionally low registration rates among new voters. Even in the national capital, Delhi, a hub of political activity and higher education, only 21 percent of eligible first-time voters successfully navigated the registration process.

Several structural factors drive this registration deficit. A primary driver is urban mobility and domestic migration. An increasing segment of Gen Z relocates from rural to urban centers, or across state lines, for higher education, vocational training and employment. The current electoral framework rigidly requires voters to cast ballots in their home constituencies where they are registered. The financial and logistical burdens of traveling back home exclusively to vote result in the de facto disenfranchisement of millions of migrant students and young professionals. Furthermore, despite aggressive digitization efforts, bureaucratic friction persists. A Lokniti-CSDS survey of unregistered youth in Delhi highlighted that a significant portion cited administrative fatigue, noting that they ‘did not get time’ (18.8 percent) or were ‘not in possession of required documents’ (5.6 percent).

Institutional Interventions: The SVEEP Initiative

To counteract youth apathy, the Election Commission of India has aggressively deployed institutional interventions, most notably the Systematic Voters’ Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) program. Acknowledging the participation challenges categorized as a ‘youth disconnect’ and ‘urban apathy,’ the ECI launched targeted initiatives such as the ‘Turning 18’ and ‘You are the One’ campaigns in the run-up to the 18th Lok Sabha Elections. Recognizing the digital nativism of the target audience, the ECI collaborated with popular social media platforms and Gen Z content creators, utilizing platforms like Instagram, YouTube and WhatsApp to stimulate civic duty and simplify the registration narrative. While these efforts have yielded localized successes, the overarching national registration statistics indicate that informational campaigns must be coupled with structural reforms, such as robust remote voting mechanisms for domestic migrants, to truly bridge the participation gap.

The Economic Imperative: Unemployment and Inflation as Primary Drivers

The defining characteristic of the 2024 electoral cycle was the overwhelming dominance of economic anxieties among the electorate, particularly the youth. India's macroeconomic growth narrative, often heralded globally, stood in stark contrast to the microeconomic realities experienced by millions of young citizens entering the workforce.

The Crisis of Youth Unemployment and the NEET Demographic

Employment generation is unequivocally the most critical determinant of Gen Z voting behaviour. The *India Employment Report 2024*, published jointly by the International Labour Organization and the Institute for Human Development, presented sobering statistics: the youth demographic accounted for approximately 83 percent of the country's total unemployed population. Even more alarming is the concentration of unemployment among the formally educated youth. In the year 2000, educated young people comprised 35.2 percent of the unemployed youth demographic; by 2022, this figure had surged dramatically to 65.7 percent.

Furthermore, a stark gender disparity exists within this crisis; among educated unemployed youths, women accounted for a disproportionately larger share (76.7 percent) compared to men (62.2 percent).

The ILO report further estimated that 103.4 million out of India's 371 million youth population fall into the NEET category, 'Not in Education, Employment or Training'. This represents roughly one in three young Indians existing entirely outside the productive economy. This structural economic exclusion generates profound psychological frustration, eroding trust in democratic institutions and fueling anti-incumbency sentiments.

The electoral ramifications of these economic realities were vividly captured in the pre-poll surveys conducted by CSDS-Lokniti.

Primary Electoral Concern	Percentage of Respondents (2024 Pre-Poll)	Shift from 2019 Elections
Unemployment	27%	Increased from 11% in 2019
Price Rise / Inflation	23%	Increased by 19 percentage points
Development	13%	N/A
Corruption	8%	N/A
Ram Mandir / Ayodhya	8%	N/A
Hindutva	2%	N/A
International Image	2%	N/A

Data derived from CSDS-Lokniti Pre-Poll Survey 2024

As demonstrated by the empirical data, 50 percent of the electorate identified unemployment or inflation as their absolute primary concern, decisively overshadowing ideological, religious, or nationalistic issues. The exponential rise in concern over unemployment, jumping from a mere 11 percent in the 2019 post-poll survey to 27 percent in 2024, illustrates how the lived economic reality of Gen Z forced a pivot toward rational choice voting. Rising prices of essential commodities, educational expenses and housing further compounded this distress, making the fundamental cost of living a pivotal electoral metric.

Policy Responses and Campaign Adaptations

Recognizing the undeniable potency of youth economic grievances, political campaigns in 2024 were heavily calibrated to address these issues. The opposition Indian National Congress (INC) unveiled a dedicated 'Youth Manifesto,' promising structural reforms such as 30 lakh (3 million) government jobs, guaranteed apprenticeships and a ₹5,000 crore start-up fund specifically designed to attract the Gen Z vote. Conversely, the incumbent BJP emphasized its record of fostering an entrepreneurial ecosystem, highlighting schemes like the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY), Skill India and Digital India, while projecting the overarching vision of a developed nation by 2047 to capture the aspirational imagination of first-time voters.

However, the divergence between macroeconomic messaging and microeconomic realities resulted in significant electoral friction. While the BJP retained a large portion of the youth vote, the accumulation of livelihood anger, exacerbated by past economic shocks such as demonetization, GST implementation and the pandemic's lingering impact on the informal sector, resulted in substantial seat losses for the ruling party, particularly in rural and semi-urban constituencies where the agrarian and employment crises were most acute.

The Hegemony of Social Media and Influencer Politics

Social media platforms specifically WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram and X (formerly Twitter) have decisively superseded traditional print and broadcast media as the primary conduits for political information among young voters. A comprehensive CSDS-Lokniti study observed that the proportion of youth (under 35 years of age) citing social media as their primary or secondary source of political information escalated from 31 percent in 2014 to 61 percent in recent electoral cycles.

Digital platforms offer unprecedented accessibility, allowing political entities to bypass traditional journalistic gatekeepers and communicate directly with the electorate. In response to this shift, the use of social media influencers emerged as a cornerstone of contemporary campaign strategy. By partnering with content creators who possess massive followings and high relatability among Gen Z, political parties seamlessly weave ideological messaging into entertainment, lifestyle and educational content, effectively reaching apolitical or undecided youths.

The Epistemological Threat: Misinformation, Deepfakes and Polarization

While the democratization of information empowers young voters to engage in independent political analysis, the digital ecosystem is simultaneously fraught with systemic vulnerabilities. The proliferation of misinformation, disinformation and algorithmic echo chambers poses a severe threat to the integrity of democratic choice.

Survey data revealed that an astonishing 80 percent of first-time voters encountered fake news on social media during the election campaign. The rapid dissemination of unverified claims, manipulated narratives and communally charged propaganda via encrypted peer-to-peer platforms like WhatsApp significantly distorts the political reality for young voters. Furthermore, the 2024 elections witnessed the advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and generative technologies in the electoral arena. AI-generated audio and video content, capable of fabricating speeches or events with hyper-realistic accuracy, were deployed by various political actors to manipulate voter perceptions, creating an environment where the authenticity of any digital content is perpetually in doubt.

The algorithms governing social media platforms are engineered to maximize user engagement by prioritizing sensationalist and emotionally resonant content. This creates 'echo chambers,' wherein Gen Z voters are continuously fed information that reinforces their preexisting ideological biases, severely limiting their exposure to diverse political viewpoints. This digital segregation exacerbates political polarization and diminishes the capacity for objective, rational choice voting.

Regulatory Deficits in the Digital Public Sphere

The governance of digital political communication in India currently suffers from profound structural inadequacies. Existing legislative frameworks such as the Representation of the People Act 1951, the Information Technology Act 2000 and the IT (Intermediary Guidelines) Rules 2021 were conceptualized long before the era of algorithmic micro-targeting and generative AI.

Legal and political scholars identify three critical regulatory deficits in the current architecture:

1. **The Anonymity-Attribution Gap:** The inability of electoral authorities to trace the originators of malicious political content or deepfakes due to platform encryption and anonymized digital networks.
2. **The Speed-and-Scale Problem:** Misinformation campaigns can reach millions of voters within hours, rendering post-facto debunking or Election Commission interventions effectively obsolete.
3. **The Platform Jurisdiction Challenge:** The immense difficulty of enforcing national electoral silence periods (such as Section 126 of the Representation of the People Act) across transnational digital platforms.

Without robust digital media literacy initiatives integrated into the formal educational curriculum, Gen Z voters remain highly susceptible to covert digital manipulation, threatening the foundational premise of informed democratic consent.

Electoral Outcomes and Shifting Alignments: The 2024 General Election

The culmination of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections provided critical empirical data regarding the alignment of the Gen Z electorate. Despite the pervasive anxiety surrounding unemployment and inflation, the electoral outcomes revealed a complex, multidimensional voting pattern that defied simplistic issue-based determinism.

National Vote Share and the Youth Demographic Advantage

At the macro level, the incumbent National Democratic Alliance (NDA), led by the BJP, secured 293 seats, while the opposition Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA bloc), spearheaded by the Congress, outperformed expectations to secure 234 seats. The BJP independently secured 240 seats, falling short of the 272-seat absolute majority it had commanded in the 2014 and 2019 elections, while the Congress improved its tally significantly to 99 seats.

In terms of overall national vote share, the CSDS-Lokniti post-poll survey indicated that the NDA maintained a narrow 3 percentage point lead over the INDIA bloc (43 percent compared to 40 percent). However, an analysis of age-stratified data reveals a distinct, disproportionate advantage for the ruling party among the youngest voters.

Voter Age Cohort	Support for NDA (BJP+)	Support for INDIA (Congress+)
18–25 Years (Gen Z)	46%	33%
Overall National Average	43%	40%

Data derived from CSDS-Lokniti Post-Poll Analysis 2024

The data explicitly indicates that the NDA maintained its strongest demographic advantage among first-time and young voters (aged 18–25), capturing 46 percent of their vote share significantly higher than the opposition's 33 percent. This constitutes a substantial 13-point gap among Gen Z voters, vastly outperforming the narrow 3-point gap in the general population.

This finding presents a critical analytical paradox: If youth unemployment and inflation were the most pressing issues, as established in the pre-poll surveys, why did the youngest demographic overwhelmingly support the incumbent government overseeing these precise economic conditions?

Several underlying factors explain this dynamic. First, the BJP has successfully cultivated a narrative of civilizational resurgence and national pride, epitomized by events such as the construction of the Ram Mandir. For a segment of the youth, this ideological identity overrides immediate economic grievances. Second, the personal popularity of Prime Minister Narendra Modi remains uniquely potent among younger voters who have virtually no political memory of preceding administrations. The perception of strong, decisive leadership continues to attract first-time voters who equate centralization with national progress. Finally, the BJP's resource-intensive, highly sophisticated digital campaigning architecture successfully outmaneuvered the opposition in capturing the attention of the digitally native Gen Z.

Nevertheless, the opposition INDIA bloc made notable gains among the youth compared to the 2019 elections, successfully capitalizing on livelihood issues and social justice narratives to consolidate anti-incumbency sentiments in several key battleground states.

Regional Variances and Intersecting Identities

The national aggregate masks profound regional divergences in youth voting behaviour, underscoring the enduring relevance of local sociological contexts and sub-national political cultures.

- **Uttar Pradesh and the Hindi Heartland:** The opposition's strategy to redefine social justice and mobilize marginalized castes (Dalits and non-Yadav OBCs) alongside minority communities fractured the BJP's consolidation in crucial states like Uttar Pradesh. Young voters from these communities, acutely affected by unemployment and perceived threats to constitutional reservations, shifted their allegiance toward regional opposition parties like the Samajwadi Party.
- **Kerala:** Historically characterized by a rigid bipolar contest between the Left Democratic Front (LDF) and the United Democratic Front (UDF), Kerala witnessed subtle but significant shifts in youth behaviour. The CSDS-Lokniti post-poll analysis indicated that while the BJP traditionally struggled to gain a foothold, it managed to secure 32 percent of the vote from the Ezhava community, a historically backward caste that typically supported the Left. This suggests that young voters in socially mobile communities are increasingly willing to breach historical class and caste alignments in pursuit of alternative political representation.
- **Jammu & Kashmir:** In the context of the first elections following the abrogation of Article 370 and the transition to a Union Territory, youth priorities sharply reflected regional divides. In the Kashmir Valley, young voters predominantly supported the National Conference-Congress alliance or the PDP, driven by demands for the restoration of Statehood and acute anger over local unemployment. Conversely, in the Jammu region, four out of every ten youths aligned with the BJP.

These regional snapshots empirically prove that the Gen Z voter is not a monolith; their electoral choices are heavily mediated by local economic trajectories, shifting caste realignments and regional identity politics.

Emerging Ideological Contours: Social Awareness and Independence

Beyond the binary of economic anxiety and leadership appeal, the Gen Z electorate exhibits distinct ideological evolution, prioritizing issues of social equity, pluralism and environmental sustainability.

The Preference for Pluralism and Democratic Norms

Growing up in a globally interconnected world has fostered a heightened sensitivity toward multiculturalism and inclusivity among Gen Z. Contrary to narratives of deepening communal polarization, empirical data suggests a robust defence of secularism and pluralism among the youth. The CSDS-Lokniti pre-poll survey

highlighted that 81 percent of respondents in the 18–25 age bracket agreed with the statement that ‘India belongs to citizens of all religions equally, not just Hindus’. This metric was significantly higher than the 73 percent agreement recorded among older demographics (56 years and above), indicating that the younger generation holds a stronger premium on religious pluralism and constitutional secularism.

This social awareness naturally extends to demands for gender justice, LGBTQ+ rights and the eradication of caste-based discrimination. Young voters increasingly assess the democratic health of the nation, expressing concerns over the independence of institutions, the stifling of political opposition and the suppression of free speech.

Climate Change and Sustainable Development

Environmental degradation, pollution and climate change are no longer fringe issues but core political demands for the contemporary youth. Understanding that they will disproportionately bear the brunt of ecological crises, Gen Z voters advocate for sustainable economic policies, renewable energy transitions and urban ecological preservation. Although environmental issues rarely supersede immediate economic concerns like unemployment at the ballot box, they serve as a critical secondary metric by which young voters evaluate the progressive vision of a political party.

The Rise of the Independent Voter

The synthesis of high educational attainment, digital information access and issue-oriented pragmatism has cultivated a culture of political independence within Gen Z. Unlike older generations characterized by rigid partisan loyalties, young voters exhibit higher electoral volatility. They are willing to switch allegiances based on government performance, policy shifts and the credibility of local candidates.

This independence forces political parties to remain continuously accountable. The traditional strategy of relying on secured ‘vote banks’ is increasingly obsolete when dealing with an electorate that demands measurable outcomes in education, employment and infrastructure. The necessity to appeal to this floating constituency is driving the modernization of political manifestos and compelling leaders to engage in direct, evidence-based communication.

Conclusion and Democratic Implications

Generation Z represents the most dynamic, informed and complex constituency within the Indian democratic framework. As evidenced by the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the voting behaviour of this demographic cannot be confined to traditional theoretical models. Instead, it is characterized by a sophisticated hybridization of sociological realities and rational choice pragmatism, deeply mediated by an omnipresent digital ecosystem.

The economic imperatives of unemployment, inflation and educational deficits remain the paramount drivers of youth electoral decisions. The structural exclusion of over a hundred million youths from education and employment, the NEET demographic, poses an existential challenge not only to macroeconomic growth but to long-term political stability. While charismatic leadership and nationalistic narratives continue to hold significant sway, as demonstrated by the NDA's robust 46 percent vote share among the 18–25 demographic, the underlying economic distress has injected unprecedented volatility into the political system, resulting in the resurgence of coalition politics.

Simultaneously, the digital realm acts as a double-edged sword. It has democratized political discourse and enabled rapid mobilization, yet it has also exposed young voters to targeted misinformation, deepfakes and algorithmic polarization. The inadequacy of current regulatory frameworks to manage AI and digital platforms

in the electoral space highlights a critical vulnerability in the democratic process that requires immediate legislative modernization.

Furthermore, the glaring deficit in formal voter registration among eligible first-time voters underscores systemic administrative and structural barriers, particularly for the vast population of urban migrants. Institutional efforts must pivot from mere awareness campaigns to structural electoral reforms that facilitate ease of access to the ballot, such as secure remote voting mechanisms.

Ultimately, as Generation Z continues to expand its footprint in the electorate, its demand for performance-oriented governance, transparent leadership and inclusive social policies will force a fundamental restructuring of Indian electoral politics. Political organizations that fail to transcend traditional identity politics and address the pragmatic, progressive and economic aspirations of the youth will find themselves increasingly alienated from the future of India's democracy.

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