

The Emerging Power of Social media: Prospects and Problems

Thesis Statement:

Social
The power of social media is emerging like never before. It is easily accessible and used globally without restriction. Teen agers, youth, and aged people use ~~the~~ social networks for information, ~~the~~ entertainment, and business and political purposes. Its unregulated use creates mental problems, security issues and distrust among people.

Outline:

1- Introduction

2- Understanding the concept of Social media

3- Historical evolution and expansion of social media

4- Emerging power of social media in the contemporary world

5- Prospects of social media in modern society

a- Provides instant global communication
(WhatsApp, messenger)

b- Breaks monopoly of traditional media
(Twitter, Facebook)

c- Influences public opinion
(MeToo movement shifting discourses on harassment)

d- Facilitates e-governance
(PM's citizen portal)

e- Provides ^{easy} ~~easy~~ access
to education
(Youtube, ChatGPT)

f- Creates ease in
business marketing
(Garments brands,
Officer's Odyssey)

g- Boosts entrepreneur-
ship for small
business
(Lahore based
backers).

h- Mobilizes political
cult
(Fall of Haseena
government)

b- Problems arising from
the expanding power of
social media

a- Increasing division
of a society
(Communal tension)

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owing to social media debates)

b - Manipulating people for political purposes
(Distorting facts via coordinated facebook and twitter campaigns)

c - Creating economic inequality due to internet limitations
(Rural community lack stable internet)

d - Breaching privacy of sensitive information
(Data leaks).

e - Cyberbullying targeted people
(Females targeted with hate speech)

f - Creating mental health issues

(Teenagers - race of comparison)

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g- Distracting students from their studies.
(Online games, PUBG)

h- Assisting terrorists activities
(ISIS uses Telegram for the spread of their ideology)

7- Impacts of growing power of social media in Pakistan

8- Strategies to minimize the negative impacts of social media

9- Conclusion

In the globalized world, social media is playing a vital role. It has connected the world, through its broad features of information, knowledge, live interconnectedness and entertainment. It is further growing. However, the power of social media is emerging like never before. It is easily accessible and used globally without restrictions. Teenagers, youth and aged people use social networks for information, entertainments, business and political purposes. It provides instant global communication, breaks monopoly of traditional media and influences public opinion. Social media also facilitates e-governance, provide easy access to education and creates ease in business marketing. It also boosts

entrepreneurship for small businesses and mobilizes political groups. On the other hand, its unregulated use is creating mental problems, security and distrust among people. It is also used in manipulating people for ^{political} ~~social~~ purposes, creating economic inequalities and stealing sensitive information. Social media has negative impacts on the people of Pakistan also. However, some pragmatic measures like digital literacy, facts finding partnership and strong data protection laws can help in minimizing the negative impacts of social media.

Social media
is -the digital means of

content sharing, and interactions. It functions as communication, content creation and community building. Some of the renowned platforms of social media include WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and Youtube. Unlike traditional media, these networks use two-way engagement, and real time communication.

The emergence of social media happened over a period of decades. It started from early internet forums where limited information was shared. After this, in the last decade of 20th century, instant messaging apps started. One of the examples is "MSN Messenger". People used to send and receive messages via this messenger. This was later followed

by the 1st generation of social networks: Friendster and MySpace. In the mid of the 1st decade of 21st century, Facebook revolution took place. Facebook, a social media platform, was widely used by the people for sharing memories.

Parallel to Facebook, Youtube, a videos sharing platform, also saw its dawn.

With the passage of time, social media also stepped in the professional domains.

This focused on work and specializations. People used 'LinkedIn's' to connect

with the world professionally. Recently, instant and live messaging platforms like Whatsapp and Wechat gave boost to social media messaging platforms. In short, social media emerges in a very

short period of time.

In the contemporary world, the power of social media emerged like never before. It gained significant importance. Social networks like facebook and twitter gave voice to voiceless. Everyone using facebook can publicly share his point of view. It gained the power of shaping narratives. Social media is used a tool by the powerful to shape public opinions. Apart from this, it revolutionized business. Through social media networks, people from all around earn money virtually. It is also used for cultural globalization. To cut the long story short, the power of social media has emerged like never before.

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Social media
has multifaceted prospects
in modern society.

To start with,
social media provides instant
global communication platforms
which benefit modern society.
In the past, people could
establish only a limited
communication. Presently, with
the blessings of social media
people are connected
globally. With in the blink
of eyes, a message and
visuals could be sent
to any place around the
world. Whatsapp and similar
other messaging applications
can connect two persons
virtually from different
corners of the world. They
can send messages, voice
notes, audio and video calls
with a touch of a button.

Therefore, one of the prospects of social media is its instant global communication.

Breaking monopoly of traditional media is another benefit of social media. Traditional media includes newspapers and T.V networks. They used to convey their own opinions and spread monopoly. With the rise of social media, the monopoly of traditional media almost vanished. Twitter and Facebook like networks brought forward academics, researchers, field experts and general public to share their opinions on a particular subject and provide multiple dimensions of a subject. Due to this reason, social media weakened the monopoly of

of old newspapers and
biased TV channels.

Further, social media also benefits people by shaping and influencing public opinion. Public opinion is not rigid and it is changed with different circumstances. Social media helps rising a particular neglected issue and shapes the opinion of public. For instance, the #MeToo movement started on social media. This movement shifted people's discourses from traditional political discussions to the discourses on harassment. Social media proved a beneficial tool in shifting the discourse, resultantly influencing public opinion.

Furthermore, social

media also facilitates e-governance. E-governance is a phenomenon of managing the state affairs digitally. With the help of social media, it becomes easy for a government to identify a problem, work on it, and get the follow ups. For example, The PM's citizen portal of Pakistan assists in e-governance. Citizens of Pakistan, having a CNIC, can easily submit a complaint about any public offices. The higher authorities are bound to take steps and resolve the issue instantly. Therefore social media facilitates e-governance.

In addition, social media benefits in

providing easy access to education. Education, in 21st century, is not not limited to the physical boundaries of schools, colleges and universities. Education getting has become very easy. Mobiles & laptops can be used as virtual schools, colleges and universities. Teachers from all around the world are available to teach online. For example, Virtual university programs, youtube, Chat GPT and other similar platforms create ease in getting education. Hence, social media has made education accessible from the comfort of homes.

Along with helping in education, social media creates ease in

In business marketing. Before the emergence of social media, businessmen use traditionally means of marketing. They used to distribute pamphlets, which were limited and costly. Social media helped in targeting large number of specific and relevant people for marketing of a product.

For example, Officer's Odyssey as newly rising publisher, is effectively marketing via only one of the social media networks, Facebook.

Similarly, many homebased females are selling and marketing their garments brands online. Social media has proved beneficial in marketing. Therefore, it creates ease in business marketing.

Social media

also boosts entrepreneurship for small business. A number of people run domestic businesses to meet their two-ends. They used entrepreneurship to earn money. For example, Lahore based baker delivers ready made food to home, which their family. This is possible just because of their social media groups. Similarly, many other people sell online handicrafts. In the aforementioned way social media boosts entrepreneurship for home based businesses.

Last but not least, social media helps in mobilizing political groups easily. Politicians require to reach their voices to the maximum

number of people. for their protests and gathering. Social media has been proved an unavoidable tool for them to mobilize people. In the same way, the fall of Haseena's long government in Bangladesh happened to the mobilization of students gathered with the help of social media. In short social media helps in mobilizing political movements in a short period of time.

Parallel to the benefits of social media, several problems are arising from the expanding power of social media.

First, social media increasing divisions

of a society. As social media is accessible to anyone, extremists and nationalists use it negatively. They involve in discussions and create tensions. For instance, Facebook is used by ethnic and religious conservatives. Baloch and Punjabi, whites and black, ~~peo~~ Shia and Sunni sets involve in meaningless discourses. These discourses create communal tension. Hence, social media is involved in further expand in the gap of between religiously and culturally different people.

Secondly, manipulating people for political purposes is another problem with the emerging power of social media. It is very easy to target a

large number of poorly educated people, and shape their opinions. Politicians use social media for their populist slogans and generating propaganda. During election campaigns, proper coordinated Facebook and Twitter campaigns are launched to distort facts. This is evident from the Hindutva policy of BJP India. Modi govt. uses propaganda on social media against Pakistan to win the elections. Hence, social media is negatively used for manipulating public opinions.

Thirdly, social media is also creating economic inequality due to unequal access of internet. People earn via social media. Freelancers use

social media for earning money. However, freelancers in rural areas are facing internet limitations, and unstable internet connections. This scenario creates economic inequality. Internet connection in the far areas of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa are example of this inequality. More than 70% of Balochistan is deprived of internet accessibility, creating hurdles for freelancers living there. Hence, limited social media ~~ex~~ is creating economic inequality.

In addition, stealing of sensitive information on social networks is another negative aspect of emerging power of social media. Information of millions

of people is publicly available on social media. Some people share sensitive information on social media to - their lack of expertise. The public information available on social networks makes sensitive information prone to - theft. Ergo, - the emerging power of social media ~~is~~ is making prone ~~to~~ sensitive information to stealing.

Further, another problem - with - the emerging power of social media is - the cyberbullying of targeted people. People take - their personal vendetta - to social media. It is often observed that people targeted with hate speech speeches on social media. Female

content creators are - the prime targets. Some are harassed online, abused and fake unethical images are shared to defame them. For example, Malala Yousafzai was targeted by people on social media that she was not ~~hit~~ attacked by Taliban. The attack ~~was~~ was allegedly preplanned. Therefore, social media negatively used for cyberbullying also.

Furthermore, the power of social media is also of creating mental health issues. Human minds have limited capacity of tolerating ultraviolet rays which are abundant in digital screens. Teenagers involve ~~themselves~~ themselves in race of comparison competitions.

In order to win the competition in social media apps like TikTok and Facebook, the overuse of these networks, which that creates mental issues. Further, fake depiction of luxuries on social media like expensive cars and smart phones led many to mental issues. In a nutshell, social media also causes mental health problems.

In addition to mental health, social media is distracting students from their studies. From school students, to college, to university students all are addicted to social media. The addiction of Facebook, Whatsapp, Youtube, and Twitter is consuming their precious time. For instance, online games and video games like PUBG are distracting

students of all grades from their studies. Hence, Online games are distracting students from their studies.

Last but not least social media is ^{used} ~~involved~~ in assisting terrorism. Terrorism is a term used for creating fear in the people to achieve their goals. It requires people, weapons and propaganda to ensure their goals. For this purpose, they use social media. For example, Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) uses Telegram, a social media platform, for the spread of their ideology and recruiting terrorists. Further, social media is used for connecting terrorists in order to avoid being traced by law enforcement agencies.

Hence, the emerging power of social media is very dangerous for state security

Similarly, social media ~~has~~

Similarly, the growing power of social media has also impacts on Pakistan. It has created online political polarization in Pakistan. Supporters of political parties are harshly ~~supporting~~ trolling each other. Further, due to social media, ~~no~~ women and teenagers are facing abuse in Pakistan. For example, Mahira Khan faced targeted harassment campaign. Further, indecent content shared on tiktok like platforms have declined moral and cultural values in Pakistan. It has also created security risks in Pakistan. Banned

outfits like TTP and BLA use it for recruitment and propaganda. Hence, like the world, Pakistan is also suffering the effects growing power of social media.

However, the problems and challenges created due to emerging power of social media could be greatly minimized by taking pragmatic measures. First, comprehensive digital literacy ~~could~~ will let people know the positives and negatives of social media. Finland has integrated media literacy from primary schools. Secondly, strong data protection laws will help in accessing deleting and editing data shared online. Further, Age-Appropriate Design Codes will help in limiting the DMs for minors. These

are few of the strategies that could help in minimizing the problems created due to emerging power of social media.

To conclude, the power of social media is unprecedentedly emerging. It is globally accessible without restrictions. People of all ages use social media for a range of purposes information, entertainment, business and politics. It has benefited people by providing global communication, influencing public opinions, facilitating governance and boosting economy. On the other hand, certain problems like communal tensions, manipulating people, economic inequality and mental health issues are caused by the social media. Similar problems are faced by Pakistan. However, there is always a room of improvement for managing social media effectively.

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