

# The Emerging Power of Social Media: Prospects and Problems

- 1) Introduction:
- 2) Decoding the term "social media":
- 3) Prospects of the emerging power of social media
  - (i) Promotes political campaigns during elections
    - i [Indonesia and Pak case study].
  - (ii) Empowerment of individuals and grass root movements [ #MeToo campaign ].
  - (iii) Businesses and marketing opportunities [ Daraz Plc, Amazon case study ].
  - (iv) Facilitation of information sharing and education [ Corona awareness, Sabaaq and Khan Academy ].
- 4) Global connectivity and cultural exchange [ Facebook, Instagram ]

- (vi) Early warning tool for disaster management [2021 floods of Germany and Belgium case study].
- (vii) Promotes tourism of a country. [Lakshadweep Island of India case study].

#### 4) Problems related to the emerging power of social media:

- i
- (i) Personal privacy and data security concerns [Cambridge Analytica scandal].
- (ii) Exacerbates mental health issues [Wall Street Journal report].
- (iii) Wastage of time on scrolling [The Economist Report].
- (iv) Facilitates the spread of misinformation and fake news [vaccine related myths].
- (v) Child safety concerns and harassment of women online. [National Commission on child

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

③

Day: \_\_\_\_\_

the rights of children report,  
UN <sup>European study</sup> women report).

(vi) manipulation and political  
interference  
[Russia involvement in the  
US 2016 elections].

5) Conclusion:

## Essay

With over 4.2 billion active users, social media hold tremendous power to change the world. There are several prospects of the emerging power of social media. It serves as a tool for political campaigns during elections. In addition, it provides the opportunity to empower individuals and highlight grass-root movements. Similarly, it promotes businesses and enables digital marketing of products. Equally important, it facilitates information sharing and online education. Furthermore, it fosters global connectivity and cultural exchange. Moreover, it plays an instrumental role in promoting ~~the~~ tourism. Along ~~with~~ these prospects, there are several problems associated with the emerging power of social media. It includes privacy and data security concerns. In addition, it exacerbates mental health

problems. Furthermore, it wastes the consumers' time on endless scrolling. Moreover, it is used to disseminate misinformation and to harass vulnerable population like children and women. Thus, the emerging power of social media has several prospects; however, it entails problems as well.

Social media refers to the means of interaction among people in which they create, share information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. It can also be defined as the platform that allows people to share media such as videos, pictures and texts in different format. Hence, the above definitions explained the meaning of social media.

The prospects of the emerging power of social media includes promoting political campaigns. Most of

the people use social media; therefore, political campaigns are launched on it to capture the attention of users. Leaders, from around the world, use social media to increase their prospects of winning elections. For instance, Leaders of the Indonesia used social media<sup>11E10K9</sup> for political campaigns during 2024 Presidential Elections. Similarly, PTI, a political party of Pakistan, made the effective use of social media during 2024 elections. Thus, social media is emerging to be a platform used for election campaigns.

In addition, social media empowers individuals and highlight grass root movements. It empowers individuals by making their voice heard which was not possible before. For instance, people share their opinions on global issues via the platform of X-former Twitter.

Moreover, it brings to spotlight the grass root movements, small scale movements start for a particular cause. For example, a woman shared her story of harassment, which culminated into a worldwide #MeToo campaign with the help of social media. Thus, social media serves as an effective tool to empower people and to put a spotlight on grass root movements.

Besides, it promotes businesses and provides opportunities for digital marketing of products. It promotes businesses by increasing their reach to a large group of people inside the country and around the world. To illustrate, Daraz Pl. is a platform that promotes several businesses online in Pakistan. Similarly, Amazon platform provides a global outreach to businesses. Furthermore, social media serves as a tool for digital marketing of products to increase their buyers. For instance,

advertisement of products on YouTube and Instagram increases their sell. No doubt, social media holds immense potential to promote businesses and serves important role in the advertisement of products.

Furthermore, social media facilitates information sharing and online education. It is used as a medium to <sup>rapidly</sup> share information around the world, as rightly said, it has democratized information. For example, it was effectively used during Pandemic (COVID-19) to spread awareness regarding its prevention and vaccines. It promotes education by giving access to a lot of educational material online without any cost. For instance, Khan Academy and Sabiq Foundation are the best sources of education on social media platforms. Hence, social ~~to~~ media helps in spreading information and education.



Equally important, it fosters global connectivity and cultural exchange. It connects people from around the world, transcending the geographical barriers to communication. For instance, Instagram and Facebook bring people closer by providing them opportunity to communicate with one another. <sup>Similarly</sup> It facilitates cultural exchange by exposing people to ~~different~~ <sup>to</sup> cultures in the form of pictures and video highlights. For example, Facebook and Instagram videos help people to have knowledge about the food, music and literature of other cultures. Thus, social media is emerging to be a powerful tool for cultural exchange and global connectivity.

Moreover, it serves as the early warning tool for disaster management. Because, social media is used to spread information regarding the imminent disaster to reduce the

likelihood of human injuries and deaths. For example, Germany and Belgium used social media for early warning against 2021 floods. As a result, they effectively evacuated people to safer places and decreased the casualties. No doubt, social media plays an instrumental role in informing people regarding disasters.

Lastly, social media has a huge role in promoting the tourism of a country. Through these platforms, people highlight the beautiful spots of their countries, which in turn attracts the tourists. To illustrate, Modi, the PM of India, posted his photo in an unexplored Island of India - Lakshadweep - which attracted several tourists to that area. Hence proved, the role of social media in <sup>the</sup> promotion of tourism is undeniable.

The preceding paragraphs highlighted the prospect of the emerging power of social media. Now, the following paragraphs will throw light on the problems related to the emerging power of social media.

Problems related to the emerging power of social media include privacy and data security concerns. It endangers the personal privacy of a person by stalking and the third party app access to the personal information. Moreover, there are concerns regarding the data breaches. For instance, the Cambridge Analytica scandal brings to light how the personal data of users were used to influence the US 2016 elections. Thus, there are worldwide concerns regarding <sup>the protection of</sup> personal privacy and data security on social media platforms.

In addition, social

media exacerbates the mental health problems of users. People on social media apps - particularly celebrities and influencers - post their success stories and photoshoot their photos, taken via beauty cameras and mobile filters. As a result people tend to compare themselves with other people, and they end up being depressed. For example, a <sup>2021</sup> report of Wall Street Journal highlighted that 13.5% girls reported that Instagram made the thoughts of suicide worse. Hence proved, social media increases the mental health issues.

Furthermore, it wastes the time of users on endless scrolling. As social media is very addictive, people tend to use a large portion of a day on social media. It has been proved from the Economist report, "social media apps take up nearly half of the mobile screen time, which in turn consumes more

than a quarter of walking hours." This proved that social media apps waste the precious time of users on unnecessary scrolling.

Similarly, social media helps in the dissemination in the spread of misinformation and fake news. People tend to share <sup>information</sup> videos and pictures without validating the credibility of them before.

This way it amplifies the spread of fake news and misinformation. For instance, a case resurfaced in Pakistan that a child died after the administration of polio vaccine. Within no time, this news was spread through social media - which further emboldened polio vaccine hesitancy. However, the doctor later, cleared the air <sup>after autopsy</sup> that the cause of death was not vaccine.

Hence, social media is a breeding ground for spreading fake news.

Moreover, social media endangers child safety online and results in the harassment of women online. It poses a threat to child safety as they come across the content which is not safe for their age. Moreover, they fall prey to online paedophiles. As per the National Commission on Child Report, children are not safe in the online space. Moreover, females face harassment on social media apps, as they fall prey to cyber bullying. As per the European study, "women are 27 times more likely to face harassment online than men." Hence proved, social media threaten the safety of children online and amplifies women harassment in online or digital digital space.

Lastly, social facilitates political interference and manipulation. Because, it is highly vulnerable to data breaches. Many countries

use social media apps to get their desired results. For example, Russia manipulated the data from social media apps to influence the results of 2016<sup>US</sup> elections results. Thus, the data of social media is used for political machination and interference in other countries.

In a nutshell, social media yields immense power in the present world. The prospects of the emerging power of social media includes empowerment of individuals, promotion of business ventures, democratization of knowledge and information. Moreover, it ensures global connectivity and early warning tool for disaster management. There is flip side to the coin as there are several problems that emerged due to the emerging power of social media. These problems include data security concerns, increase mental health problems. In addition, it wastes the time of users

and spreads fake news. Moreover, it is used <sup>or interference</sup> for political machinations by countries in their rival states. Thus there is a need to solve the problems associated with the emerging power of social media. So that it acts as a great equalizer, everyone reaps the benefits, rather than divider.