

POLITICAL ADS ON FACEBOOK TO CARRY LABELS OFFERING INFORMATION ON ADVERTISER

Relevant for: Indian Polity | Topic: Elections, Election Commission and the Electoral Reforms in India Incl. Political Parties

In this photo taken on May 16, 2018, a figurine carrying the logo of social network Facebook is viewed in Paris. | Photo Credit: [AFP](#)

Facebook on Thursday said political advertisements on its platform will carry a 'disclaimer' offering details about those responsible for running the ad as the social media giant looks to bring transparency into political ads ahead of elections in India.

"Starting today (Thursday), people will begin to see political ads with 'Published by' or 'Paid for by' disclaimers specified by advertisers. This will give people more information about who is responsible for the ads they see," Shivnath Thukral, Public Policy Director, India and South Asia at Facebook said.

People will also be able to access a 'searchable ad library' to find out more about ads related to politics, including range of impressions, spends and demographics of who viewed the ad.

This month, Facebook will also start showing the primary country location of the people who manage pages running or paying for political ads in India.

The social media giant said the enforcement of the new features and the political ads policy begins February 21, and from then only advertisers who have completed authorisations and made stipulated disclosures will be allowed to run political ads in India.

With ensuing general elections, the Indian government had warned social media platforms of strong action if any attempt was made to influence the country's electoral process through undesirable means.

The Government is also proposing to amend IT rules, wherein social media, online platforms and messaging apps will be made more accountable and be mandated to deploy tools to identify and curb unlawful content as well as follow stricter due diligence practices.

Over the last few months, social media players like Facebook, Twitter, and Google have promised to infuse more transparency into political advertisements on their platform, and have since announced a slew of measures as part of election integrity efforts.

Facebook — which has over 200 million users in India — said it is committed to create a new standard of transparency and authenticity for political advertising on its platform and Instagram.

The social media giant is also making big changes to ads that reference political figures, political parties, elections and ads that advocate for or against legislation, ahead of polls.

"We first announced these plans back in December last year, when advertisers were able to begin authorisations on mobile, verifying their identity and location to run political ads," Mr. Thukral said and added that latest measures announced Thursday marks the next phase of the ongoing ad transparency efforts.

Political ads on Facebook will carry a 'Published by' or 'Paid for by' disclaimer provided by advertisers at the top of the ad. For the disclaimer, authorised advertisers can either name themselves, a page they run or another organisation as the entity behind the ad.

If they name another organisation, Facebook also require additional credentials such as phone number, email and website or a Media Certification & Monitoring Committee Certificate, to ensure that the entity cited is authentic.

Once a person clicks on the disclaimer, they will be taken to a searchable Ad Library offering details like ad's creative, start and end date, and performance data including range of impressions, range of spend, and information about who viewed the ad like age, gender and location across India.

The Ad Library archives political ads for up to seven years and is available to anyone, irrespective of whether they are logged into Facebook or not, at facebook.com/ads/archive. In March, India will also have its own Ad Library Report, which helps more easily view insights about the ads in the library, Facebook said.

Facebook will remove political ads running without a disclaimer in News Feed and will place them in the Ads Library.

Facebook also said that in coming weeks, people who manage pages with a large audience in India will need to secure their account with two-factor authentication and confirm their primary country location to be able to continue to post to their pages.

The move, said Facebook, would make it harder for people to administer a page in India using a fake or compromised account.

Facebook has planned to integrate chats within WhatsApp, Messenger and Instagram

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