

**Date: 15<sup>th</sup> November 2013**

## **Press Release**

### **Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and Facebook join hands to provide information on 'Know Your Neta' on mobiles for free (Dial \*325\*35#)**

**New Delhi, November 15, 2013:** Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and Facebook have joined hands to provide citizens the up-to-date candidates' information for the upcoming State Assembly Elections and Lok Sabha Elections to help them make an informed choice. Voters will now be able to access election candidates' criminal, financial, educational, professional etc. information directly on their mobile via Facebook using USSD technology<sup>1</sup>.

#### **How to access the information on election candidates for free-**

Access to information has never been simpler, faster and cheaper -- all users have to do is dial \*325# from their mobile to access Facebook and select the election menu (option 6) or directly dial \*325\*35# to access the election menu for no charge.

**Prof. Trilochan Sastry, Founder and Trustee, Association for Democratic Reforms, said,** "At ADR, we are committed to strengthening democracy by continuously empowering the electorate through greater dissemination of information relating to the candidates and the parties, for a better and informed choice. This initiative with Facebook will allow us to expand our reach. Voters will be able to know the poll worthiness of candidates -- their educational, criminal and financial information -- at their fingertips and choose wisely. Simply voting in an uninformed manner is not enough, citizens need to make an informed choice."

**Ankhi Das, Director of Public Policy, Facebook India, said,** "Over 82 million Indian citizens access Facebook regularly, and an increasing number of users access the platform on mobile. Together with ADR, an organization that has built its reputation by empowering citizens with informed updates and analysis, we hope to make

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<sup>1</sup> Facebook for USSD is a technology that helps people access facebook on phones without Internet. USSD is a technology that all GSM phones (over 90% of all phones today) across prices and complexity are equipped with. USSD allows text experiences on phones that are richer than SMS and cheaper for the user than mobile Internet.

information more readily available to users about the antecedents and performance of political candidates. Our goal is to enable citizens to get involved in issues of governance. We are delighted to collaborate with ADR on this important initiative.”

This initiative combines ADR’s strong experience in electoral research to millions of Facebook users in India. The USSD election feature will allow citizens to access information more easily and will enable them to make an informed choice.

## Contacts

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