

EMERGING POWER OF SOCIAL MEDIA: A BLESSING OR CURSE

OUTLINE

A. INTRODUCTION

- 1) Hook
- 2) Background
- 3) Thesis statement

B. EMERGENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

C. WHY IS IT A BLESSING?

- 1) Global Networking and Communication
 - a) World; a global village.
 - b) Instant social connections.

2) Dissemination of Information

- a) Effective awareness campaigns.
- b) Larger Reach. and Cheaper

3) Promotes Good Governance

- a) Medium for expressing local grievances

- b) Instant voter gratification to foster political popularity.

4) Freedom of Expression

- a) Street journalism; road to policy change
- b) grassroots activist initiatives

5) Entrepreneurial growth ;
 a) Rise of E-commerce
 b) Growing GDP

C. WHY EMERGING OF SOCIAL MEDIA IS A CURSE? - A COUNTER NARRATIVE

- 1) Misinformation
 - a) Spread of fake news
 - b) Increasingly harder to distinguish fake information from real.
- 2) Rise in cybercrime
 - a) Increase in crimes like scams, harassment, defamation.
 - b) Data and privacy concerns.

D. CONCLUSION

Your arguments are okay but
 work on articulation
 Add more arguments not enough
 for 100 marks essay
 Work on paper presentation

Introduction is not good
 Write introduction in a formalized
 way

Avoid Grammatical errors
 Add thesis statement atleast in
 the intro para

THE ESSAY

According to Erik Qualman, an American Author and researcher, "We don't have a choice on whether we do social media, the question is how well we do it." These words of Qualman portray the new reality of our world: life has become impossible without Social media. It has permeated every aspect of peoples' lives and has significantly impacted the way mankind operates in the 21st century. Just like any other historical event in the history of mankind, the advent of social media has come with its own set of opportunities and challenges. The benefits though far outweigh the challenges. Social media has emerged as a blessing for the society by connecting global populations, disseminating information, promoting good governance, freedom of expression, and has facilitated entrepreneurial growth. This has lead to not just an informed civil society but also towards economic development of nations.

First of all, Social media use has

fostered a global community. Social media has simplified the process of communication and networking. Applications like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp have brought the world at the fingertips of its users. Communications that used to take weeks or months, now take mere seconds. A survey on "the Effects of Social Media" by the University of Punjab students found that majority of its users admitted to becoming more social due to social media use. Moreover, career networking and personal networking have also become quite convenient. Applications like LinkedIn, where one can seek career opportunities and connect with different people from their profession. Digital Media experts call LinkedIn "a perpetual recruiting process". Aside from career opportunities, personal networking sites like Fatsoma, which lists all events happening in certain locality, is designed to encourage social activity among individuals. Another example are matrimonial sites, which have made the process of partner searching a lot less easier and convenient. In 2017, a survey found that over

20,00,000 million registered on Indian matrimonial sites. This number has undoubtedly doubled by now. Thus, the emergence of social media has expedites the process of global networking and communications.

Secondly, social media has enabled the process of quick dissemination of information. In the digital age, all information is spread and present electronic gadgets. All governmental policies, notifications, amber alerts are given digitally. Anyone with a smartphone can access any and all kinds of information. This digital revolution

has played a significant role especially in carrying out awareness campaigns. A prominent example is that Climate Awareness campaigns.

The public has become increasingly aware regarding the nature and impacts of climate change. In Pakistan the government publishes advertisement on their official social media pages thereby effectively reaching a significant number of people in a matter of minutes. The old days of relying on the newspapers for any news on the state of affairs are gone. The digital influx of information is much less

costly too. The traditional way of exchanging communication and knowledge had been through the media, either tv or newspapers, or through postal services, all of which took months to be relayed. With social media, any sort of communication or information is relayed almost instantly and at a fraction of the cost. Almost all of the popular social applications are free to download, so the only cost borne by the consumers is that of internet providers or mobile data, which is not a lot. Thereby, the emergence of social media has certainly been a game changer for the field of communications.

Moreover, social media has also become a tool to encourage good governance. Social media has widely been weaponised to express the grievances by citizens all over the world. Individuals take to social media applications and write about their experiences and issues faced. They also tag their representatives, local institutions, etc. to garner a response for whatever problems they face. An example can be seen when a small locality, in the north of Karachi,

faced severe sewage issues, they started making videos and posting them on Facebook. Within days, representatives from the local government showed up and resolved the issue. An issue that had plagued the locals for months was solved within days due to the power of social media. Further, this medium is also effective as it is a tool to score political points. Political parties prefer to instantly satiate their voters and constituents.

This ultimately becomes race to resolve all voter grievances as soon as possible to maintain their popularity among them. For example, Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz, visited hospitals in Lahore and issued directives after talking to the patients and their families.

The news and the videos of this event went instantly viral and the CM's popularity saw a surge. This is just one event that demonstrates how in the 21st century, instead of always resorting to physical processions just to make their demands heard, voters can instantly mobilize on social media to make their voices heard. The

rise of social media puts the civil liberties in a new light and prove that its emergence has been a blessing for mankind.

Another blessing of social media has been the enhancement of freedom of expression. Social media has led to amplification of voices from all over the world and every strata of society. This has prompted the phenomena of "street journalism". Street journalism is the phenomenon where anyone with a smartphone can essentially mimic the work of a journalist. People all around the world make use of their individual platforms to call out and expose any injustice faced by them. A case study of this is Israel's recent war on Gaza. The people of Gaza have consistently documented the horror that has been unleashed on them by the Israeli army. This documentation has largely swayed mass opinions in favour of the Palestinian cause, especially in the Western world which has remained pro-Israel since the beginning. This documentation has also

led to certain policy and diplomatic developments. For instance, Spain, Norway, and Ireland made a decision to recognise Palestine as a state amid the relentless Israeli campaign in Gaza. This is a significant development and it was a result of the power of social media. Moreover, social media has facilitated the growth of grassroots activist initiatives. The availability of internet connection in even the most remote corners of the world means that it's easier to reach people with those initiatives. A recent example is that of the freedom flotilla which departed from Italian coastwaters towards Gaza. The vessel contained various activists and a French member of the European parliament. It aimed at breaking the Israeli blockade on Gaza and deliver crucial aid items. Although the vessel was intercepted by the Israeli forces before it reached Gaza, its journey was closely followed by millions on the internet. It created a mass movement of sorts of people opposing the inhumane treatment of gazaans and illegal occupation by Israeli settlers. It depicts the power of social media to protest against

against human rights violations on a mass scale manner. Thereby, a human necessity in the 21st century, social media, is a blessing.

Perhaps the most essential feature that social media has triggered is the birth of E-commerce sector. Social media applications are not only used to connect people but they are also a booming ground for business. Facebook and Instagram marketplace are but one such example. Aside from the traditional business models, new concepts such as 'influencer marketing' have emerged. Social media personalities endorse brands and products which they are affiliated with to promote them. A report by Shazia Ismail Toor published in the 'Pakistan Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences' revealed that 56% out of the 200 people surveyed admitted that they are easily influenced by what they see on social media. This leads to wider consumption of products.

The convenience of shopping with a single click makes it all the more attractive. Further, starting a business has become very simplified. All a person has to do is

register an online account on their desired application and they are good to go. This hassle free process is successful in making e-commerce a booming industry. Furthermore, e-commerce growth has helped bloom another industry; the courier and logistics industry. This has created more courier and delivery jobs like in Pakistan foodpanda and indrive are the most economical options. Intra-city delivery services have seen a surge in the past half-decade. Influxion of new businesses and invigoration of other sectors has ultimately led to Gross Domestic Product contribution. The up tick in e-commerce businesses and consumption leading to increased usage of delivery services has a direct impact on the GDP. In Pakistan, around 1-2% of the GDP is made up by the e-commerce sector according to a report by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. Therefore, the emergence of social media is not just a tool for individual upliftment but also a blessing for national economy.

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However, critics argue that social media has **here** created an ecosystem where misinformation thrives and is

therefore a curse. Millions of users globally engage with each other on social media and all of them operate according to their unique set of circumstances. They have varying degrees of media literacy and critical thinking skills. This makes them vulnerable to believe and peddling fake news. Additionally, it has become exponentially harder to discern the fake news from real in an increasingly AI-led world order. On the contrary, these problems can easily be resolved by policymaking measures. An example of this is the EU Digital services act, which governs how digital providers like social media applications should operate according to rules and regulations. This act includes guidelines as to how the platforms should tackle the issue of misinformation, hate speech, and content moderation. Therefore, the argument that social media is a curse on the grounds that it is epicentre of misinformation is wholly misplaced.

Moreover, the critics also argue that social media has facilitated the uptick in cybercrimes and has thus become a curse for the mankind. The number of social media

users globally has quadrupled in the recent years and it will continue to multiply. The increase in the number of users has led to an increase in the number of cybercrimes. Digital scams, defamation and harassment have become commonplace. There are also concerns regarding data and privacy. Private data being sold in bundles to private companies is an alarming issue. This further leads to crimes like identity theft. These crimes have increased the burden on state and courts by adding to the types of crimes. However, this view overlooks the jurisdiction of state authorities. States design their laws accordingly to the need of the time and digital laws are no exception. For instance, Pakistan introduced the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) in 2016. The primary aim of PECA is to address cybercrimes including offences like electronic fraud, cyberstalking, hate speech etc. The state apparatus is more than ready to deal and prosecute crimes of digital nature. Thereby, the argument that social media is a bane for humanity's existence is unfounded in reality.

The growing technological sphere,

specifically the social media landscape, has transformed the way mankind and society operate. It has done so by revolutionizing the way humans network, the way the spread of information takes place, promoting civil liberties, good governance, and reforming the business model. While acknowledging that there are certain negative outcomes to it, they are not irreconcilable. Policies and initiatives aimed at making the public media literate, legislations aimed at subverting cybercrimes and guidelines in accordance with which social media companies must abide by are imperative in creating a safer digital space for all. Overall the advantages of these digital tools far outweigh the limited negative aspects. It is essential that one must acknowledge the positive impacts of social media on mankind and society collectively. That is because broadening one's view in the ~~digital~~ era is not optional; it is survival in a globally networked society.

Bring coherence between your paragraph