IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON SOCIETY

Dr. B.P.Mahesh Chandra Guru*   Mr.M.Dileep Kumar**   Gowtham Devanoor***   Rajeev. K***
* Professor, Department of Studies in Communication and Journalism, University of Mysore, Manasagangotri, Karnataka, India.
** RGNF Research Scholar, Department of Studies in Communication and Journalism, University of Mysore, Manasagangothri, Mysore, Karnataka, India.
*** Research Scholar, Department of Communication and Journalism, University of Mysore, Manasagangothri, Mysore,Karnataka, India.

Preamble
In the new millennium, the means of communication have dramatically increased because of revolutionary changes and developments in the field of communication science and technology. The social media has brought forth the infinite access to free speech in modern social environment. The social media have brought people closure to the mainstream of life. The social media have practically become media of the people, by the people and for the people and touched the lives of people remarkably. The social media have expanded circle of social connections of people and brought about several changes and modifications in the educational, social, economic, political and cultural orders. The impact of social media on society has been examined in this article on the basis of qualitative research method.

Concept of Social Media
According to the Oxford Dictionary, a 'social network' is a dedicated website or other application that enables users to communicate with each other by posting information, comments, messages, images, etc. A social networking service is a platform to build social networks or social relations among people who share similar interests, activities, backgrounds or real-life connections. A social network service consists of a representation of each user and provides various services to the mankind. The social network sites are web-based services that allow individuals to create a public profile, create a list of users with whom to share connections, and view and cross the connections within the system. The online community services are sometimes considered a social network service, though in a broader sense, social network service usually means an individual-centered service whereas online community services are group-centered. Social networking sites allow users to share ideas, pictures, posts, activities, events, and interests with people in their network.

Scholars have examined the nature and diversity of social media platforms and offered various definitions. Drury (2008:13) defines social media as   online resources that people use to share content: video, photos, images, text, ideas, insight, humor, opinion, gossip, news. The scholar has emphasized the social media behavior of people. Dykeman (2008:15) defined social media as the means for any person to: publish digital, creative content; provide and obtain real-time feedback via online discussions, commentary and evaluations; and incorporate changes or corrections to the original content. The scholar has highlighted the features of social media. Marchese (2007:23) distinguished social media from traditional media by stating that social media is not the media itself, but the system of discovery, distribution, consumption and conversation surrounding the media.

Safko and Brake (2009:26) considered social media as   activities, practices, and behaviors among communities of people who gather online to share information, knowledge, and opinions using conversational media. Conversational media are Web-based applications that make possible for one to create and easily transmit content in the form of words, pictures, videos, and audios. In general, social media can be understood as online platforms for the interaction, collaboration, and creating/sharing of various types of digital contents Eisenberg (2008:16) opined that social media allow people to actively engage in a communication process not only as information receivers but also as message creators. The online applications are designed to facilitate information sharing, knowledge distribution, and opinion exchanges.

The social network sites (SNSs) are increasingly attracting the attention of academic and industry researchers intrigued by their affordances and reach. The term 'social media' refers to the wide range of Internet-based and mobile services that allow users to participate in online exchanges, contribute user-created content or join online communities. The social network sites are commonly defined as web based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system by Boyd and Ellison (2007:09) They are commonly viewed as part of the overall Web 2.0 revolution that aimed to enhance creativity, communications, secure information sharing, collaboration and functionality of the Web. The social network sites have attracted millions of users, many of whom have integrated these sites into their daily practices. The social media enable users to articulate and make visible their social networks.

The social media are indeed the forms of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other contents. The Wikipedia defines social media as "media for social interaction, using highly accessible and scalable communication techniques. Social media is the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into interactive dialogue". The social media platforms enable the interactive web by engaging users to participate in, comment on and create content as means of communicating with their social graph, other users and the public.

Joe Cothrel opines that social media include the channels for user-generated content based on social technologies. Sam Decker describes social media as a digital interaction oriented channels and contents created by and between people. Gini Dietrich states that social media allow people to network, to find people with like interests and to meet people who can become friends or customers. Bryan Eisenberg notes that social media are platforms for interaction and relationships, not content and advertisements. Howard Greenstein remarks that social media are online technologies and practices that people use to share content, opinions, insights, experiences, perspectives and media themselves.

Haythornthwaite (2005:20) writes: "What makes social network sites unique is not that they allow individuals to meet strangers, but rather that they enable users to articulate and make visible their social networks. This can result in connections between individuals that would not otherwise be made, but that is often not the goal, and these meetings are frequently between latent ties who share some offline connection. On many of the large SNSs, participants are not necessarily networking or looking to meet new people; instead, they are primarily communicating with people who are already a part of their extended social network. To emphasize this articulated social network as a critical organizing feature of these sites, we label them social network sites". Basically, social media facilitate social interaction and participation in modern society.

The social media are the collective of online communications channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration. The websites and applications dedicated to forums, micro blogging, social networking , social bookmarking, social curation, and wikis are among the different types of social media. The social media have become an integral part of life online as social websites and applications proliferate. The social media have also become an all pervasive online media which include social components, such as comment fields for users.
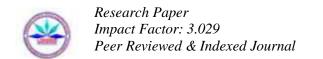
The social media are commonly defined as internet or cellular phone based applications and tools to share information among people. Social media includes popular networking websites, like Face book and Twitter; as well as bookmarking sites like Digg or Reddit. The social media also involve blogging and forums and any aspect of an interactive presence which allows individuals to engage in conversations with one another, often as a discussion over a particular blog post, news article, or event. In the present times, people use one form of social media or another primarily online, in order to keep in touch with family or friends; or to either be informed or to inform others about a variety of topics concerning their lives and activities. The social media have made the world too small since the people are able to use cellular phones and social media sites such as Face book to stay up to date on the happenings of their family, friends, and the world in general.

Social Media vs. Social Networks
Social media can be called a strategy and an outlet for broadcasting, while social networking is a tool and a utility for connecting with others. Cohen (2009:11) observes: "The difference is not just semantics but in the features and functions put into these websites by their creators which dictates the way they are to be used." Hartshorn (2010:19) writes: "There are several differences between social media and social networks. The first one could be the definition; social media is still a media which is primarily used to transmit or share information with a broad audience, while social networking is an act of engagement as people with common interests associate together and build relationships through community". Bedell (2010:07) notes: "Indeed, social media is simply a system, a communication channel; it is not a location that you visit. In contrast, social networking is a two-way communication, where conversations are at the core, and through which relationships are developed".

Impact of Social Media on Society
The use of social media has become strongly imbedded in modern society. The social media have ensured connectivity through the constant use of the social technologies. It is impossible to make any all-inclusive claims about social media. Social media have the potential to fundamentally change the character of our social lives, both on an interpersonal and a community level. On a community level, the organizing features of these sites lower the transaction costs for finding and connecting with others who may share one interest or concern but differ on other dimensions. Social network sites provide simple, inexpensive ways to organize members, arrange meetings, spread information, and gauge opinion. Organizations, political figures, advocacy groups, regional associations, and other types of groups have various ways of using such sites:

through their own profiles, site groups, or standalone networks. Beyond coordinating community organizations, social network sites can also play a role in more casual types of civil activity (Ellison et. al 2009:17).

The borders of countries and states have dissolved to the credit of the Internet and social media. The collective social networking sites offer companies an opportunity to fine-tune these personality characteristics. Two advantages being that it has given people the convenience of being able to connect with others all over the world without having to step a foot out of their homes and also the rare cases that crimes are sometimes solved through the help of a social media site (Pernisco 2010:25).

Social media also facilitates strong ties and bonding capital, and does so more effectively than earlier Internet applications. New social media helps these individuals maintain a sense of continuity with each other and identification with the group as a well, regardless of where the members of the group live (Komito 2011:22).

Social media sites allow teens to accomplish online many of the tasks that are important to them offline. They are enabled to stay connected with friends and family. They make new friends, sharing pictures, and exchanging ideas. Social media participation also can offer adolescents deeper benefits that extend into their view of self, community, and the world. They foster human relationship, better individual identity and unique social skills (O'Keeffe et. al 2011:24).
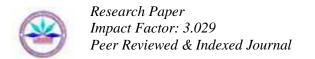
The communication that occurs in these online contexts promotes interactive dialogues that build understanding of different points of view. Intercultural dialogue is critical today in our globalized and blended world, where different cultures encounter each other daily, especially through social media such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and the iPhone. Social media provide a place where people across the world can stay in touch and feel closer and more connected regardless of the distance that separates them. New social media have provided ways in which people can communicate and interact with others across the world, without being restricted by the limitations of time and distance (Sawyer 2011:27).

There are people behind the social media tools that are used for social change. Social media can be used as a tool to raise awareness, raise money and join people together but to personify these tools is to under estimate the time, resources and risks that activists and citizens sacrifice. It is clear that the policies of many social media platforms may not be in the best interests of activists and there is a real danger of governments using social media to spy on, misinform, or incriminate activists Sheedy 2011:28). Social media have also facilitated active political mobilization in the world. The Arab Spring was the outcome of extensive use of social media by the youth in particular. The Egyptian Revolution was brought about by the people who intelligently used social media to change the political equations in the country.

Social media allows civil society organizations to project their voice more effectively than through offline work alone, but using social media requires detailed planning to produce focused aims and clear messages that will reach the target audience without being lost in online 'noise'. It is therefore essential to listen first to establish what is being said, where, how and by whom. Social media is most effective when it is treated as an interactive forum; not only does this allow supporters to become involved and heighten their commitment, but, whenever they comment, the campaign message gains visibility within their own networks. Replying to follower comments, posing and answering questions and re-tweeting/posting their input all help to extend the reach and amplify the voice of a campaign. Social media offers considerable new opportunities for third sector organizations and campaigners, but few are currently realizing this potential due to skepticism, nervousness, low skills bases or a simple lack of awareness (Taylor 2012:31). Social media have enabled the civil society organizations to voice their concern and protect public interest against tyranny, injustice and exploitation.

The ubiquity of smart phones, associated with the adoption of social media websites, enables unprecedented opportunities to study city dynamics and urban social behavior by analyzing the data generated by users. Social media systems allow the people to get connected to the administrative system. This class of work is focused in the identification of events through data shared in social media. This task is especially favorable due the real-time nature of certain types of social media, such as Twitter. Considering social media as a source of sensing, constructing then a participatory sensor network imposes many challenges (Silva et. al 2012:29). Social media are widely used by the administrators in modern cities to facilitate good governance.

Social media, comparing to traditional media, allows people to actively engage in a communication process not only as information receivers but also as message creators. Greater application of social media tools has brought dramatic changes in the business environment. The online applications are designed to facilitate information sharing, knowledge distribution, and opinion exchanges. It is important to note that technological changes have created an increasing convergence of functionality

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and features in many social mediating services (Chan-Olmsted et. al 2013:10). The proliferation of social media and widespread adoption of social media tools have also brought about dramatic changes in the modern business environment.

Social media equally provide the opportunity to tap into personal networks and present information in multiple formats, spaces, and sources which helps to make messages more credible and effective. Additionally, many social media channels facilitate social engagement, viral sharing of information and trust. It is obvious then that integrating social media into different communication campaigns and development activities will allow the government, civil society and other professionals to leverage social dynamics and networks to encourage participation, conversation and community all of which can help spread key messages and influence informed and positive decision making (Dunu et. al 2015:14). Social media have expedited the process of social mobilization for worthy causes all over the world. In India, Anna Hazare's movement against political corruption was boosted with the active social media application. Social media have also enabled the women and youth to fight against the system and seek justice.

The social media have increased the rate and quality of collaboration for students. They are better able to communicate meeting times or share information quickly, which can increase productivity and help them learn how to work well in groups. The social networking teaches students skills they' need to survive in the business world. The students gain familiarity with computers and other electronic devices and increase their academic competence, (Agosto and Abbas 2010:01). Social media applications have also promoted business management all over the world. The ease and speed with which users can upload pictures, videos or stories has resulted in a greater amount of sharing of creative works in all walks of life.

The social media also help in integrating all the parts of the world including subcultures and minority groups who otherwise never get the physical means and space to practice their views and beliefs. Through social networking sites individuals can communicate with others irrespective of meeting face to face or present at a specified time, (Bassem and Maamari 2013:06). Social media have considerably enhanced learning opportunities of the students by connecting with one another on homework and group projects. The social media programs allow students to gather outside of class to collaborate and exchange ideas about assignments. Some schools successfully use blogs as teaching tools which has the benefit of reinforcing skills in English, written expression, and creativity.

Social media and other emerging communication technologies are quite useful tools for social development and mobilization since they connect millions of people and personalize and reinforce development messages on several issues that can be more easily tailored or targeted to particular audiences. They also facilitate interactive communication, connection and public engagement and empower people to make better informed decisions, (Behnke 2010:08).

Social networks offer the opportunity for people to re-connect with their old friends and acquaintances, make new friends, trade ideas, share content and pictures, and many other activities. Users can stay abreast of the latest global and local developments, and participate in campaigns and activities of their choice. Professionals use social media sites like LinkedIn to enhance their career and business prospects. Students can collaborate with their peers to improve their academic proficiency and communication skills.

Students can learn about different cultures and societies by connecting with people in other countries. The social media have made it possible for like-minded individuals to discuss important topics, widen their personal knowledge and discover things they never knew before. The young people are actively involved in public affairs since social media have provided new opportunities for active participation of people (Barker 2009:05).

The users have not fully understood the other side of social media. Privacy has been harder to keep, and productivity in the workplace has slipped to alarming lows in many situations. The cyber bullying is a form of bullying that is only done through the web and other technologies. Social networks make it worse for the victims since bullying is difficult in person and even harsher over the internet.

Instances about cyber bullying and risks to children have led to increased fears about the impact of online social networking, particularly on children and young adults. Social networking sites have led to a different way of communicating with others, both with those previously known to the person as well as newly formed friendships. Concerns about reduced face-to-face interactions and the loss of social skills have emerged". The anonymity afforded online can bring out dark impulses that might otherwise be suppressed. Cyber-bullying has spread widely among youth, with 42% reporting that they have been victims, according to a 2010 CBS News report (The Australian Psychological Society 2010:03).

The social networking sites make young people more self-centered, social networking websites are causing alarming changes in the brains of young users. They create a culture in which a single mistake such as a racy picture or poorly thought-out comment can cause irreparable harm to your reputation, decreasing productivity as workers habitually check social networking sites while they should be working and providing information that increases the risk of identity theft (Jain 2010:21). Social media have adversely affected the youth in modern society. Scholars have raised concern about the ill-effects of social media on children, adolescents and youth.

Social networking users face severe health risk because they reduce face-to-face contact and become addicted in a virtual world of relationships. People spent hours chatting with their friends and browsing profiles on social networking sites. It becomes a compulsive habit to visit own profile several times in a day for checking friends' updates, changing status, and commenting on others photos and videos. Social networking site that once was thought to be helping people across the world to unite and making new relationship can also damage the relationship and make life miserable (Das and Sahoo 2011:12). The users of social media make a good number of friends even though they are not friends in need in the real life situations. The users have also ruined their other friendships since social media normally form shallow friendships. The constant use of social media has caused damage to the humanity in several ways.

Social media have led to addiction and lowered the motivational level of the people, especially of the teenagers and students. They mainly rely on technology and the internet instead of learning the practical knowledge and expertise of the everyday life. The children also become victims of circumstances due to over exposure to objectionable contents. Many introverts and socially reclusive users place too much emphasis on virtual interaction, and ignore the real world outside, according to empirical evidence (Ahn 2011:02). Social networking sites encourage people to be more public about their personal lives since the user's intimate details of their lives which can be posted so easily. It affects the privacy of the individuals in a society.

Our analysis provides empirical evidence of information processing limits for social media users and the prevalence of. The most active and popular social media users are often the ones that are overloaded. Moreover, we find that the rate at which users receive information impacts their processing behavior, including how they prioritize information from different sources, how much information they process, and how quickly they process information. Finally, the susceptibility of a social media user to social contagions depends crucially on the rate at which she receives in formation. An exposure to a piece of information, be it an idea, a convention or a product, is much less effective for users that receive information at higher rates, meaning they need more exposures to adopt a particular contagion (Gomez-Rodriguez et. al 2014:18). The social media application has brought about information overloading and the users have found it difficult to make use of the information resources.

The potential harmful effects surrounding social media use have profound consequences for young adults. Similarly, the body image of young people, particularly girls and young women, seems to be affected through consumption of online media. These social networks have damaged many things, but they cannot be allowed to harm the humanity (Strickland 2014:30). Studies have reported certain negative implications of social media on society and people.

Social media have become a constant source of alternative news for Internet users. They have enabled the users to direct the focus of national news media. The activists make use of social media to educate, organize and enlist the participation of people in social movements. The social media have great impact on culture, society, business, politics and all spheres of human life. They have revolutionized the way people communicate and socialize on the Web. The social websites have played an important role in many elections around the world. They have enhanced brand image and popularity in the business field. The professionals use social media to enhance their career and business prospects.

Conclusion
The world has witnessed a shift in the focus of Web applications towards social interaction, collaboration and networking. By the year 2000, around 100 million people had access to the internet, and it became quite common for people to be engaged socially online. Face book is the number one social media website today and it currently boasts over a billion users. The social media platforms serve multi-purposes and they continue to play a vital role in future. The social network sites (SNSs) are increasingly attracting the attention of academic and industry researchers intrigued by their affordances and reach. Indeed, social media is simply a system, a communication channel; it is not a location that you visit. In contrast, social networking is a two-way communication, where conversations are at the core, and through which relationships are developed.

The social media also help in integrating all the parts of the world including subcultures and minority groups who otherwise never get the physical means and space to practice their views and beliefs. The use of social networking sites has been the focus of a large number of research studies. Social media have negative implications on society. The young generation of users should be sensitized about the harmful effects of social media. Modern organizations have lost billions of dollars per year in productivity because of social media addiction among employees. Revealing personal information on social sites can make users vulnerable to crimes like identity theft, stalking, etc. The social media have both advantages and drawbacks which are revealed in the past scientific investigations. The users should use social networking sites with utmost care and responsibility in order to enhance their educational, professional and social life and prevent possible threats and constraints.

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