SOCIAL MEDIA: MANY TOO MANY FORM OF MESSAGE TRANSMISSION AN ANALYSIS (Article)

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Abstract

Social media play a very important role in national development. National development involves changes or advancement in a nation aimed at improving the political, economic and social lives of the people. The real influence of the social media in national development is dependent upon the penetration of internet and on computer literacy. The traditional media in dictatorships for example are not going to present the real picture because of the pressure from the Government and society. On the other hand big media houses are also called elite media in which news and views of the common person is absent. Therefore social media can bridge this gap by providing a platform for common person where everyone can become a journalist or a watchdog of the society. This is just reverse to the concept of different early models of communication in which the communication was from one source (media) to many. Social media has given a new concept of communication in which many source of information are multiplied by many. This is really a recent phenomenon in which many persons are not only transmitting the message to many but at the same time they are also the receiver of the message. Today we are witnessing that Social media are strengthening the nation in several ways like: social media has mobilized the masses against corruption and gender discrimination. Different departments of the Government have also recognized the positive role of the social networking websites and with the help of the social media they are involving the common man in developmental programmes. Delhi Traffic Police and Varanasi Police are among those which are using the social media like: Facebook just to connect with the common man. These are only a few examples where social media are playing a positive role and becoming a tool of participatory communication and in this way it is strengthening the democracy of the country. On the other hand there are a few concerns about the role of social media like: commercial use of the individual's information, privacy, authenticity problem, fake information, propaganda tool, defamatory information. Recently during riots it was found that social media are spreading rumors and fake information that led different community in communal tensions. Even The Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said that social media has to be used carefully. Therefore this paper aims to discuss various fields where social media has affected our lives and also of the fields where social media has been lacking in its role.

Keywords: Social Media, digital media, online media, social networking web sites, participatory media.

Introduction

The communication system of the industrial society was based on mass media, largely television, radio and the print press. Such technologies allow for the mass distribution of a one-way message from one-to-many. The widespread diffusion of the Internet, mobile communication, digital media and a variety of social software tools throughout the world has transformed the communication system into interactive horizontal networks that connect the local and global. New forms of social media such as SMS, blogs, social networking sites, podcasts and wikis, cater to the flow of messages from many-to-many. They have provided alternative mediums for citizen communication and participatory journalism. As we know that "Information and communication technology shapes our perceptions, distributes our pictures of the world to one another, and constructs different forms of control over the cultural stories that shape our sense of who we are and our world. The instant we develop a new technology of communication – talking drums, papyrus scrolls, books, telegraph, radios, televisions, computers, mobile phones – we at least partially reconstruct the self and its

world, creating new opportunities for reflection, perception, and social experience..." (Burnett Robert, Marshall David, 2003)

This social experience is being transformed with the new technology and internet. Social media (e.g., Facebook, linikedin, myspace, orkut), micro blogging (Twitter), various internet forums etc. are among the most popular Internet services that have created a new virtual world for digital citizens. Recent years have demonstrated the importance of social media within the realm of public affairs, as well as individuals' everyday lives (Lenhart, Amanda. 2007). The role of social media platforms in providing information about public affairs and offering online space for people to express their opinions and engage in a variety of activities has been increasing as users are not only obtaining news and information but they also are able to post their own thoughts and opinions. Some 19% of internet users have posted material online about political or social issues or used a social networking site for some form of civic or political engagement. And this group of activists is disproportionately young. (Smith, 2009).

Social Media in India

Earlier Orkut was very popular among social networking web sites in India, but now a day's social networking websites like Face book, Linked in, Twitter are very popular. These social media are not only popular among the youth and children but these social networking websites are also getting acceptance from the older people. Following are the reasons behind the popularity of social media:
1. Reach
2. Prominence
3. Uniqueness
4. Purpose
5. Customizability
6. Data and Personal Experience
7. Interactivity
8. Multimediality
9. Virtuality
10. Many to many form of messages transmission

In India, Facebook is used by 42 per cent of mobile users but only accounts for 27 per cent of all mobile page views in the country. Social networking is the most preferred activity of a majority of mobile users around the world who surf internet on their handsets, a survey has revealed. Facebook has come as a clear leader among all the social networking sites. The commentary we find on Twitter today suggests its potential ability to give voice to those who may not have other outlets for expression. Indeed the diary has often been an outlet for women and minorities to find and develop their voice in society (Culley, 1985).

No doubt social media has become voice of many of the youngsters, but we are witnessing that social media habit of the youth have also changed a lot. On the basis of gender we see a lot of differences in the use of social media. Younger boys are more likely to participate than younger girls (46% vs. 44%) but older girls are far more likely to participate than older boys (70% vs. 57%). Older boys are twice as likely to use the sites to flirt and slightly more likely to use the sites to meet new people than girls of their age. Older girls are far more likely to use these sites to communicate with friends they see in person than younger people or boys of their age. (Lenhart, Amanda. 2007. "Social Networking Websites and Teens: An Overview." PEW Internet and the American Life Project). This is the reason that teens and youth are more interested in making a virtual friend rather than a real friend. They are more connected to the world rather than their family.

In a survey it was found out that Teens are much more likely to report that using social media has a positive impact on their social and emotional lives than a negative one(www.commonsense.org/research). In this way Many to many form of the messages on social media are transforming the user of social media and they are becoming a part of popular culture. They are having some sort of commonness of taste, fashion and the language that they use while using the social media.

Social media are also bringing political consciousness among the youth. On the social networking websites people and different political leaders presents their political/ social viewpoints. Exposure to diverse viewpoints is theorized as central for creating an effective, deliberative democracy (Habermas, 1989; Huckfeldt, Beck, Dalton, & Levine, 1995). It stimulates individuals to search for information more thoroughly and to examine issues and alternatives with more scrutiny (Delli Carpini, Cook, & Jacobs, 2004). In India different political parties are making a team of youngsters who can use the platform of social media to propagate their political ideology and to attract the attention of the youth. On the other hand social media has also transformed the youth. The youth of different countries are not only discussing about the country specific political issues and problems but they are also discussing about different international political issues.   On the other side Grab Wall Street is the International mass movement against the pro rich policies of different countries that are creating unemployment in different countries.

Now a day's many forms of messages on "Twitter's receive much media attention, perhaps because it is more visible to the media. Therein lays its value, as a tool to tell your story to the world. In the spring of 2011, the world watched as revolutionary fervor swept the Middle East, from Tunisia, to Egypt, to Syria and beyond. Star-tilting images captured by civilians on the scene were viewed by people around the world. In Japan during earthquake social media like: Face book, Twitter & YouTube helped different persons to rescue themselves from this crisis. There can be no doubt that information and communication technologies, in particular burgeoning social media, played a part in the upheavals. In India during the movement of Anna Hazare, Twitter & Facebook played a major role in mobilizing the youth of the country for "Jan-Lokpal' bill. Apart from it social media has been quite vocal against the Khap Panchayats in Rohtak, Jhajjar, Bhiwani, Sonepat, Jind, Kaithal, Karnal, and Hisar districts of Haryana. Lately, these have been blamed to treat people inhumanely especially in case of same gotra weddings. Since the Khap Panchayats are not sanctioned under law, social media presented the stories of boys and girls who had been tortured by Khap Panchayats in Haryana. This has saved lives of many young boys and girls.(Gupta Anmol Rai, Zafar Shahila.2013)

On the other hand there are the critics who are of the opinion that social networking websites are creating conflict in society, because people are misusing the platform of social networking websites to disseminate the massage against different cast, religion, gender, social group, political leaders, celebrity etc. They are also of the opinion that social media are also creating a cyber addiction among the users. Therefore the youth are not taking interest in other sorts of activities. It has been found in a research that Social networking now eats up twice as much of our online time as any other activity. According to the survey by Nielsen, sites like Facebook and Twitter now account for 22.7% of time spent on the web; the next closest activity is online games, which make up 10.2%.

As we know that the advantage of any technology/media is dependent upon its users. If the users want they can get several benefits otherwise it can also create problems for others. In India we are having several examples in which social media played a constructive role. Like for the justice of Delhi rape victim Damini,

people use the platform of social media to show their anger, and in this way they mobilized the whole digital citizen. Therefore my observations about social media and their applications are as follows:

- They bring together otherwise remote and disparate groups.
- They create channels to bypass traditional state control of the media so the outside world can see what is going on.
- Social media can also be used for information dissemination and news
- Social media is helping us to connect with each other and coordinate with others
- Now days it has become very difficult for the Government to hide any sorts of information from the public due to social media.
- Mobile phones have made it possible for us to remain connected with social media and in this way we can use it for crisis management.
- Any citizen can become a journalist and he/she can capture any incident/event that happens.
- Now a day's media are also becoming major source of the information even for print and electronic media.
- With the help of social media the advertisers can take advantage of the user's demographic information and target their advertisements appropriately.
- 24x7 concepts are practicable with social media, in which the users are actively using the social media according to their convenience.

Therefore we can say that one must be careful not to overstate the role of social media; it is only a tool, but it has a potential to become major tool for the development of the country. We see the role of social media in the formation of civic groups, protest and awareness campaign. Therefore Social media is considered to contribute to democratic processes, and to be an important mechanism for collective action, protests and social movements. We see that many to many form of message transmission are really making the whole world more vigilant towards human right issues, gender discrimination and against corruption. Now days each and every user of the social media is trying to transform his/her society. In this way they are also strengthening the democracy of the country.

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