

How The Social Media Act As Plinth For Social Issues? - An Empirical Study with College Students in Erode District

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Abstract: In the past two decades of urging competitive world, everyone tries to be ahead of their competitors, friends and social circle. Considering the fact, there are so many burning issues around us which we need to think upon and act, it's an alarm for us to be aware about the society and its issues. Current issues like violation of human rights, girl's education, adverse effects of global warming, wrong deeds of political leaders, crime against women, corruption etc. need to be discussed openly with the society in an effort to do something about it and bring a revolution. Social Media provide a platform for discussion on such issues as it is this media which majority mass rely on and extend warm support. One such burning issue that has been overlooked in today's scenario is the impact of social media in the changing mindset of the youth. Our research is conducted on youths between age group of 18-30 years with a view to know the level of awareness on the social issues and how far social media awakened the today's youth in expressing their views on current and burning issues like corruption, human rights, girl education etc. Study was conducted on 100 people mostly through email or sending link of questionnaire on various social sites.

Keywords: Social Media, Corruption, ANOVA, Social Issues.

I. Introduction

Social Media are web-based services allowing individuals to construct a semi-public or public profile in a bounded system as well as to articulate a list of others so as to share connections, views and thoughts. However the type, classification and nature of these connections may differ from site to site. Uniqueness of social media not only allows individuals to meet strangers but enables users to discuss and make visible their social networks. This results into connections between individuals which otherwise is not possible through any other media already existing. Maximum of the time social media are used to communicate with people who are already their friends or acquaintances in the social network sharing same mindset or same interests and views. Discussions on debatable topics, news articles are most common topics on these SNSs. There are a number of SNS's available now-a-days wherein users are increasing leaps and bounds as shown in the table below.

Top 7 Social Media In The World

Rank	Sites	Estimated unique monthly users
1	Facebook	55,00,00,000
2	Twitter	9,58,00,000
3	Myspace	8,05,00,000
4	Linkedin	5,00,00,000
5	Ning	4,20,00,000
6	Tagged	3,00,00,000
7	Classmates	2,90,00,000

Social media are not only popular for providing a platform for chatting, sharing scraps, videos, pictures etc. but also for discussing social issues. However, certain issues yet require study and research like impact of SNS on youth's minds and loss of privacy as earlier people believed in keeping their data private but now they enjoy going public and showing wall posts, status updates, tweets and infact every thrill of their lives. In this way, we are ourselves breaching our privacy and personal space at the compromise of publicizing intimate details so as to attract hundreds of online readers and even strangers.

There is a pool of social problems which requires attention of majority so that we can fight against them as a united country and make the society more peaceful. Social awareness brings more matureness, unity and thoughtfulness when it comes to making important decisions for them or for society. When these social media started, youths got immediately attracted towards them as they found it very convenient to expand their social circle, chat with other fellow teenagers, share their personal photos and see others data too without any security alert. Infact now there is a sort of competition among the youths to pose themselves as most favorite

and renowned person on internet. The actual competition is to get the coveted title of the king/queen of the virtual world, which is sure to have a profound impact of the psyche of an entire generation. So, the effort, time and focus we spend on creating our position, popularity rate and brand on these social media is a standing testimony to the awakening of the narcissist in us.

II. Impact Of Social Networking On Social Issues

2.1 Corruption

It is the biggest crime harming societal values, morals and in core population. The 2010 statistics of Transparency International shows that 54% of Indians paid bribe in last year for getting their work done across different departments and sectors. This day-to-day corruption is posing a serious problem for people to live life in a normal way. Everybody is in some sense exposed to corruption either as a perpetrator or as a victim or as a beneficiary. Paid a Bribe (ipaidabribe.com) is one of the social networking website started by Janaagraha which aims to capitalize on the commonness of the practice and provides a platform to people to report their experiences and find what others have gone through.

2.2 Power of Facebook

Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Orkut etc. are the most popular sites for having forum on social issues. More than 150 pages related to social issues like corruption, human rights, girls education etc have emerged in the last few months in social media like facebook, Youtube, Orkut, etc. Surprisingly, maximum of such lot seem to be created by various enthusiasts.

2.3 Connotation of Blogs

Blog writing is a latest trend which serves as an online journal linking to varying news stories and sites. It allows individual or group of users to record their opinions and information. Now every hit personality or celebrity is maintain their blog logs and updating in a regular basis so as to enhance their popularity rate and get open views and suggestions from mass. Maintaining blogs also enables strengthening community ties and advancing key issues. People now don't rely much on traditional means of interaction instead they want to penetrate internet, social networking and derive the best output. For example, Amnesty International, an international human rights campaigner active in over 150 countries, earlier relied on traditional media e.g. newsletters and e-mail, to interact with their approximate 2.2 million members (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/who-we-are>) but it failed to create a bi-lateral channel of communication between staff and supporters so they switched to blog writing which dramatically helped in exchanging views of supporters as well as organization.

2.4 Integrating Communities

Social media helps in integrating all the parts of the country including subcultures and minority groups who otherwise never get the physical means and space to practice their views and beliefs. Through social media individuals can communicate with others irrespective of meeting face to face or present at a specified time. As these individuals are not aware of things they can use these websites and can raise their voices and can also participate. As these social issues need regular discussion individuals can use networking sites to communicate periodically or regularly depending on your and others' requirements. So we can say in a country like INDIA social networking websites is acting as an officer who integrate individuals about social issues like corruption, girl's education, and Human rights etc.

III. Literature Review

Lot of literature is available now days on the social media and their impact on the youth of any nation, children, adolescence and families as during the last 5 years, usage of such sites has increased among preadolescents and adolescents. According to a latest poll, 22% of teenagers log in more than 10 times a day on to their favorite social media site, and more than half percentage of adolescents log more than once a day (Steyer James, 2009). Infact research also states that parents need to be aware of the type; content and nature of social media sites as maximum of them are not suitable for children and adolescents. So, Pediatricians are now playing a vital role to help families understand these sites and their usage so as to monitor for potential problems with sexting, cyberbullying, Facebook depression, and exposure to inappropriate content' (Keeffe, G.S. 2012). Social media sites allow many tasks that were not possible offline as making new friends, staying connected with friends and family, exchanging ideas and sharing pictures. Participation in social media offers adolescents deeper benefits that extend into their view of community, self, and the world. (Boyd, D. 2007) Today many parents are IT literate and use technology suitably well, comfortably and feel capable with the online sites that their children and adolescents are using. But some parents find it problematic to relate to their techno-savvy youngsters online. Such parents gradually lack an idea and connectivity with these new forms of socialization

that play a vital role in their kid's lives.(Palfrey J & Gasser U, 2010). Out of 75% of teenagers owning cell phones, 25% use them for social media, 24% use them for instant messaging and 54% use them for texting (Hinduja S. & Patchin J., 2007). Youths and adolescents are at some risk as they navigate and experiment with social media because of their limited capacity for self-regulation and susceptibility to peer pressure. There are frequent online expressions of offline behaviors, as clique-forming, bullying, and sexual experimentation according to a recent research (Lenheart A., 2009).

James Bennett in 2010 examined the link between organizational culture and social networking so as to predict whether social networking tools are capable of reshaping and revitalizing and the brand and culture of an organization, which in turn can lead to enhanced levels of employee productivity and satisfaction. As the adoption of these SNS such as Facebook is increasing by diverse populations, the benefits provided by them have made us better off as a society and as individuals, and that, as they continue to be, we will see an increase in their utility. Positive outcomes from these technologies as jobs found through LinkedIn or political activities organized via Facebook is well-known, but now a growing corpus of research on social networks sites supports this view too (Sumiti Sehgal, 2010). Social media have both negative and positive impact on the education of the youth. (S. Kuppuswamy, 2010).

IV. Objectives Of The Study

1. To study the awareness level of usage of different social media.
2. To find out level of trust over the information received from social media.
3. To study the type of social issues discussed over social media.

V. Hypotheses Of The Study

1. There is hardly any knowledge available on social media regarding social issues like corruption, human rights etc.
2. Awareness level of men and women are equal on social media
3. Youth participation is negligible in social movements discussed on social media.
4. There is no difference in responses of the people on the issues like 2G scam and gender discrimination on the basis of different age groups

VI. Research Design

The research gives an insight to the people's connection with social issues and the social media. The research also analyses that are the people really participating in the movements or just discuss them on web and sit back. It also covers the different sections of people with the opinion on the various issues pertaining in India. Research was conducted on the youth of Erode district. Total sample size taken is 100 respondents. It was a exploratory study and tools used were tables, ANOVA, Cross tables using IBM SPSS 22.0. Only Structured Questions (mostly in Likert scale) were used.

VII. Analysis And Interpretation

In response to the query whether the respondents have the access to the internet or not following table is obtained.

Table 1: Access To Internet

		Area of the respondent			
		Perundurai	Erode	Gobi	Bhavani
		Count	Count	Count	Count
Access over Internet	Yes	9	58	22	10
	No	0	1	0	0

The above given table depicts the relationship between the area of the residence of people and percentage of people having internet access with them. In response to the query, 'If you are NOT participating with any of social networking websites, what is the main reason', following table obtained which depicts the structure of people having access to social media. If not then what can be the possible reasons for not being a part of the social media. When we analyze the reasons we find out that mostly people don't have time that's why they are not using or using these sites less.

Table 2: Main Reason Of Not Participating In The Activities Of Sm

		If you are NOT participating with any of social media, what is the main reason?							
		I don't have time		It's not Interesting		I don't want any publicity		It's against my religion	
		Gender		Gender		Gender		Gender	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
		Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count
Do you have access over any social networking sit?	Yes	6	5	1	4	3	2	0	1
	No	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0

In response to the query which networking sites were mostly used, following responses were obtained;

Table 3: Social Media Used

Which all media do you use?			
Name of Social Media	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Twitter	32	11	11
Orkut	41	14	25
Facebook	96	33	58
Linkedin	44	15	73
Youtube	57	19	92
Flikr	9	3	95
Myspace	5	2	97
Blogspot.com	10	3	100
Total	294	100	

The table shows the number of social media users. Facebook is the most popular website of all the other social media. In response to the query how much time was spent by the respondents on their favourite networking sites cross tabulation was performed and represented as follows:

Table 4: Time Spent On Social Media

		How much time do you spend on your favourite social media per session?				Total
		less than 5 minutes	5-10 minutes	10-30 minutes	30+ minutes	
Gender	Male	2	9	19	20	50
	Female	3	9	20	18	50
Total		5	18	39	38	100

Table 4 depicts that the average time spent per session on the social media by male and female separately. On one hand where male prefer spending more than 30 minutes per session females try restricting themselves to between 10-30 minutes.

In response to the query, whether use of the social media as a tool for mass mobilisation and rapid information dissemination of information through internet is useful, it describes that the respondents of different age group's thinking on this issue is positive and they think that it is useful. Almost 90% of the people think it is a mass communication tool specially the people of the age group 20-40 years.

In response to the query 'what kind of social issues you came across to the social media', the corruption is the most popular issue discussed over the SNS followed by human right and gender inequality. When it is being asked, 'do you really think that social media influence the people's opinion on the social issues', the people of the Erode are specific that only sometimes their opinions changes on the social issues not always. In response to the query whether mostly all the discussions end with signing out of users from the social media. Most of the people don't react to the situation or the social issues faced they are least bothered. They just read comment and shut their pc without further concrete steps that can be taken. This can be interpreted from the above figure where 71% of people don't react, they only sign out of their systems. In response to the query that how often you came across the blogs on corruption and social issues, table no. 5 results as follows:

Table 5 : Anova On Various Statements Along With Age Groups

		Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Important role of youth in bringing a change in society	Between Groups	7.338	2	3.669	7.025	0.001
	Within Groups	50.662	97	0.522		
	Total	58.000	99			
Opinion towards corruption has polluted our society	Between Groups	.493	2	0.246	1.152	0.320
	Within Groups	20.747	97	0.214		
	Total	21.240	99			
2G scam diluted the trust of major politician	Between Groups	2.046	2	1.023	1.333	0.269
	Within Groups	74.464	97	0.768		

	Total	76.510	99			
Gender Discrimination is bringing our society back to the same level from where it was started	Between Groups	.718	2	0.359	0.335	0.716
	Within Groups	103.872	97	1.071		
	Total	104.590	99			
Joining any page on social media helps to suppress the problem	Between Groups	4.381	2	2.190	2.105	0.127
	Within Groups	100.929	97	1.041		
	Total	105.310	99			

In response to the statement that ‘Youth plays an important role in bringing a change in the society’, a null hypothesis was framed that there is no difference in the people mean response of the people according to different age groups which was rejected as F-value at 5% level of significance comes out to be 7.025 which is more than the tabulated value so it can be expressed that different age groups response differ significantly on this statement.

In response to the statement, ‘Corruption has polluted the society’, Null hypothesis that there is no difference in the different age group on this statement, was accepted as the F-value (1.152) was much lower than the tabulated value at same degree of freedom. Similarly the null hypothesis on the statements related to 2G scam and Gender discrimination was also accepted as the F-value on these statements 1.33 and 0.335 were lower than tabulated value. In response to the statement, ‘Joining pages on the social networking helps to suppress the problem’, F-value comes out to be 2.105, which is much less than tabulated value. So null hypothesis was accepted which means responses were not differed over the different age groups. ANOVA results show that youth were more vibrant while discussing the social issues during the social media usages but they are not coming forward in concrete way to resolve the issues.

VIII. Conclusion

It was found that these social media are acting as great medium for view mobilization. People are feeling free in sharing their thoughts on any issue and even youth is raising their voice against social acts like violation of Human Rights, corruption etc. These social media are proving themselves a boon at least in bringing thoughts of people on these social issues. It is also being generated from the information so obtained that people are getting more aware about the social issues mainly from Facebook. But instead of getting this knowledge the people generally don’t discuss them and if they do, they just sign off the sites after discussion and the issue just remains focused on web only. It was found that women’s are spending less time on these sites mainly for 10-30 minutes yet they are more sensitive towards these social issues. Most of the people think that youth can play a positive role in changing our society which is represent in most of the responses to different queries.

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