

## **Social Media: Society, Politics and Healthcare**

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### ***Abstract***

*With the introduction of social media, majority of the population of the world is under the influence of it which is both positive and negative. It has changed the world scenario: education, politics, administration, health, society and so on. Youths are glued to social media and adults and senior citizens are no exception. This paper tries to highlight some of the issues faced in the field of politics, society and healthcare. The author took up this areas believing that society is deeply impacted by our health and the way the administration is run.*

***Key words: social media; politics; society; healthcare***

### **Introduction**

Social media has become an integral part of our life. It no longer confine in staying connected with family and friends but it serve a bigger role such as forming public opinion, a platform for discussion for almost every field (society, administration, economy, politics, health and so on, both in the national and international arena). The use of social media is prevalent across all ages and professions and is pervasive around the world. Social media, nowadays, plays a significant role in shaping/changing our world.<sup>1</sup> As of January 2023, Facebook users have reached 3 billion (monthly active users)<sup>2</sup> Youtube - 2.49 billion; WhatsApp - 2 billion; Instagram - 2 billion.<sup>3</sup> A detailed analysis by the team at Kepios shows that there are 5.04 billion social media users around the world in January 2024, equating to 62.3 percent of the total global population.<sup>4</sup> Social Media such as Face book, Twitter and YouTube are not just

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<sup>1</sup> Peck JL. (2014) Social media in nursing education: responsible integration for meaningful use, *Journal of Nursing Education*, 53 (3): 164–169 at <https://doi.org/10.3928/01484834-20140219-03>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.statista.com/topics/751/facebook/#topicOverview> accessed date 18/03/2024

<sup>3</sup> <https://backlinko.com/youtube-users> accessed date 18/03/2024

<sup>4</sup> Global social media statistics at <https://datareportal.com/social-media-users> accessed date 16/03/2024

mere innovations in the internet world, but are fast emerging as influencers and opinion creators.<sup>5</sup>

## Definition of social media

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define social media as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content”.<sup>6</sup> According to Dewing (2010) social media is defined as “various types of internet services commonly associated with social media (sometimes referred to as web 2.0 includes the blogs, wikis, social networking sites, status-update services, media sharing sites)”.<sup>7</sup> Another definition provided by Mayfield (2008) describes these media as “online platforms that promote participation, openness conversation and connectedness”.<sup>8</sup>

## Types of social media

Social Media can be classified as: Social Networking Sites (mainly used for connecting with friends and family focusing more on person-to-person conversations); Image-based sites (apps like Pinterest, Instagram, and Snapchat which are designed to amplify the sharing of images); Video sharing/streaming platforms/Discussion forums (which allow users to ask questions and get answers from different people) and Blogs and community platforms (Blogs are a great way for businesses and marketers to reach and provide credible information to their target audience).<sup>9</sup>

## Social media and society

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<sup>5</sup> Kaur, Surjit and Kaur, Manpreet (2013) Impact of social media on politics, *Gian Jyoti e-journal*, 3(4): 23-29.

<sup>6</sup> Kaplan, A.M. and Haenlein, M. (2010) Users of the World, Unite! The Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media. *Business Horizons*, 53, 59-68. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2009.09.003>.

<sup>7</sup> Dewing, Michael (2010) Social media an introduction, Social affairs division, parliamentary information and research services, Library of Parliament.

<sup>8</sup> Mayfield. Is blogging innovation journal? at [http://www.innovationjournal.org//archive/INJO\\_Baltaziz.pdf](http://www.innovationjournal.org//archive/INJO_Baltaziz.pdf). Accessed date 16/03/2024

<sup>9</sup> Kudumula, Durga (2022) What Are the Types of Social Media? at <https://blog.digimind.com/en/insight-driven-marketing/what-are-the-types-of-social-media> accessed date 17/03/2024

Social media deeply influences every aspect of our lives be it personal or our professional lives. Following are some of the positive as well as negative impact of social media in our society:

### **Positive impact**

One simple example of positive impact of social media is very much prevalent during the time of Pandemic (Covid-19). Education was hard hit during the Covid-19 pandemic. It was with the help of social media that education was made available online to millions of student. In today's time academic education is provided through various tools such as blogs, podcasts, e-learning, m-learning etc. Connectivity with family and friends living faraway places has become easier. It also helps in giving awareness regarding various topics, including current affairs, politics, environment, etc.<sup>10</sup>

### **Negative impact**

1. It has become primary source for spreading fake news and information
2. Powerful people, companies and institutions misuse it to spread propaganda to meet their interests
3. Politicians /political parties use as a propaganda tool, setting a fake narrative to manipulate the ideology especially common people.
4. Use as a tool by Terrorists and Extremists extensively to spread hateful and violent ideologies
5. Trolling and bullying can become a serious issue affecting one's health (mentally as well as physically).<sup>11</sup>

### **Role of Social Media in Politics**

Social media which was considered as a tool for entertainment has change considerably. Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube and others have played a big role when it comes to administration. It has dismantled traditional barriers between politicians and their

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<sup>10</sup> Social media and its impact on society – positive and negative impact

At <https://testbook.com/ias-preparation/social-media-and-its-impact-on-society> accessed date 17/03/2024

<sup>11</sup> ibid

constituents.<sup>12</sup> It is seen that before 2009 general elections, Shashi Tharoor, a Congress MP who had previously served as UN Under-Secretary-General, was the only Indian politician with a Twitter account but today most of the politician has social media account.<sup>13</sup> For example, the most influential political leader on Twitter is Barack Obama (former US President). In 2008 Obama first started using Twitter and other social media sites during his presidential campaign. India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2014 election made Twitter his most important tool for communication, Joe Biden, Amit Shah, Arvind Kejriwal, Dalai Lama, Pope Francis are some of the prominent leaders who have used social media. It is worth mentioning that BJP reportedly operates around 200,000 to 300,000 WhatsApp groups and controls 18,000 fake Twitter handles.<sup>14</sup>

### **Social media influencer and politics**

Social media influencer also plays important role in creating public opinion when it comes to politics. They are important in political marketing shaping narratives and engaging with diverse voters. Political parties collaborate with influencers of different types based on their campaign goals and budgets. Influencers can be categorised as Nano (0-10000 followers) and micro-influencers (10000 – 100000) connect with local communities, while macro (1-10 lakh) and mega-influencers (10 lakh and above) spread messages to a vast audience.<sup>15</sup>

In 2023, Ankit Baiyanpuria (a social media fitness influencer from Haryana) joined Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Shramdaan programme of the "Swachhata Hi Seva"<sup>16</sup> Union Ministers S Jaishankar (watched 6.6 million times), Nitin Gadkari (watched 2.2 million times), Piyush Goyal, Smriti Irani, Rajeev Chandrasekhar have given interviews to two prominent Youtubers Ranveer Allahabadi and Raj Shamani. Delhi chief minister Arvind kejriwal gave interview to comedian Kunal Karma in 2019; Chattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel was interviewed by YouTube content creator Samdish Bhatia in 2022;

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<sup>12</sup> Kumar, Krishna (2023) The Role of Social Media in Shaping Indian Politics at <https://medium.com/@krishnakumar10000/the-role-of-social-media-in-shaping-indian-politics-960a38ebfb37> accessed date 07/03/2024

<sup>13</sup> Jose, Jelvin (2021) The Politicization of Social Media in India, South Asian Voices at <https://southasianvoices.org/the-politicization-of-social-media-in-india/> accessed date 07/03/2024

<sup>14</sup> ibid

<sup>15</sup> Singhmar, Nikhil Kumar (2024) How important are social media influencers in Indian elections? at <https://thewire.in/politics/how-important-are-social-media-influencers-in-indian-elections> accessed date 17/03/2024

<sup>16</sup> ibid

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan interviewed by Shamani;<sup>17</sup> Congress leader Rahul Gandhi gave interviewed to Bhatia, Curly Tales and Mashable India during his Bharat Jado Yatra.<sup>18</sup> The Bharatiya Janata Party's Manoj Tiwari and Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray)'s Aaditya Thackeray have given similar interviews since 2022.<sup>19</sup> Biden recently rolled out the red carpet at the white house for hundreds of influencers including actor Kalen Allen (2 million) and artist Devon Rodriguez (9 million followers) hoping to persuade them to join his cadre of digital assets.<sup>20</sup> Trump has been cosy with conservation influencers. The list is endless.

### **Social media and political events**

Incidents like the huge protests of 2012 regarding anti-corruption movement by Anna Hazare leading to the serious consideration of Lokpal Bill in the Parliament; the outrage following Nirbhaya gang rape case (2012) channelized through the social media led to bring changes in Rape Law; the development on the long awaited administrative issue of Telangana; the 2014 India's Parliament Election called as "First social media election" made history as much of it took place online; presidential campaigns of Barack Obama way back in 2008 made history; the Arab Revolution or the Arab Uprising where social media played a significant role in bringing changes to the long dictatorial rule in Tunisia and Egypt in 2011. In Philippine, with the help of only text messages President Joseph Estrada was ousted in 2001. In 2012, in Romania it had helped in converting street movements into large cities.

### **Social media and Health**

Human beings being a social creature need companionship. It is this connections that help humankind to ease stress, anxiety, and depression, boost self-worth, provide comfort and joy, prevent loneliness, and even add years to your life.<sup>21</sup> On the other, lacking of such connection can lead to serious health issue. Although, it is seen that social media have their

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<sup>17</sup> Deuskar, Nachiket (2023), Why are so many Indian politicians giving interviews to social media influencers? at <https://scroll.in/article/1052678/why-are-so-many-indian-politicians-giving-interviews-to-social-media-influencers> accessed date 17/03/2024

<sup>18</sup> ibid

<sup>19</sup> ibid

<sup>20</sup> Why Biden is investing in influencers to help with this year's election at <https://theconversation.com/why-biden-is-investing-in-influencers-to-help-with-this-years-election-224912> accessed date 17/03/2024

<sup>21</sup> Robinson, Lawrence and Melinda Smith, M.A. (2020) Social Media and Mental Health file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/Social%20Media%20and%20Mental%20Health.pdf accessed date 17/03/2024

own benefits but it can never replace the real world. Ironically for a technology that's designed to bring people closer together, spending too much time on it actually make you feel more lonely and isolated.<sup>22</sup>

### **Benefits of social media in Healthcare Professionals (HCP)**

Social media was widely used in health contexts by many especially during the time of Covid-19 pandemic.<sup>23</sup> It is used for various health purposes such as health interventions, health campaigns, medical education and disease outbreak surveillance.<sup>24</sup> Mention may be made that 80 per cent of cancer patients used it to connect with peers In US alone, 80 per cent of health organisations used social media accounts.<sup>25</sup> Social media provide HCPs with tools to share information, to debate health care policy and practice issues, to promote health behaviours, to engage with the public, and to educate and interact with patients, caregivers, students, and colleague.<sup>26</sup>

According to the Pros and Cons of Social Media in Healthcare (2022 Guide)<sup>27</sup> following are some of the benefits and drawbacks of social media in healthcare:

The positive side:

#### **1. Patients use social media sites**

About 80 per cent of patients used internet to make healthcare-related search, therefore, it's important to connect practice and services to the internet

#### **2. Easily Build Relationships with Patients**

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<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Chen, Junhan and Wang, Yuan (2021) Social media use for health purposes: systematic Review, *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 23(5) doi:10.2196/17917. Also see Braun LA, Zomorodbakhsch B, Keinki C, Huebner J. (2019) Information needs, communication and usage of social media by cancer patients and their relatives. *J Cancer Res Clin Oncol* 145(7):1865-1875

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* Also see Jha A, Lin L, Savoia E. (2016) The use of social media by state health departments in the US: analyzing health communication through Facebook. *J Community Health* 41(1):174-179.

<sup>26</sup> Bernhardt M, Jay and Alber, J and Gold RS (2014) A social media primer for professionals: digital do's and don'ts, *Health Promot Pract*, 15(2):168-172 at <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24396119/#:~:text=When%20used%20wisely%20and%20prudently,recognitio n%20and%20improve%20one's%20reputation> accessed date 16/03/2024 DOI: 10.1177/1524839913517235. Also see Fogelson NS, Rubin ZA, Ault KA (2013) Beyond likes and tweets: an in-depth look at the physician social media landscape, *Clin Obstet Gynecol*. 56(3):495-508. See Moorhead SA, Hazlet DE, Harrison L, et al. (2013) A new dimension of health care: systemic review of the uses, benefits, and limitations of social media for health care professionals. *J Med Internet Res*. 15(4): e85.

<sup>27</sup> Pros and Cons of Social Media in Healthcare (2022 Guide)

<https://digitalismedical.com/blog/pros-and-cons-of-social-media-in-healthcare/> accessed date 16/03/2024

Patients want to feel that they have a close relationship with their physicians. According to a survey conducted on behalf of American Osteopathic Association roughly 42 per cent adults want to follow their healthcare professionals on social media

### **3. Showcase accomplishments and activities through social media platforms**

Patients want to know that their doctors and nurses are involved in the community.

### **4. Attract Healthcare Professionals to the Workplace**

Research shows that about 90 per cent of physicians use social media for professional reasons. It becomes easy to find more doctors and nurses to join your company.

### **Drawbacks of social media in healthcare**

- 1. Security Risks:** The biggest is that their private information might get stolen.
- 2. False information**
- 3. Lack of Control from the Healthcare Professional:** there is no way to prevent negative comments.
- 4. Time-Consuming:** it is not easy to produce new content all the time.
- 5. The Danger of Self-Diagnosis**

### **Conclusion:**

Social media have become so important in every sphere of our life. From the above discussion we can conclude that there is an ever increasing rate of internet users all around the world. The facilities provided by social media cannot be comparing with any other in every field (politics, society or health, as discussed above). It is up to us to utilities it in the most appropriate manner.

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