

Social Media and its Impact on Society - UPSC Notes

Social media is a big platform that plays a vital role in the modern world. Fascinating parts of social media evolve in keeping touch with family and friends on a real time basis. This platform has strengthened relationships and it brings people to an entirely different viewpoint of life culture that was not possible in the past. Social media influencers have a great impact on many people and especially youngsters.

Social media are computer mediated technologies that facilitate the creation and sharing of information and ideas via virtual communities and networks. Social media platforms provided Indians with a platform to raise their voice against injustice and inequality. People from the underprivileged society have always been suppressed by the upper class. Social media websites such as YouTube, Instagram, Twitter gave opportunities to common people to earn fame and thereby resulted in the rise of social media influencers.

Impact of Social media on Indian Society

In 2004, Harvard student Mark Zuckerberg created Facebook as a way to connect with fellow students. Initially adopted by high school and college students, the social network, according to its 2012 initial public offering filing, has grown to 845 million active users worldwide, with approximately 161 million active monthly users in the US, making it the premiere social media service in the world.

If Facebook were a country it would be the third largest behind China and India. Launched in July 2006, Twitter is an online social networking and micro blogging service that has grown to over 300 million users as of 2011, according to account tracker two charts. It allows users to exchange photos, videos, and messages of 140 characters or less. Founded in 2005 by Steve Chen and Chad Hurley, YouTube provides a forum for the distribution of video content – everything from cute kittens sleeping to first-run television programs to eyewitness.

Information on the latest happenings reaches people in just a matter of minutes even in the remotest corners of the country. The easy and swift availability of information makes social media one of the most reliable sources for forming public opinion. It bridges the gap between the leaders and the masses by becoming their channel of communication.

The technology is incredible – the possibilities of mobile apps and the Internet are truly endless. Social media takes science and technology and mixes it with two fundamental human needs, relationships and communication. The discussion on the advantages of

social media is a never ending saga. Unleashing the unearthed potential of social media is one of the best ways of making the future of mankind endlessly exciting.

Both negative as well as positive impact can be seen on social media on Indian youth. Given below are the various aspects of social media which have influenced Indian youth in different ways.

- **Education** - Information can be searched as well as gathered by the students regarding their study and particular subject. Many students who cannot attend classes regularly can choose distance mode of learning which is easily available on the Internet. Pedagogues may send material about class activities, workshop, seminar, school/college events and assignments on social media which would be very useful to them. Information and communication technology provides us with different learning tools such as podcasts, blogs, Wikipedia, e-learning and m-learning mode of education.
- **Family Relations** - World has become a global village, due to globalization. These days, Students are going to Leeds for their further studies. Indian people mostly settled outside India or some other part of the country. Social media plays a pivotal role keeping them in touch or connected with their family members. Voice as well as video calls do not let them feel that they are far away from their home and country.
- **Entrepreneurship** - These days, the role of social media in entrepreneurship and the consumer market cannot be sabotaged. Social media has changed the behaviour of the consumers in different ways. Social media, business and marketing are interrelated with each other. Television, newspaper, radio and other traditional marketing tools were used for marketing and selling the products by the troupes. With the use of social media, marketers have more options in terms of communications, opportunities, and support for advertising.
- **Online Shopping** - Today, most of the multitude are passionate in order to purchase different types of products through online shopping. Hence, the vogue of online shopping is increasing prevalence fleetly the world over. Masses achieve chances in order to become excessive if they buy products by online shopping. At the present time maximum top class multinational troupes advertise their products by different shopping sites such as Amazon, eBay, Walmart, Flipcart, Alibaba and the rest.
- **Entertainment** - Social media plays a phenomenal role to entertain the people in different ways. Infinitely a number of people use social media as their source of entertainment rather than watching serials, news and movies on Television. Now social media is not only used for transferring information and communication tools but widely used for entertainment purposes. Social media users watch

online movies, news, live cricket matches, listen to music and send the related links to their companions. Nowadays, video games such as PUBG, Ludo King, Candy Crush et cetera are being downloaded and played by the Indian youth. Adolescents kill most of their time playing online video games on their smartphones.

- **Social-media and Indian Politics** - Social media is now being used by Indian politicians and plays a pivotal role in Indian politics. In Lok Sabha elections 2014 Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) has been using the services provided by the social media and convinces the people, achieved their votes and succeeded. Narendra Modi became the Prime Minister of India now The Prime Minister has crossed 44 Million followers on Twitter. Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) also has achieved great success and popularity on social media. These media forms extensively were used by the leaders of AAP to share the current activities, schemes for public welfare, meetings and other work done by them for the public.
- **Social-media, Rumours and Corona Virus** - The Government of India has recently issued written advice to companies providing platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Shareit instructing them to ensure that they do not allow the exchange of any factual information related to the Covid-19 pandemic. Another aspect of the negative role of social media in the corona incident was that a miscreant in a city in Madhya Pradesh spread a Rumours that an attempt could be made to inject people with the corona vaccine, which resulted in a team of doctors and police personnel who had gone to treat.
- **Recruitment and Social Media** - Social media and recruitment mutually dependent with each other. Social
The media is becoming an essential part of recruiting agencies. Popular social media applications such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Workable are used by the recruiting firms to determine the new skills, employees and workers. Craftsperson hiring through traditional methods evolved from perception whereas using social media it is based upon reciprocal action and direct communication. Hence, Recruitment through Social media is beneficial for the unemployed to get good jobs with handsome salaries.

Social media is primitively developed for communication and reciprocal action. Beyond any doubt social media is imminent facet of modern age assisting countless active users. The role of social media is of utmost importance. The advantages of social media outweigh its flaws. The youth can be educated with the help of audio-visual aid, Seminar, group discussion, debate, quiz et cetera play a crucial role in shaping the ideas of the youth.

Social media platforms

1. Social networking sites- Facebook, Google Plus, CafeMom, Gather, Fit sugar
2. Micro-blogging sites- Twitter, Tumblr, Prosperous
3. Publishing tools- WordPress, Blogger, Squarespace
4. Collaboration tools- Wikipedia, WikiTravel, WikiBooks
5. Rating/Review sites- Amazon ratings, Angie's List
6. Photo sharing sites- Flickr, Instagram, Pinterest
7. Video sharing sites- YouTube, Vimeo, Viddler
8. Personal broadcasting tools- Blog Talk radio, Upstream , Livestream
9. Virtual worlds- Second Life, World of Warcraft, Farmville
10. Location based services- Check-ins, Facebook Places, Foursquare, Yelp
11. Widgets- Profile badges, Like buttons
12. Social bookmarking and news aggregation- Digg, Delicious

Misuse of Social media

- Society and its conflicts manifest themselves in what has come to be known as “fake news” — and the internet does aid its rapid distribution.
- That is not the malaise of the internet or social media platforms, however.
- It is the actors, very often, competing political and other special interests which are producers of such content.
- India has reflected these conflicts and contestations for ages but our democratic spirit and tradition have endured much more than identity discord.
- In August 2012, photos and cross-border propaganda material was misused and spread, sparking panic among people from the north-eastern region residing in Bangalore; the episode even caused a large-scale migration of people from the north-east back to their home states.
- Rumours were authenticated as “news” and these were published widely.

Social media influencers impact on youth

Social media influencers have the power to impact the daily lives of youngsters. However, many young people are increasingly aware of the influence social media celebrities have. So, they can choose the good and leave the bad. But, influencers have the responsibility to be ethical.

In this world of technology, where almost every teenager has access to social media, there has to be an impact of it, either positive or negative. And since the current rise in social media influencers and the power of the influence, this impact is significant.

- People trust social media influencers more than traditional celebrities because they are more relatable having the image of a girl/boy next door. Followers and

especially youngsters feel closer to the influencers they follow because influencers interact with them frequently. And hence many youngsters follow social media influencers religiously and are influenced by what they say and promote.

- As youngsters are spending more time on social media than people of other age groups, social media influencers have more impact on youngsters than others.
- Brands are also preferring to collaborate with social media influencers over traditional celebrities due to the influence they have on youngsters, and also because the sponsored content is easily blended into the normal content of influencers. Influencer marketing is on the rise and is affecting the purchasing behaviour of youngsters. Moreover, youngsters are more likely to research the product before buying. And they will check the reviews by the influencers they follow.
- Some influencers do not mention whether the content they created is sponsored or not. They promote products for money and mislead the youngsters. A few influencers are also creating paid content in favour of political parties. As followers do not know that it is paid content, they are likely to believe it and may get influenced.
- The food habits of the youngsters are also shaping up by the influencers they follow.
- As influencers are creating attention-grabbing content, several youngsters are wasting their precious time by watching the content.
- Some influencers fake perfect bodies and perfect lives. So, some youngsters are comparing them with those influencers and are feeling insecure. This is resulting in low self-esteem, mental health issues, cosmetic surgeries and materialism. This influences identity formation too.
- Youngsters are listening to different world views and perspectives from social media influencers.
- Some social media influencers genuinely review the products they used. By watching their reviews, people are saving money and are avoiding bad purchases.
- There are so many influencers on social media that promote positive things such as body positivity, financial awareness, ethical values etc.
- With great power comes great responsibility. So, social media influencers should be socially responsible. They should avoid doing things that have the possibility of influencing people negatively.
- Youngsters should be aware of the influence social media influencers have on them and need to make conscious decisions. They should choose to follow genuine influencers who are ethical and socially responsible.

- Parents and teachers also have the responsibility to make their children aware of the positive and negative impact of social media celebrities on their daily lives.
- Regulations should be there on influencer marketing to mitigate the negative impact and to prevent the misuse of fame.

Negative impact

Social media is a digital platform that allows its users to create and share the content of their choice with people. Social media has command on a wide range of websites and apps. It has made its importance in our lives in a very short period. It has become a necessary daily activity for people. Social media enables its users to stay in contact by making communication easier.

Social media can adversely affect the thinking capability of individuals and instill negative or destructive precepts in society. As said before, social media has the power to form and alter opinions. It can portray an ordinary event so negatively that it may force people to think or act in quite the opposite way. Social media glorifies violence and contains graphic descriptions or images. When viewed by the vulnerable sections of the society, i.e., the children, it can have grave effects on their upcoming and thinking patterns.

Conclusion

Social media attracts a wide audience that reinforces the sustainability of more development initiatives in information and communication technologies among the youths as a prime goal for their empowerment, leading to national and economic integration. Social media is of immense importance in connecting deprived nations to the outside world, being a relentless platform which advocates hard core issues to celebrations of a nation. About 150 million people in India are online active users of the various social media and email platforms who see these technologies as a logical extension of traditional communication methods, and perceive social networking sites as a much quicker and more convenient way to interact. But it is up to us to make the media do certain things for us or else the media will make us do it.