IMPACT OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION ON SOCIAL MEDIA : PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract

Freedom of expression is regarded as one of the primary conditions of liberty in our democratic nation, it a very important fundamental right under the constitution. The right to freedom under the section 19 guarantees freedom of speech and expression as one of its six freedoms.The evolution of the internet has taken the information age by storm and social media has emerged as a vital aspect of freedom of expression and people more often use social media like Twitter, Facebook, Instagrametc. to read, express and share their opinions and has changed several areas like business, industry, economy, education and many more as information is shared from every corner of the world. It's a platform which creates a virtual world where the mass uploads their personal information as well. It recently has become a powerful venue where people can make money through affiliation, promotion, coaching and other options. This paper focuses on how it has created many prospects for us on the other side the paper alsotalks about the challenges that appear from the extensive use of social media which are oftenugly and threatening. People express their opinion about any individual, race, political party etc without drawing a line between facts and fiction. These multifarious voices at time are too demeaning, offensive, violent and disgusting; it may even encroach to someone's privacy resulting in an irrecoverable loss in one's life both mentally and physically and can change your perception for world and yourself. The paper concludes with suggestions onhow people should wisely use such platforms andhow to regulate the use of free speech and refrain themselvesfrom sharing any opinion that may tarnish one's reputation, business or livelihood.

Keywords : *Freedom of Expression, Democratic Nation, Constitution, Social Media, Technology, Information age.*

INTRODUCTION

Social media is a virtual space to express your opinions. Whether it's Facebook status, Twitter updates, Instagram photos, all of these are personality extensions. They help to portray our interests, our opinions and to demonstrate who we are. They provide us with a platform to be ourselves, to be creative, who we want to be and, most importantly, to have an audience for all this. Social media is an inevitable component of modern life. It helps to connect real-time with friends. Users can interact, reconnect and socialize through these channels. Social media is a one-stop shop, for example, to keep up with current events, a business growth tool, ideas and information sharing, etc. Essentially, social media offers the opportunity to improve freedom of speech and to give voice to millions. On the flip side, it has an unregulated world and using too much of it may leads to uncontrollable obsession and addiction. A wise and conscious use of free speech on social media is fruitful and worth investing time on.

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INDIA: DEMOCRACY AND CONSTITUTION

It is said that democracy is the best form of government. It enables every citizen of the country to vote and choose their leaders regardless of caste, color, creed, religion or gender.There are many countries that have a democratic system. However, India is the world's largest democracy. It is based on five principles of democracy, including sovereign, socialist, secular, democraticand republic.India's Constitution is India's supreme law. It sets out fundamental government policies, procedures, practices, rights, powers and duties.The Constitution of India, the longest in world provides its citizens with six fundamental rights. These rights are the Right to Freedom, Right to Equality, Cultural and Educational Rights, Right to Constitutional Remedies, Right against Exploitation, and Right against Exploitation.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND EXPRESSION

Freedom of speech and expression means the right to express one's own beliefs and opinions freely through any mode. Freedom of Speech and Expression is considered as one of the first condition of liberty.A free society's first principle is a limitless flow of words in an open forum. The freedom to express opinions and ideas without hindrance, and especially without fear of punishment, plays an important role in the development of this society and, ultimately, of that state. It is one of the most important fundamental freedoms against suppression or regulation by the state.People convey their thoughts, feelings and feelings to others through their speech. Therefore, freedom of speech and expression is a natural right acquired by a citizen at birth. It is therefore a fundamental right.Article 19(1) (a) of Indian Constitution says that everyone has the right to freedom of speech and expression. It means freely expressing one's own beliefs and opinions by word of mouth, writing, printing, pictures or other means. It can thus embrace one's opinion through communicable media or visible representation.

Freedom of expression is the democratic powerhouse. It is essential for the expansion and fulfillment of personality and in a democratic framework in which people are the sovereign rulers. Public discussion of economic, political and social issues is essential to the smooth functioning of democratic governance. Freedom of expression has few specific objectives: It gives an individual a sense to attain self-fulfillment. It helps to uncover the truth and to strengthen an individual's ability to participate in decision-making and increases an individual's capacity to participate in decision making. It also provides an effective mechanism to strike a rational balance between stability and social change and gives society the power to form its own beliefs and communicate them to others freely.

INFORMATION AGE AND INTERNET

The information age that began around 1970s is still prevailing. This era is widely known as digital age, computer age or new media age which brought easy access to information and knowledge. Because of this information age came into existence many inventions and one of the best is Computers. In addition, internet brought information accessible with a touch of a button. It has transformed society into homebodies, where people from the comfort of their home can do everything online, shopping, bill payment, ordering food, education, communication, entertainment etc.

The information age has change the culture, economies, science, technology, and even the way people think. The most prominent innovation of information age is internet which made a large amount of people smarter. Communication services like, E-mail, texting and social media development has the changed the world.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media are interactive computer-mediated technologies that facilitate the creation and sharing of information, ideas, career interests and other forms of expression through virtual communities and networks.It is not limited to blogging and sharing images, there are also many powerful tools provided by social media. This is because the social media's impact is very high and far-reaching. Numerous websites and apps are available to make this possible. Social media is now one of the biggest media and is gaining popularity quickly. In recent years,

social media have grown enormously and have captured millions of users worldwide.Users typically access social media services on desktops and laptops using web-based technologies or download services that provide their mobile devices with social media functionality (e.g. smart phones and tablets). When users participate in these electronic services, they create highly interactive platforms through which individuals, communities and organizations can share, co-create, discuss and modify online posted content generated by users or pre-made content.

In our lives today, social media plays a major role. We have access to all kinds of information. Anything that is so enormously expanded has positive and negative aspects. The power of social media is very high and affects everybody. It's hard to imagine our lives today without social media, and we're paying a price for overuse. There is much discussion about the impact of social media on the society as a whole. Some people feel it's a boon, while others feel it's a curse.

Social Media can be broadly categories into the following-

1. **Social Networking:**Social networking is an online service that allows its users to build virtual networks with people who are similar. It offers chat, instant messaging, sharing of photos, video sharing, updates, etc. Facebook and LinkedIn are the most popular.

2. **Social Book Marking:**These services allow you to save, organize and manage links to different Internet sites and resources. Interaction is through tagging websites and searching other people's bookmarks through websites. Delicious and Stumble Upon are the most popular.

3. **Social News:**These services enable you to post different news items or links to external items. Interaction occurs by voting and commenting on items. Voting is the core aspect, as the items that receive the most votes are shown prominently. Digg, Reddit and Propeller are the most popular.

4. **Blogs**: Blogs are descriptive content created and maintained by individual users that can include text, photos and links to other websites. The interactive characteristic of the blogs is the ability of readers to leave comments and to follow the comment trail.

5. **Micro Blogs:** Microblogs are similar to blogs that have a typical limit of 140 or less characters, allowing users to write and share content. Twitter is a micro-blogging site that allow its users to sends and reads' tweets'

6. **Vlogs and Video sharing sites:** Video blogs (Vlogs) are blogs that primarily use video as the main text-supported form of content. You Tube is the largest video sharing site in the world. You Tube is a live video casting and video sharing site that allows users to view, upload, share videos and even comment.

7. **Wikis**: Wiki is a collaborative website that enables multiple users to create and update pages for specific or linked topics. While a single page is called a' wiki page,' the whole related content on the subject is called a' wiki.' These several pages are linked via hyperlinks and enable users to interact in a complex and non-linear way.

8. **Media Sharing**: These services allow you to upload pictures or videos and share them. Interaction is through the sharing of user submissions and comments. YouTube and Flickr are the most popular ones.

There can be overlap between the types of social media mentioned above. Facebook, for example, has micro-blogging functions with its status update. In addition, Flickr and YouTube have blog-like comment systems.

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FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND SOCIAL MEDIA- PROSPECTS

Free speech is considered to be the most fundamental right; since it is the basic permission on which all other freedoms are respected. There is no democratic debate without free speech. Free speech is an essential condition for political participation and the ability of citizens to defend their rights.Nowadays, the Internet has become an extraordinary' democratic expression' because it is' free,' open and (almost) accessible to everyone. The web is able to produce the best but also the worst.We often articulate that the technology has reduced the world, but the social media have reduced the world even more. Today we mainly use the social media platform to express our thoughts. It has grown into a podium for citizen journalism.The Internet offers this new opportunity for people worldwide to interact. It allows for the exchange of ideas, images and works that are unprecedented in human history and which correspond to a genuine democratization of access to our world.

Social media has become a part of our society, and of late it is virtually impossible for people to take you seriously, unless you are on the social media platform. All are on social media–young, old, rich, poor, etc. Everyone is in a hell when it comes to online socialization. Even the business world has jumped in and companies are very active online, posting updates and answering questions.

There are many networks to choose from, some of which are popular with Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter and Instagram. As the popularity of social media continues to spread around the world, there has been a mixed feeling about these networks and they affect young people. Looking at the positive impact of social media on people, it has reduced the world to a global village. People can interact with others from any parts of the world by clicking the button.These interactions allowsharing ideas, gaining information and are exposed to many opportunities. Secondly, it gives them the opportunity to form a new association and revive the old ones.

In addition to socializing, the social network has become a frontier for the business world to publicize its goods and services. The company may hire people to be its employee or brand online ambassador. People can earn a considerable amount online by running Podcasts, Vlogs, businesses and by sharing goods and services offered to friends and in groups for a wider coverage.

It gives them a platform to demonstrate their talent.People can express their opinions honestly. People, who are of course timid, speak freely in public forums without fear of serious repercussions. It also enables people to work from anywhere on earth, known as virtual teamwork. Although these virtual groups are employed in the same organization, they are operated in different parts of the world. However, their online communication is done through social media platforms. The icing on the cake is also that these networks can be used freely, which makes them ideal for all businesses. Once you're on social media, you're exposed to a world filled with new people and opportunities.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND EXPRESSION HAS LIMIT

People have the right to express our opinions on the Internet and on social media. They can comment on newspaper articles, respond to a video or just tell how they feel in social media. But there can be a fine line between freedom of speech and illegal action.

It is a fundamental right protected by our rights and freedoms to express your opinion. The Internet is a powerful tool for large audiences to express their opinions. With the growth of the social media, it was never easier and faster to give your opinion. However, be careful! Freedom of expression, as in everyday life, has its limitations on the Internet. Your right of speech may conflict with the rights of other people to protect their privacy, reputation, image and security. The Internet increases the possibility of harming people with its wide range, immediate impact and anonymity. We are responsible for what we say in both the virtual world and the real world. Words exceeding the limits could lead you to the courtroom!If you damage someone's reputation, you are charged with defamation by ridiculing that person or spreading false rumors, for example. A judge could order you to pay the victim's compensation. The judge may also remove the Internet user or the website which has published the material. The same can happen if, for example, you violate the right of other people to privacy or protect their image by placing very personal information on social media.

Sometimes it can be a crime to go beyond the limits of freedom of expression on the Web. These behaviors, for example, can become crimes: Promote hatred towards a group of people because of their ethnic background, sexual orientation, beliefs etc. Dangers to harm or kill somebody intimidating someone to do or not do something

to that person harassing the person to the point of fearing for his safety distribute a person's intimate photos without permission These crimes can lead to imprisonment. The law also states that the punishment must be harsher if, for example, the crime is motivated by hatred based on race, language, religion, sex or age. It is worth thinking twice before you speak or click "send!"

Your freedom of speech, whether on the Internet, in a newspaper, on the radio or in the schoolyard, is limited. Freedom of speech in our society is a very important value, but the right to express yourself or to express your opinion about a person has its limits. The main limits of freedom of expression are the rights of other people:

- The Right to Privacy
- The right of people to control their own images
- Right of people to their reputation
- The Right to Security

Cyber bullying means intimidating a person using technology, such as social networks, e-mails, forums, blogs or text. For the victims, it can be devastating. That's why some kind of behavior is illegal under law.In other words, although your right to speak is very important, this right may conflict with the rights of somebody else. If you do not respect the rights of other people, the law could be involved.

REGULATE USE SOCIAL MEDIA:

When you get up, you switch on your mobile internet and scroll the updates from Facebook to Instagram. From liking your friends posting on FB to following your favorite speaker, from smiling at a humorous post to anxious about a viral update in social circles, social media has a dense impact on our lives. Digitalization is one of the main factors that has been a catalyst and has routed more and more people virtually to become social.No matter how you use social media, whether for business or personal use, almost everyone uses a social network today. Today, masses rely on media such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to engage and expose people and bring together a very large world in a simple and easy way. Social media have demonstrated repeatedly their remarkable ability to communicate with and inspire action. However, for all the positive aspects and strengths offered by these online communities, social networks have their troubles and weaknesses.

We cannot ignore the risks of using social networks. The reduction of privacy is one of the greatest concerns, especially for children, adolescents and adults. It is therefore important to keep your privacy settings up to date on your accounts. Just think before you post. It can remain public for a long time what you publish on the Internet. The content can also be reproduced and shared beyond the intended original audience.Again, many psychological and emotional challenges associated with social media can be deeply damaging for all ages. We can see that social media users often feel compelled to portray themselves in the most positive light, which may not reflect reality. Again, the desire to validate your existence through the number of likes and positive feedback plus the above factors can make you envious and lead to depression.

Social networking, mainly aimed at personal use as a casual activity, can hamper productivity. Workers mostly surf social media during their working hours, costing their employers millions of monetary losses due to throughput losses. Although social media is one of the best tools for relationship development, it can also be the main source of relationship problems.

Conclusion

In the end, all you need to do is be responsible and sensitive. We all love to freely express on social networks. Most of us use it every day and wouldn't have been without it. But it is high time we understood that we use social media as a positive tool for achieving great things. We can foster creativity and use social networks to connect with people worldwide. Businesses can use it to a large extent to reach their target audience. You must exercise common sense and curb extravagant use to avoid potential pitfalls. Users can have fun, stay safe and by keeping a check on what information you put out or what you consume.

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