Topic Number 2 : The Power of Social Media :
Challenges and Opportunities

Outline

A. Introduction

   a. Media is the 4th pillar of a state

   b. Opportunities and challenges to the power of social media

   c. Thesis statement

B. The power of social media in current scenario and in future

   a. Availiability of several social media websites

   b. Artificial intelligence and CHATGPT

C. Opportunities Available to the Power of Social Media

1. Strengthen relation with other countries ;

   a. Public opinion

   b. Promotion of soft image of the country at international level

2. Ensures good-governance ;

   a. strict accountability and transparency

   b. Freedom of speech and public participation

   c. Keep a cheek to improve human rights

3. Public opinion can be heard easily ;

   a. Political analysis

   b. Economic debate

4. Can be use as a medium for education ;

   a. Source of information and Knowledge

5. b. Eraducating social evils by highlighting them through social media

6. Brings comfortabilty and enhance connectivity ;
   a. Entertainment source
   b. Ease of information

D. The Power of Social Media and Challenges in its way

1. Use as a tool for propaganda and sensationlism ;
   a. Portraying false image of a state
   b. Case study of Israel and Kashmir

2. Competition for breaking news ;
   a. Yellow journalism
   b. Case study of news channel

3. Spreading misinformation ;
   a. Religious sectarianism and extremism
   b. Hate speeches
   c. Islamophobia as an example

4. Wastage of time due to its excessive usage ;
   a. For example, daily usage of Facebook, Twitter etc

5. Negative impacts on user health ;
   a. Psychological impacts
   b. Weak eye-sight
   c. Brain effects

6. Threat of hacking ;
   a. Theft of personal data

E. Way - Forward to Overcome the challenges of Social media Media.

1. Purification and filtering of the content ;
   a. Protects national interest

2. Strict action over fake news ;
   a. Imposition of fine on the propagater
   b. Adherence to PEMRA rules

3. Irregular usage be avoided ;
   a. Usage in free time under limitation
4. b. Excess of anything is bad
4 5. Necessary steps to curb cyber-crimes ;
   a. Stringent measures to enhance cyber security

F. Conclusion

Twenty-first century is the age of technology. Modern inventions have revolutionized the world. Now a days, media is considered the 4th pillar of a state; as it plays an important role in the country development. Social media, in fact, is one of the main type of media. The extent and power of social media is very vast and, with the passage of time, it is increasing. In case of developing countries like Pakistan, social media is in quickly emerging. According to a report, " throughout 2022, on average ther are about 72.9 million active social media users in Pakistan on a monthly basis with an annual growth rate of 4.3% in 2021-22. This represents about 31.5% of the total population. " (oosga.com, Social Media in Pakistan, January 2023). This report represents the scope of social media power in Pakistan. Similarly, there are several opportundies available due to the power of social media, such as strengthen relation with neighbour; ensures good-governance; ease of reach to public opinion; can be use as a platform for information and learning etc. Besides this, the power of social media posed various challenges which include usage as a tool for propaganda and sensationalism; competition for breaking news; spreading misinformation; wastage

of time due to its excessive usage and so on. However, these challenges can be overcome through certain suggesstions, like purification and filtering of the content; strict action over fake news; avoid irregular usage; and curbing the cyber crimes. Therefore, it is high time that the power of social media is aptly considered. Indeed, in this modern era, social media usage can not be ignored. People use it for multiple purpose. Hence, due to its opportunities and challenges, the power of social media can be use more effectively.

   Social media refers to that media which can be used by any individual. And that is why it has high reach and power. Currently, social media and users outnumber in billions. Millions of people across the world uses several social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin, Whatsapp, and many more. The number of users as well as such social media websites are increasing exponentially with the passage of time. Now a days, CHATGPT is getting popular, which works under artificial intelligence (AI) algorithm. Thus, nexus between AI and social media will further expand the power of

this technology. People, undoubtedly, used these tool for various purposes, such as entertainment, Knowledge and information. It has increased the power of social media further. Hence, the power of social media is more emerging not only in current era but also in the future as well.

The power of social media delegates several opportunities. The following paragraphs will describe it in detail.

First of all, social media strengthen relation with other countries. The people of different countries can exchange their views and culture easily. Different governments can establish friendly relation with each other through this platform. Social media forms public opinion; educated citizens want to have a friendly relation with other nation. For example, the people of India and Pakistan want peace and friendly relations, but the governments ~~er~~ are not on the same page. Therefore, social media platforms can promote soft image of their respective countries, ~~and public~~ in ~~this~~ order to bring peace between them. Hence, it can be said that relation between the countries can be strengthened through the power of social media.

The second factor opportunity available due to the power of social is that it ensures good-governance. It paves way for strict accountability of public office holder, politician and any other influential officer. In the same manner, it can bring transparency in the system as well. The freedom of a speech and basic rights of an individual can be safeguard through this r medium. Social media, in fact, is a platform through which public can participate in government decision. The government performance can improve largely. Moreover, it keeps a check to improve human rights. Pakistan can display its soft image on world level through social media and good-governance. Therefore, importance of social media cannot be ignored as it ensures good governance.

Similarly, ease in hearing of public opinion is the third opportunity which is available due to the power of social media. Public present their views and thoughts on various social media platform over an issue. And thus, an opinion is biuld from it. Various socio-economic and political affairs on a daily basis is are analyzed by public. For example, Facebook and Twitter provide poll option for public (audience) to vote their option choice, and thus

the view of majority can be obtained. Therefore, public opinion can be heard easily due to the power of social media.

Fourthly, the power of social media can be use as a medium for education. Social media, being use by people of any age, through which they can access to any sort of knowledge and information. For instance, a competitive stud exam aspirant can get different opinions regarding current affair issues. That, in fact, will help in broadening his horizon of understanding. Various news channels have their pages, through which latest news is posted. In the same fashion, there are numerous pages related to different fields, so, require knowledge can be obtain from relevant page. As a result, it can be agreed that the power of social media provides opportunity to have access to knowledge, information and education.

The fifth factor which provides opportunity due to the power of social media is the eradication of social evils through social media highlighting. Social evils such as child abuse, illegal killing, abduction, poverty, illitery and so on can be aptly highlighted through the help of social media.

Social media portrays its various aspects. So, people fears that they should not be involve in any crime. Resultantly, social evils are reduced due to the highlighting power of social media.

Last but not the least, bringing comfortability and enhancing connectivity is one of the main opportunity and benefit of the power of social media. People in one part of the world can access to other part of the globe through this platform. Social media is like a village in its own. It is also considered as a mega source of entertainment. In times of isolation, social media can be a good company to provide you companionship. It makes easy to access an information. Extra time can be better utilize through this platform as it can give information as well as entertainment. Various family members and friends can connect and contact each other through this medium, for example Whatsapp, Skype, Zoom etc. Also, it is used for taking online classes for the purpose of education and learning. In this way, the power of social media brings comfortability and enhance connectivity.

Besides, opportunities of the power of social media, it has put several

challenges to us. The following paragraphs will explain the challenges of social media emerging power in length.

The first challenge that is posed by the power of social media is that it is use as a tool for propaganda and sensationalism. Fake news spreads very speedily through this means. Politicians use it for their vested interest. For example, Donald James Trump use Facebook and Cambridge Analytica in order to win election in 2018. (Cambridge Analytica employee, Christopher Wylie, 2018). In same way, it can be use to portray false image of a state. For instance, India propagates fake news regarding Kashmir issue through media. And same is the case with Israel-Palestine issue, where Israel use media in their favor. No doubt, social media power is used as a tool for propaganda and sensationalism.

Likewise, the power of social media also present a challenge in the shape of competition for breaking news. News channel for the sake of increasing their channel ratings, they break news in such a way which may not be the case.

Different journalist represent their views and they tries try to create sensationalism, which is also called yellow journalism. Take the example of ARY News and Geo news channels, both of them sometimes take sides in a political campaign. For instance, in general election 2018 of Pakistan, Ary openly supports PTI party, while Geo news backs PML(N) and other political rivals to PTI party. So, the competition for breaking news on social media is major challenge posed by the power of social media.

Moreover, spreading misinformation is another challenge emerge by from the power of social media. On social media, different sects in a religion tries to to target each other views and thus it lead to the issue of sectarianism and extremism. Social media platform, as a matter of fact, is used for hate speeches by different communities and nations as well. Islamophobia is best example in this regard, as the western countries portrays the negative and hard image of Islam in the world. These kinds of misinformation can destroy the peace of the world. Hence, the spread of fake information through social media is a maj. major challenge

posed by the power of social media.

Furthermore, wastage of time due to excessive usage of social media is a great challenge not only for an individual but for the nation as well. Social media content are infinite and after every second after, it is updated and new piece of items are posted from anywhere everyone. So, its usage is a kind of addiction. Children, especially under 20 years of age, can largely wastes their huge time on it. The prime example is TikTok, Snapchat, You-tube, Facebook, Instagram and so on. People of all ages waste their major time by frequent scrolling through these sites. Some people use social-media for almost more than 10 hours per day. And some even used smartphone more than 15 hours screentime without any reason. Hence, excessive usage of social media leads to wastage of time and is a challenge posed by the power of social media.

In addition to this, negative impacts on user health is another major challenge posed by the power of social media. As discussed in previous paragraph, that some users of social media spent about

more than 12 hours a day. Therefore, as a result, psychological impacts on the user occur. The user become its addict and he/she thinks ex about it everytime. It create a sort of imaginery world in their mind. The user become less soual and shy, especially, it can be observed in children. Also, excessive exposure to screen weaken their eye-sight. Additionally, memory loss also increases due to excessive use of digital app devices. Resultantly, it can be accepted that power of soual media presents a challenge to the user health and fitness.

Lastly, threat of hacking is also a challenge created by the power of social media. The user of social media has an account and that accounts have access to an individual personal data. Therefore, there is always a threat of hacking that someone can theft secret information. The bank accounts in this regard are very sensitive. Famous celebrities, politicians and other personalities accounts can be easily attacked and hacked by the expert hackers. And thus, they are blackmailed as well in this manner. The cyber crimes, in fact, is not only limited to personal level but it is also presents in between the countries of the world as well. Thus, threat of hacking

is a major challenge originated by the power of social media.

Previous paragraphs discuss the challenges of power of social media. Now, the following paragraphs will discuss the way-forward to overcome the challenges of social media.

First of all, purification and filtering of the content is necessary to overcome the negative power of social media. For this, the regulator and controller of respective social media platform should filter out the real and correct content in an unbiased manner. Any content before releasing must be judge in a neutral and fair manner. Thus, filtering out filthy and fake content will improve the quality of social media platform upto maximum extent. For this purpose, a fine can also be imposed on user by giving false information. As a result, national interest as well as true content can be secured accessed. Therefore, purification and filtering of the content is sine qua non to overcome the challenge of misuse of social media.

Additionally, strict action over fake news can be taken to undermine the harsh challenge of social media.

These There should be an imposition of fine on the propagator. The fine should be so much that no one else could try to do such malaise act again. Likewise, Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) rules should be applied over this medium as well. So, that maxi maximum people avoid fake news and sensationalism. That is why, the challenge of negative impacts of social media can be minimize through strict action over fake news.

Apart from it, irregular usage of social media be avoided in order to reduce the bad impacts of social media power. There is, without any doubt, a need of awareness campaign in this regard. The common masses must understand the importance of their time. They should be educated in terms of social media usage. It is rightly advisable to use social media in free-time and in certain limitation. The personal and family life shell not be affected from it. As it is said that, "Excess of anything is bad." Therefore, in order to overcome the harsh impacts of social media, its irregular usage must be avoided at any cost.

The last step to overcome the

challenges of social media is to take the necessary steps to curb cyber-crimes. The menace (cyber-crimes) has increased many fold with the passage of time. Computer related crimes is exceeding, because of social-media platform. Due to social media accounts, the hacker gets access to the respective target. For this, stringent measures must be taken to enhance cyber-security. It is the need of hour that to have a stable and strong cyber-security system. Proper measures be taken in this regard. Thus, to enhance cyber-security is to reduce the cyber-crimes through expertise. Two-step verification of the social-media account holder makes it difficult to hack. Therefore, some sorts of steps is needed in this way. As a result, the challenge to overcome the illegal power of social-media is possible by taking necessary steps to curb cyber-crimes.

To conclude, it can be said and accepted that the power of social media cannot be ignored. Despite having some opportunities and challenges, however, there are some suggestions through which it can be used more effectively. Some of the benefits and opportunities of social media are

ensuring good-governance; Source of information and Knowledge; eradicating social evils by highlighting them through social media and enhancing connectivity. Besides opportunities, social media has some challenges like spreading misinformation; wasting of time due to excessive use; impacting the health of user negatively and the threat of hacking. However, these all challenges can be overcome through certain remedies, such as purifiying and filtering the content; taking strict action over fake news; avoiding its irregular usage; and taking necessary steps to curb cyber-crimes. Moreover, media is considered as 4th pillar of a state and it is rightly said that, "Variety is the spice of life and difference of opinion is the beauty of democracy." Social media, as a matter of fact, is a platform which provide an opportunity to each individual to present his opinion and viewpoint openly. And the power of social media is huge and increasing with the passage of time. Now, it largely depend on the user of social media that how this platform is used by him/her in order to pursue & their goals. As social media display both opportunities and challenges

to its user. Hence, the need of the hour is to effectively and positively usage of social media be supported. As it is has is now become, the important part of the system.