

Social media in society: A boon or a bane

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Abstract

In the modern world social media is define in a terms of mobile and web based technologies to create a social network in a virtual world through a collection of online communication channels. The Social media has helped to make our society a democracy by placing emphasis on issues that at one point in time would have been considered strictly private such as child birth, homosexuality, child care, domestic violence, and sexual harassment. Coverage of exploitative malpractices by corrupted officials has helped in taking stringent actions against them by attracting the government's attention. We live in society today where the social media plays a pivotal role in how we see the world, and how our opinions are formed, whether it is from what we watch on television, facebook or what we gather from twitter, blogs, youtube etc.

This paper discusses whether social media is a boon or bane of a social perspective depicting its various benefits and pitfalls. It has also focused to find out the answer whether the social networking sites are boon or bane for today's society. It cannot be favored by proving it to be a complete boon nor can we call it to be completely negative. It is a mixture of both i.e. it is a boon as well as a bane.

Keywords: Social media, boon Facebook, instagram, social sites, users

1. Introduction

When we talk about social media, the first thing that strikes in our mind is facebook or Twitter, but social media is very broader than this Social media includes web- based and mobile technologies used to turn communication into interactive dialogue. It blends technology, telecommunications, and social interaction and provides a platform to communicate through words, pictures, films, and music. Social media is a medium that connects people and gives them voice. This voice is growing louder. It is a welcome sign. Social media helps in connecting themselves with social networking sites through which now people can stay far and yet remain connected For example Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Skype, YouTube, and the like are used quite frequently. Similarly, other social media like Blogs create a platform to post comment on any event which needs to be publicized also can be utilized as a awareness promotional technique for customer's adoption as well as for promotions. Now users are acquiring followers & subscribers and directing them to your social networking page. These media has an competitive edge over other popular public media like Television because there is a time gap between social event occurrence and the time it is being broadcasted. As boundaries between people blur over social media, and they become more aware and better informed, this will no longer be easy to do. However, with its potential to bring people together, social media also holds immense promise as a tool for social change. We have recently seen many successfully executed protests organized over social media that have made the right impact. Another application of social media could be to effectively utilize the vast diversity of human resource that India has which is still lying untapped. For instance, in Volunteer for a Better India, somebody announces a medical camp in a locality on a date and others join. Likewise, somebody announces a tree plantation or a cleaning drive and people support the initiative with their time or resources.

1.1 Objectives

This paper examines whether the social media is a boon or a bane for society:

- To describe the role of social media in society
- To analyze the social media as social educator.
- To analyze social networks have the potential to bring in change.
- Enumerate the positive and negative effects of social media.

1.2 Contribution of Social Media to Society

Social media is those virtual worlds where people interact freely, sharing and discussing ideas and information, know about each other and their lives, sending messages etc. by using a multimedia mix of personal words, pictures, videos and audios. It is worthful aid for solving crime, police are beginning to investigate gang-related crimes on social media networks. Social media is a true voice of people. It is a powerful force for change and it has a potential to influence the outcomes of political decisions. We can reconnect with our kith and kin internationally without wasting money on international phone calls by using emails and Skype. Social media has transformed the market. Brands have the ability to engage the customers with products, social media helps to make good brand image. Here are some spectacular examples of social media:

1. Blogs and Microblogs (i.e. Twitter)
2. Social news networking sites (i.e. Digg and Leakernet)
3. Content communities (i.e. Youtube)
4. Social networking sites (i.e. Facebook)
5. Collaborative projects (i.e. wikipedia)

Social media is different from any other media in many ways including quality, reach, frequency, usability, immediacy and durability.

1.3 Social Networks Have the Potential to Bring In Change

Social Media has always been a significant pillar of society. Social Media doesn't just report happenings, it also builds public opinion. In the recent past, we have seen so many top news stories originate from social media. Apart from highlighting issues that are socially relevant and crucial, social media has also exposed the disconnect between the government and the population. People are more aware of what our leaders are up to and exchange notes on how laws and policies affecting them are being made. Thanks to the social media, discussion on political issues and implications is widespread and immediate. Like all powerful tools, social media should also be used with utmost care and responsibility failing which it can cause damage to the society. More recently, in India, social media was used to spread panic among people from North-eastern states living in Bangalore and Hyderabad leading to a massive exodus to their native places.

1.4 Glance on social media as social educator

The motto of social media is to inform, to entertain and simultaneously to educate or to impart knowledge to the society. We all are aware of The Right to Education, Right to Information and Adult Education etc. through various media. The social awareness programmes on Child marriage, Child labour, eradication of Polio, hygiene, HIV AIDS and so many are becoming an obligatory episode in main stream of social media.

Social media has a strong potential to steer the voyage of a society towards sustainable development. For advance application of e-governance, distance education and e-commerce media is the hub of all such activities and without which it is impossible. Social media can be used for educational purposes in an effective manner, and media is a boon for all age groups and people from different walks of life in many ways. They get news, views, and constructive information related to the subject of their choice. Challenging poverty, unemployment, malnutrition, illiterate and bureaucracy is the ultimate duty of social media. Various Indian brands are harnessing the power of social media, where they have launched digital campaigns, set up hashtags, contests and so on to spread awareness and raise money some of interesting Social Media Campaigns:

- Philips India has launched a 'Husband Initiated Movement' or 'HIM', in a move to spread awareness about breast cancer. They have been constantly encouraging their audiences to participate through their social networks, and even created a very powerful advertisement about this cause with a mute couple.
- Elle has taken its pink ribbon initiative one step ahead, by creating a Facebook page for it and constantly providing support to women. They have tied up with many brands, that are supporting Elle in the fight against this disease by providing discounts, donations and so on. In a unique initiative by Elle India, people have to post their selfies wearing pink in support of breast cancer awareness. Bollywood celebrities like Sonam Kapoor, Nargis Fakhri and many more have shared their PinkSelfie which in-turn has encouraged their fans to follow the same feat.
- TrulyMadly "Breaking Stereotypes"] In a nation of diversities, our perceptions about people of a certain community often overlook logic. We've created such

hardened stereotypes that artists struggle for a living, government office employees 'do not work', girls who love fashion are shallow, men from the north do not respect women, and so on, we are all falling victim to a stereotypical society. As harmful as it is to the society, here is a campaign I came across from 'TrulyMadly.com' that seeks to break stereotypes existing in the country, with the help of social media. TrulyMadly is a modern day matchmaking service that finds suitable matches using science and technology.

- Gillette India has also reached out to bloggers to carry on the conversations. It has teamed up with Blogadda, an Indian bloggers community, to launch the 'My Role Model' blogging contest, where bloggers have been invited to share about that one person they considered a role model in their lives. The role model could be a father, a teacher, a colleague or a complete stranger who they looked up to and got inspired by.

1.5 Positive and negative effects of social media

Social media offers lots of opportunities for learning and interaction, Students are getting to explore and experience the world not only by books and assignments; but also by adapting social media. Students and teenagers can produce and retain information, In today's world; contacts, networks and communications are very important; students who are accessing facebook, twitter and other such social networking site to connect and share information have good contacts. Social media gives teens with unusual interest and hobbies a place to share information and enthusiasm. Teens who are differently abled and have other challenges can communicate with other teens with similar problems.

Social media has also adverse effects as can be a very distracting and harmful for students. Students share personal information, comment on someone's post which may be harmful for them. Always glued with their mobiles, tablets, computer which is a wastage of time and may spoil their performance. Online bullying and harassment which is also known as Cyber-bullying may be the biggest danger for teens. Less interaction with friends and family.

From businesses point of view social media gives a platform such as Facebook and Twitter help targeting new customers and make brand more popular. Social Media can improve customer services and enable business to gain new information about their customers. And on the other side consumers can post negative comments on social media sites which may damage your prospects with new clients. Threat of hackers is a terrible issue on social media. Choosing among different social media sites might be a tough task for business owner, if select the wrong one then it may affect the success of business. Social media has both positive as well as negative effect on society.

2. Conclusion

Social Media strongly influences the minds of the people who read or view what has been published. Social media is a boon if it is socially responsible, unbiased, non-political, informative and educative to the masses but not to a class alone. But, it is a curse if it carries information or coverage to sensationalize, create curiosity among the public, misrepresentation of facts at the cost of someone's reputation. For long-term solutions, we will have to bank on the educational institutions to educate, train, groom and prepare the youth to be more discerning

viewers rather than passive spectators or participants in order to avoid any irresponsible influence or working of the media. It can target both local and global users. It helps to know about the various problems faced by the nation, achievements of the nation in different sectors, through the prompt and precise reporting of different forms of social media. It has also brought to light some of the rustic practices like child marriage, dowry, etc., to light and has empowered women especially to come to the forefront and express their grievance.

However, media suffers from some pitfalls; growing consumerism and materialism have adversely impacted our social media. At times, the information reported may not be authentic from every angle. Hence, there may be a misinterpretation of a situation. News can be manipulated to influence the minds of the users. For example, a particular political party may manipulate reports in their favor, which would indicate the political control in the media. Media bias can occur due to various issues. A user or an editor may give personal preference to an issue. A particular event or a celebrity may receive undue importance and set wrong ideals before the youth. It may present an ostentatious lifestyle, which may inculcate wrong ideals amongst youngsters. Unnecessary sensationalism of an issue may project incorrect information to the public. It cannot be favored by proving it to be a complete boon nor can we call it to be completely negative. It is a mixture of both i.e. it is a boon as well as a bane.

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