

SOCIAL MEDIA: A COMPELLING WAY TO STAY CONNECTED

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ABSTRACT

Social Media does not need any introduction. Today almost 60% of world population is connected to Social Media in one way or the other. Social Media which includes WhatsApp, Facebook, Myspace and YouTube etc. is becoming more and more popular and has become part of daily life for an increasing number of people. Because of their features, people are attracted to Social Media. The main reason being, these Social Networking Sites provides News, Employment, Marketing, Personal growth, sharing of information. It is very easy to use and access Social Media through various different channels.

Keywords: *Social Media, Social Networking Sites, Marketing, Personal Growth.*

Introduction

What is Social Media

Social media is an internet-based form of communication. Social media platforms allow users to have conversations, share information and create web content. There are many forms of Social media, including blogs, micro-blogs, wikis, Social networking sites, photo-sharing sites, instant messaging, video-sharing sites, podcasts, widgets, virtual worlds, and more. Andres Kaplan (2010) described in his study that Social media is a set of internet based application that constructs on the ideological and technological foundation of web and that permit the design and exchange of user generated content. Social Media are Electronic Media that transforms audience into active participants in the communication revise content, respond to content or contribute to new contents.

Social Media is defined as "A group of Internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundation of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content". Furthermore, Social media depends on mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content. Social media has been broadly defined to refer to 'the many relatively inexpensive and widely accessible electronic tools that enable anyone to publish and access information, collaborate on a common effort, or build relationships.

Social media is currently playing an important role in the society, there is hardly anyone in the world that is not familiar with Social media or does not use it in one way or the other. Weather it is children, young, old, rich, poor or any other relating to a particular caste or class use different platforms of Social media for fulfillment of their necessities. Nowadays some of the major platforms of Social media have become very popular on the global level like Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, YouTube and Instagram etc. on which a person spends hours. Through these platforms, the person can listen music created by others or can share the songs created by himself with the people; likewise they can also share the various methods of cooking with others and can learn cooking.

The impact of Social media on the society can be seen in the last 200 years as a result of the transformation of information and communication technology. This has accelerated due to the development of mobile technology. Due to which the number of mobile users are increasing at the same pace as the users of Social media. With the information related to the subjects of Social, political, cultural, educational, entertainment, etc. is available easily, the popularity of Social media is increasing. The use of Social media has affected people so much that without it life seems incomplete. The utility of Social media in every field has affected each of them. Socio-economic, Political, Educational, there is not a single area on which Social media has any effect. Social media has both positive and negative effects of people, which depends on the person using it and how they use it. If they use it for good cause, it has

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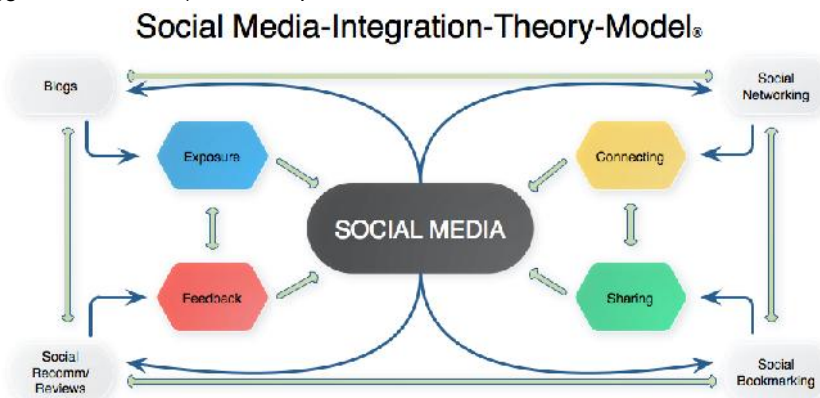
good effects. But when a person uses Social media more than necessary, then it adversely affects the health of the person, mental state, education etc. The increasing popularity of Social media also has an effect on the public mentality, due to which the use of Social media is increasing among them. Due to which their living, food and lifestyle are also affecting. The increasing utility of mobile today has become a symbol of Social status. Whoever has the more expensive mobile the Social status is considered to be as much higher.

Due to the increasing popularity of Social media in society and individuals, Social media has played an important role in changing the society. It has made life easier as well as proving helpful in maintaining relationships. Social media has also affected the Social relationships. On the one hand, on different platforms of the Social media people are able to talk to each other, share their video clips of their works etc., which strengthens their relationships, but this is only virtual. Where on the one hand, Social media has tried to strengthen the relationships; on the other hand it has also increased the physical distance from relatives. So there are positive as well as negative effects on Social relationships. Social media has also affected the Indian society. As only the individuals uses the Social media, then the group is formed and they form the society, therefore it is inescapable to have the effects of Social media on the society as the individual, group, traditions, customs comes within the society.

Social media is made up of two words. The first word "Social" and second word "Media". First word indicates a situation in which man tries to actively associate himself with a group so that he can share his thoughts and life experiences among themselves. Man is Social by nature and he likes to interact with people, Socialize, share one's ideas, co-operate with each other. He lives and expresses himself in society in many forms and purposes. Social media is believed to be born in 1995, when a website name classmates.com was started. Through which schools, colleges, workplaces and military people could connect with each other. After this a Social site named Bolt.com was created in 1996. In the year 1997 a site named Asian revenue was started for Asian American community. The biggest change in the field of Social media was the creation of Facebook and Twitter. Facebook was born on 4 January, 2004. Social media is related to electronic, information technology, mobile & internet. Social media provides a great opportunity to realize system reforms. It has changed the world into a small village. Social media has changed the world by giving a free chance to the freedom of expression. It has given wings to journalism and encourages it. This is the only media that has tried to eliminate the gap between rich, poor & middle class. With the advent of Social media, the nature of freedom of expression of the people has changed. As before, curb controls and conditions no longer exists. In today's time, almost everyone has this facility that by connecting to the internet with their mobiles or computers, they can login and express their reactions, thoughts and feelings.

How does Social Media Work

Social Networks are the relationships that tie us together. Think about what happens when we meet someone new. We ask where they work, where they grew up, where they went to school. Eventually, we realize that our childhood friend was in this guy's fraternity in college. Even though we've never met before, we are both part of the same Social network - a friend of a friend or we can say a Mutual friend. There are many different models which explain Social Media Theory. One of them is "Social Media-Integration Theory Model" given by ISRA GRACIA (a Marketer, new media advisor, speaker, blogger and educator), which explains:



Social Media is integrated with Social Networking, Blogs, Social Bookmarking and Social Reviews. A Social network is a Social structure that maps out the relationships between individuals. Technically we all belong to one giant Social network, but we also belong to smaller, tighter Social networks defined by our families, our friends, where we live, where we work, where we went to school, our hobbies and interests and much more. So Social Media maps these to create a strong network.

Most Popular Social Media Platforms in Different Domains

There are hundreds of Social media Sites and the number is growing every year, so deciding which one is right for your uses can be overwhelming. It is important to be aware of emerging Social media sites, and understand how they could fit into your communications strategy. However, not all Social media sites are conducive to your uses. The most popular of these in different domains are: Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest and YouTube etc.

- **Facebook:** is a Social networking site that allows people from around the world to network with friends, companies and organizations. People looking to build overall awareness or stay connect with the world should consider using Facebook.
- **WhatsApp** is a Social networking application through which people stay connected using their Mobile devices, Share Pictures, Audios, Videos, and Documents.
- **Twitter** is a micro-blogging site that allows people to post updates in 140 characters or less. Departments looking to engage their audience at a high frequency and have the resources to respond promptly should consider using Twitter.
- **Instagram:** is a Social networking site that allows users to share pictures and short videos using their mobile device. People interested in these contents should use Instagram.
- **LinkedIn:** is a business-related Social networking site used mainly for professional networking. People looking to connect with their current employees or alumni should consider creating a LinkedIn group.
- **Pinterest:** is a Social networking site that allows users to organize and share content using virtual pinboards. With a large female audience, the website offers inspirational and creative content such as recipes, craft projects, fashion, and event planning.
- **YouTube:** is the world's largest video sharing site. People or Companies with a videographer or high volume of videos should consider creating a YouTube channel to publish their videos.

Practices the Social Media can be used as a Tool to Stay Updated

The development and upliftment of the society is possible only by staying updated of the activities of the society. If there is a problem in the society which the person is not aware of, it becomes a cancer for the society and if the person is aware of its solution, then it can be removed. There is always some medium to make aware about the problems arising in the society, its development, etc., whether it is a leader. Through newspapers, magazines, television, news channels, Social media etc. a person tries to make other people aware of his thoughts and feelings. At present in all these mediums, the Social Media is most effective in bringing awareness in the society. Social Media is a powerful medium to bring awareness to the issues related to the development of the individuals along with the problems of ethics, unemployment, terrorism etc. At present, governments are also using Social media to spread awareness about the ongoing issues like prevention of epidemic Covid-19, which are also affecting the general public. Similarly, in the interest of students and to make the government aware of its negligence towards rising unemployment, the 'unemployment day' was celebrated on 17 September 2020.

President of the United States Barak Obama once said: "The world has always been so messy, we are just noticing now in part because of Social Media and our capacity to see in intimate detail the hardships that people are going through."

We can stay updated using Social media platforms, viz: Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest and YouTube etc. Social media is reshaping news and its readers. Facebook is the obvious news powerhouse among the Social media sites, almost 50% population now a days is active on Facebook and the number is growing in million per day. YouTube is next biggest Social news pathway after Facebook.

Facebook users spend far less time and consume far fewer pages than those who arrive to that news by searching contents on web or getting the news through conventional media. As soon as the news breaks out it becomes a trend on Social media and the trend about any specific news is on top if

that news is breaking news. Because people will talk, discuss, share and comment about that particular news and then it will become most talked news within 5 minutes of its release and it becomes a trend. And the news is now available 24*7, thanks to growing technology and power of Social media.

The news channels are also going through major technological changes to cope with the growing competition. It may seem like re-stating the obvious but looking in our rear-view mirror back along the road of technological change shows just how news has changed: typewriters out, computers in; newspaper cuttings libraries closed as the internet opened access to information; mobile phones rather than messages at hotel receptions; satellite technology to feed material rather than tapes put on planes and so on.

All big news organizations are plunging into the world of Social media, looking at its extraordinary newsgathering potential, its potential as a new tool to engage the audience and as a way of distributing our news.

Social Media: An instrument for Government to Share News

Nowadays even governments of different countries are using taking help of Social Media to stay engaged with its people. Be it any Election campaign, taking people's views, looking weather any new Government idea/Scheme is good enough for its people through opinion polls, or sharing a small piece of information. Social Media is best way to interact with people for Governments today.

The "Digital India" dream of our Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi is totally linked to Social Media in one way and Social Media is going to play the most important and vast role in his dream.

Taking a recent example of the news: "Prime Minister Narendra Modi jolted the nation on Tuesday night with a dramatic announcement: currency notes of Rupees500 and 1,000 will be demonetized from November 9 onwards, in a bid to crack down on illegal hoarding of black money. Instead, the government will introduce new design for the Rupees 500 note and add Rupees 2,000 note", as soon as Prime Minister Modi announced this, it was available on Facebook, Twitter and everywhere the very next minute, and there were people taking, discussing, sharing the news, we could saw the night when the new broke out, our Facebook news feed was full of posts with people posting their thoughts on this ban. And we could also give our opinion on this and support or criticize this Government decision. So it is very easy now a days to access any news which is most talked at the time and express our own opinion on that.

As per Social Media Digest India 2014, Internet penetration in India is 10.6% of which about 84% use the Social media. This translates to around 8.5% of total population or around 110 million Social network users and it is rising at a rate of 8.5% per year. With low priced smart phones, penetration of internet as well as Social media is bound to increase exponentially.

The main functions of Social media in this may involve the following points:

- Information Dispersion
- Democratic Policy making with help of common men's views
- Knowing the feelings and views of Civilians

In India almost every Government has started their Facebook and Twitter pages for disseminating information to Public at large. The most useful initiative involves Facebook page of Delhi Police, through which people can post pictures as well as write information about any wrong doings or traffic violations or anything going wrong without being involved. And the response of this site has been very good.

Social Media page of Prime Minister of India also has a big fan following and there are regular updates to inform public in general about Prime minister's initiatives, programs etc. There is an App called NAMO for mobile devices, specially dedicated to our Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi. This brings to the latest information, instant updates & helps you contribute towards various tasks.

Sociological Perspective of Social Media

Sociology is the study of Society in which we include Family, Marriage, Caste, Class, Values, Social structure etc.

Sociology is how we live our life every day and how we interact with other human beings. The evolution of internet has changed the Social Structure of Society. Earlier, when Social Media was not so popular or didn't exist, people used to interact with public conversations. Taking Family into consideration, Social Media has changed the way we interact within family. There as time when we had to visit our friends and family members just to share our thoughts and to take their ideas on any

conversation. But with the advancement of technology people seem to be making connections more easily and on a much broader scale. They are interacting in many different ways and in some cases, the interactions are extremely creative. It has been seen that conscious and subconscious behaviors dramatically increase when people are involved through Social networking. Because humans are emotionally dependent on each other, many people will share qualities, both positive and negative. But as there are always two sides of every coin, there are some drawbacks of this technology advancement. When people used to meet physically with each other there was special bonding existed, which is now getting faded, that emotional bond is disappearing slowly.

Same is the case in Marriages and Castes, Social Media has changed everything. These days Social Media is playing an important role in making and destroying relationships. It is critical to understand that human relationships are at the heart of Social media's success. A person sitting at one place can make friend on Facebook, who is physically miles away from him/her, but they can interact with each other and can fall into a relationship which can end up with their marriage if their thoughts are in same frequency and they seem to like each other well. When people engage in Social networking, there is no doubt that they start to have a tremendous impact on each other and the discussions that come out of the networking experiences very often affect the decisions that they make in life. But it can have adverse effects too, for example without meeting there may be cases when it is not safe to fall into any relationship, without judging any person, without meeting them, it cannot be decided if that person is also serious for relationship or is a fraud.

Social Media has helped bridge gaps in a phenomenal way. People have come back in touch with their schoolmates, College mates, ex-classmates, whom they had not heard for a long time. This powerful medium has helped reconnect and maintain old relationships. This is one of the most positive impacts of Social Media. However, a very interesting trend is emerging rapidly. The medieval era's perspective of sending Birthday cards etc. by courier is now replaced with sending best wishes through Mails or Facebook posts. Making Birthday calendar in hard copy has been replaced by setting up Birthday reminders in Google or Facebook Calendars. Now people wish anyone through posting on his/her Facebook/Twitter/WhatsApp timelines. The "Virtual World" is changing the reality at a very fast pace. We get to know about anyone's feelings, change of Jobs, Promotions in jobs, and Relationship Status etc. through Social Media now days. So, the tendency for gossips, chit chats face to face is getting reduced.

Finally the conclusion is, technology can be viewed as an extremely sophisticated tool that makes things possible when it comes to Social Media and human beings. As time goes on, those tools change and new ways are introduced. It is very important to take advantage of whichever technological advances are being offered, as long as they make sense for our relationships. A devotion of time and energy toward working with new technologies will pay off in making and maintaining relationships in one way or another.

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