Indira Gandhi National Open University
School of Journalism and New Media Studies

MNM-011
UNDERSTANDING DIGITAL MEDIA

BLOCK

2

SOCIAL MEDIA IN INDIAN SCENARIO

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BLOCK INTRODUCTION : SOCIAL MEDIA IN INDIAN SCENARIO

The second block of **Course MNM011: Understanding Digital Media,** has four Units dealing with the emerging and powerful platform called social media from the Indian point of view. With around 400 million social media users as of 2020, India is one of the leading markets for social media platforms. Its influences are being witnessed through multiple segments including the public opinion process, political and cultural ramifications, economical and social settings, and individual user's personal and professional matters. The strong impact of high mobile penetration and consistently decreasing data affordability in the Indian context has fueled the adoption of stand alone social media 'apps' and utilisation of these all-powerful and intimate social media. Through this Block, you will learn the ground scenario of social media, its relationship with the individuals' interaction with others, specifically on information exchanges, nature and profile of social media audience and a detailed description of the application side of social media.

Unit 5: Spectrum of Social Media describes the evolution and types of social media, and gives you the differentiation between mainstream media and social media characteristics, particularly from the point of view of vertical vs. horizontal nature of communication settings. Besides these fundamental concepts, you will learn more about the cultural, economical and social dimensions of social media usage in this Unit.

Unit 6: Online News Sharing explains one of the hallmark characteristic of social media, knowing that the common social media users tend to share information within the closed networks and/or publicly. Sharing news and information occupies half of social media activities. By sharing information the individual user seemingly acknowledges and agrees with the contents. Unlike the mainstream media's stringent gatekeeping process, the social media platform uses the process of gate-watchers, in which a collective decision by the multiple users or community endorses or rejects the publicly available information. This Unit gives you multiple dimensions of online news sharing processes through social media.

Unit 7: Social Media Audience may be considered as an extension of Unit 2 'Media Audience' of MNM013. In this Unit, you will learn about the concept of audience, its nature and evolution with particular emphasis on social media along with exploring a few audience theories besides various theoretical perspectives on nature and characteristics of social media audiences and social media marketing strategies.

Unit 8: Applications of Social Media is the continuation of Unit 7. Here the application angle of social media is being explored in detail. Particularly, social media applications in government departments, non-governmental organisations, business entities, educational institutions and multiple

social-cultural sectors. These areas are unique in their respective fields. Accordingly, the application side of social media varies from one field to another.

The influence of social media is diverse in nature, and its significance can be felt across many fields. It is important to note that significant number of individuals are entangled with different social media platforms. In this scenario, Block 2 will give you an overview of social media from the Indian perspective.

UNIT : 5 SPECTRUM OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Structure

5.0 INTRODUCTION

If the Internet and World Wide Web are the modern innovations in the technical aspect of the communication system, then the social media applications are the creative part of it. In the world of social media, every user has his/her world, in which s/he can communicate, interact, create and collaborate with others. Others may be few numbers of close friends, or thousands of like-minded people or an innumerable number of social media users. Particularly, the social media platforms facilitate multiple avenues of communication in terms of predominantly using text-based interaction like Facebook and Twitter, photo sharing like Instagram, or one may even like to share video messages. There are plenty of options available like YouTube which enable to you share your knowledge, and also another popular platform the Wikipedia provides a similar platform or you want to categorise all your online information and would like to share it with many, then Pinterest or Reddit facilitates these options.

Participation, sharing and collaborations are the main features of social media, and in recent times the proliferation of mobile devices has accelerated the adoption of social media at much faster rates. Facebook and Instagram

have more than one billion monthly users. The size and significance these social media entities have ramifications across the countries since it operates in the global contexts.

In this Unit, we shall explore the world of social media, its characteristics and particularly its utilisation in various fields.

5.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

After reading this Unit, you will be able to:

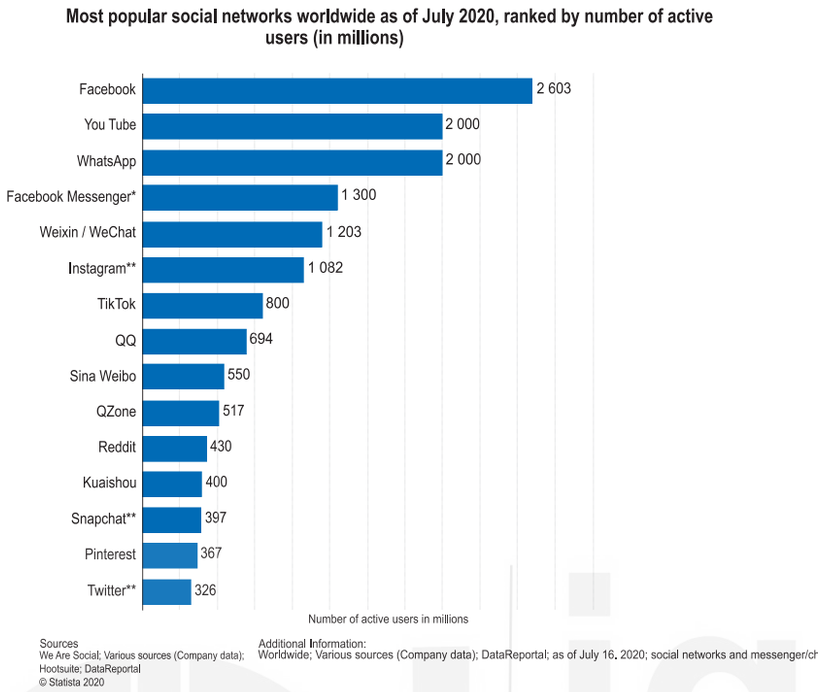
- understand the evolution, types of social media and its channels;
- differentiate between traditional mass media and social media;
- explain the right social media etiquettes;
- explore social media's utilization in marketing and advertising, crowd sourcing of information, crowd funding etc.; and
- understand the social, cultural and economic impact of social media.

5.2 UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL MEDIA

The Internet is a network of networks, a global system of interconnected networks of computers. The term Internet and World Wide Web (WWW) are used interchangeably, but they are different. So while the Internet is a global system of interconnected computers, WWW also called the web, is a collection of interconnected documents and resources linked together using the resources of the Internet.

In the beginning, there was what was called Web 1.0, a static or read-only web. This was replaced by what we call a dynamic or interactive Web or Web 2.0. Web 2.0 led to the development of interactivity on the Internet and announced the arrival of social media. Web 2.0 is a term that has been used by many authors to mean many things from early to mid-2000s. The one aspect of Web 2.0 most views converge on is, that it was a more social, collaborative, interactive and responsive web unlike web 1.0. Among one of the many reasons that, web 2.0 became what it is known by is the use of certain software technologies.

The social part of the web meant users were just not consuming information from a static web, but they were also creating it. This was enabled by what is called social media platforms or what we know in the popular press as social media. One can then say that social media is a combination of Web 2.0 technology, i.e. interactive applications, user-generated content and media richness and Web ideology of transparency and availability of information and tools. To this mixture, if one adds the Information Technology (IT) and markets, i.e. smartphones, broadband, wifi and affordability, we arrive at the foundations of Social Media.



Social media is a highly interactive platform through which individuals and organizations can co-create, share, discuss, participate and modify user-generated content or self-curated content while also having control over the content that is created and its timing. All creation, sharing etc. of the content happens in a social context, i.e. users are a part of the society and its culture while producing new cultures. Social media provides people with pervasive network connectivity (Asur & Huberman, 2010) and allow the people to create virtual social networks which replicate the real social networks one has in the real world. Social media has been referred to as "social media sites" (Diga & Kelleher,2009), or a set of information technologies which facilitate interactions and networking (Kapoor et al., 2017; Oestreicher-Singer & Zalmanson, 2013).

The virtual world mimics the real world because as would be logical, humans created the computers and the associated networks looking at the knowledge gained from the real world and its functionality. Hence, many parts of the way social media networks operate mimic the way humans create networks except that in the virtual world, you can create an anonymous identity, operate behind shadows and hide behind multiple avatars. The other thing about the virtual world is it speeds up whatever happens in the real world. Messages move in real-time as do responses. Social media allows humans to connect and share with other humans across space and time.

Why would humans seek a virtual social network in the presence of a real one? This is due to the concept of "Social Presence" which humans look forward to in their relationships. Social presence is defined as "the extent to which a medium allows users to experience others as psychologically present" (Hassanein & Head, 2005). Presence is the "illusion of being there or an experience of being in an environment while physically situated in another location" (Li, Daugherty, & Biocca, 2002). Media is perceived as

warm if it enables human interactions, sociability, and sensitivity (Hassanein & Head, 2005). Information seeking increases the perception of social presence (Hajli, Sims, Zadeh, & Richard, 2017) and Cheung, Chiu, and Lee (2011) find that social presence enhances users' continued use of social media.

5.2.1 Definitions

Social media is defined in many ways by various authors and scholars. We looking at some academic work in this area, Boyd & Ellison(2008) defines it as "platform to create profiles, make explicit and traverse relationships"; Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre (2011) identified social media by the set of functionalities or "building blocks"; while Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) introduced the social media taxonomy by splitting it into six distinctive categories (Blogs, Social Networking Sites, Collaboration Projects, Content Communities, Virtual Social Worlds, and Virtual Game Worlds).

However, Carr and Hayes (2015) gave a detailed definition of social media, which gives a much better understanding. According to them, "Social media are Internet-based channels that allow users to opportunistically interact and selectively self-present, either in real-time or asynchronously, with both broad and narrow audiences who derive value from user-generated content and the perception of interaction with others."

While explaining this 'rephrased definition,' Carr and Hayes (2015) have identified *five* components, which summarise the whole gamut of social media - 1] Internet-based; 2] Disentrained, persistent channels; 3] Perceived interactivity; 4] User-generated value, and 5] Mass personal communication.

Internet-based: WWW is an application side of the Internet, the social media networks are becoming increasingly standalone, rather than web-based. These social media 'apps' more closely use other Internet tools in order to make its communication process complete in all aspects.

Disentrained, Persistent Channels: With mobile-based social media 'apps' gaining popularity, the individual users' interaction with the social networks is continuous in process, irrespective of that particular user being continuously 'present' online like Video chat. Messages are delivered continuously, and the same is being consumed continuously by others - more importantly, during these interactions, both the users need not necessarily to be in real-time (synchronous mode) online. This facilitates a better presentation of one's ideas and particularly one's 'self'. Communication may be in asynchronous mode, but the platform persists and facilitates the interaction round the clock. That is the second important feature of social media.

Perceived Interactivity: 'A social medium is inherently social in nature' as noted by Carr and Hayes, the social media facilitates parasocial interaction among its users. A user may subscribe to a personality over Twitter or Instagram, and while that particular personality may continuously be sending messages, the individual who is following perceives that s/he receives messages and communicates to him or her. Whether a social media user is posting a message or sharing information or commenting on others posts, the mere presence is an acknowledgement of being part of the communication process.

User-Generated Value: Social media itself is a product of Web 2.0, where every user is capable of interacting with any particular messages through comments, likes and sharing options. These inputs from various users collectively convey added information and value to the original message. More user-generated values give the popularity of that particular message, which either indicates the mass acceptance or acknowledgement or rejection of the original message. Any particular user derives significant interpretations from the original message along with the user-generated contents.

Masspersonal Communication: The nature of interactivity with social media allows a user to communicate with others in a multidirectional way, like Facebook or Twitter or Instagram may be used to communicate with the mass audience while at the same time these platforms can be used to interact on a one-on-one. This multidirectionality of communication flows allows the interaction between 'user to user, user to audience, audience to user, or audience to audience in social media'.

5.2.2 History

It is essential to understand the history of the present technology-mediated social media or social media networks as we know them today. Most students seem to think that the current technology of computers and the Internet are the reason behind social media. However, if we see the history of human beings, the precursor to the current social media networks using computers was laid way back.

For example, *Cursus publicus*, the state-run courier (and transportation) service of the Roman Empire was established by Roman emperor Augustus whose reign started in 27BC. Essentially the courier system or a postal system is nothing but a social message network as it moves messages from one person to another. The telegraph, telephone and radio were the precursors to the Internet. The earliest forms of the Internet, such as CompuServe, were developed in the 1960s. The 1979's UseNet allowed users to communicate through a virtual newsletter.

By the 1980s, home computers were becoming more common and social media was becoming more sophisticated. Internet relay chats, or IRCs, were first used in 1988 and continued to be popular well into the 1990s.

The first recognisable social media site as we know social media today was the "Six Degrees" created in 1997. It enabled users to upload a profile and make friends with other users. In 1999, the first blogging site "Blogger" became popular, creating a social media sensation. This was followed by the hugely popular sites like MySpace, which was the precursor of Facebook, and LinkedIn, which gained prominence in the early 2000s. This was followed by photo-sharing sites like Photobucket and Flickr, which facilitated online photo sharing. Then the video-sharing platform YouTube came in 2005, creating an entirely new way for people to communicate.

Facebook and Twitter became available by 2006 to users throughout the world. Other sites like Tumblr, Spotify, Foursquare and Pinterest came to fill specific niches.

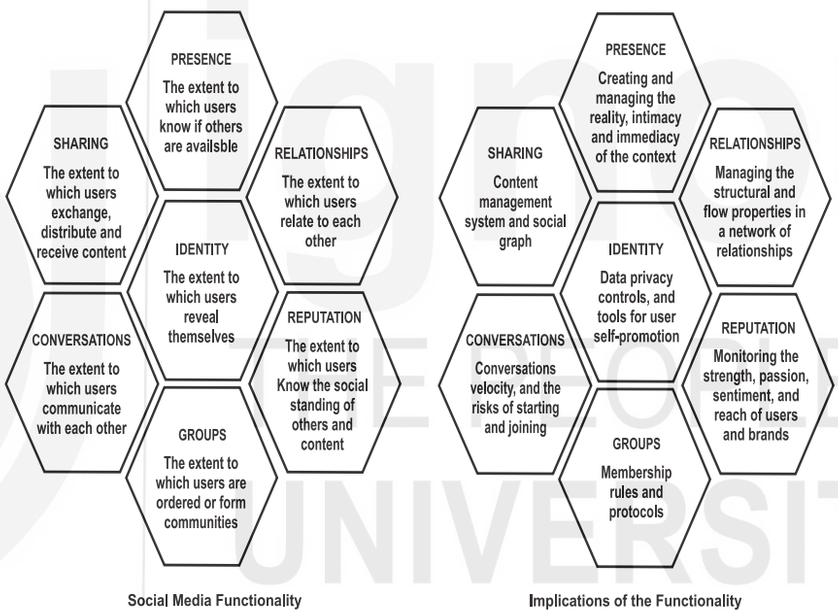
5.2.3 Types

Kietzmann et al., (2011) define seven functional building blocks for social media. These are present in varying quantities in any social media application and can be substituted and enhanced by the integration of applications.

Identity could be the profile of the user, including her display picture and her likes, hobbies etc. on Facebook or her biodata on Twitter, LinkedIn etc. The **relationship** is a visualisation of a user's social network. It could be as simple as whose post does the user "like" or who is she "following" or is "followed." It could also be a virtual representation of real-life relationships. These relationships could be unidirectional or bidirectional.

Reputation establishes the trust level between community members. The trust could be through verification by the platform or through the biodata and content provided.

Groups are where users articulate their affiliation and are also used to manage relationships.



Conversations allow users to interact with each other in a dialogic manner within real-time or in a time-lapsed manner. **Sharing** is how content is spread. A user does not need to be in a social relationship to share content. Sharing is also done cross-platform. **Presence** is about knowing about the other community members.

While LinkedIn is about reputation, Facebook will be about relationships, Twitter about conversations, WhatsApp about sharing, TikTok about identity and Foursquare about presence, all these social media platforms could be used as a combination of the above mentioned seven functional building blocks in varying degrees. To give an example, Facebook could be used for presence in a natural disaster when users mark themselves as "safe."

5.2.4 Mass Media and Social Media

Social media is also a type of media. Media is nothing but plural for medium. When commentators use the word media, they either mean mass media or traditional mass media. In the classic sense, the traditional mass media is a

one-to-many communication where the consumer is passive and isolated. It is message-driven and has limited targeted channels. It has limited reach with the fleeting impression which has an expiry date, i.e. content out of circulation after publication or broadcast. Social media, on the other hand, is one-to-one and many-to-many communication where the user/consumer is active. The user/consumer is both the user/consumer and producer of content and is called a produser/prosumer. It is conversation-driven and has unlimited targeted channels. It has no limits, i.e. can reach all the Internet-connected areas of the world, and social media conversations are lasting and can be discovered using a search engine.

Social media space is a disruption of typical media as unlike traditional media, and there are no cultural gatekeepers like curators, editors etc. disturbing the balance of control. The users now have the tools at their disposal to create their own culture, which impacts the consumer-producer relationship impacting the cultural and economic value of media.

Social media differs from traditional media like print and broadcast in many ways including reach, frequency, interactivity, usability, performance and even quality with the media being dialogic(many-to-many) as opposed to mono-logic(one-to-many) traditional media. Today the boundary between traditional and social media is a little blurred with traditional mass media also using websites and social media accounts to foray into user conversations which have access across the Internet world, and one can search the content using a search tool on their website or a search engine.

Check Your Progress: 1

Note: 1) Use the space below for your Answer.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this Unit.

1. Explain the term 'perceived interactivity'?

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2. Give suitable examples of seven building blocks of social media?

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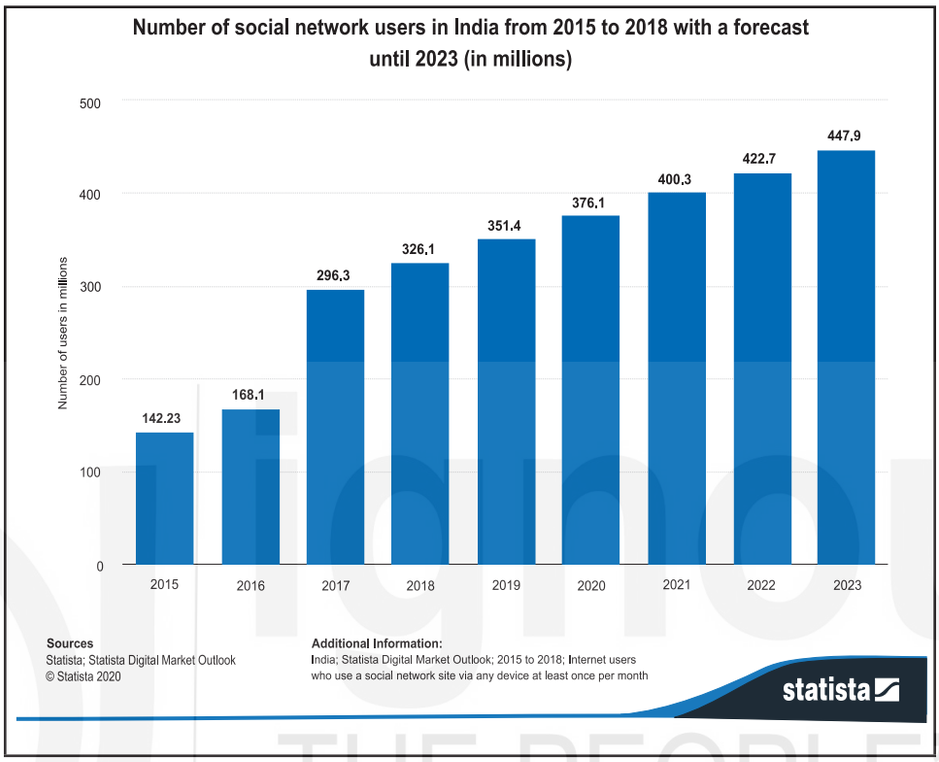
5.3 SOCIAL MEDIA IN INDIA

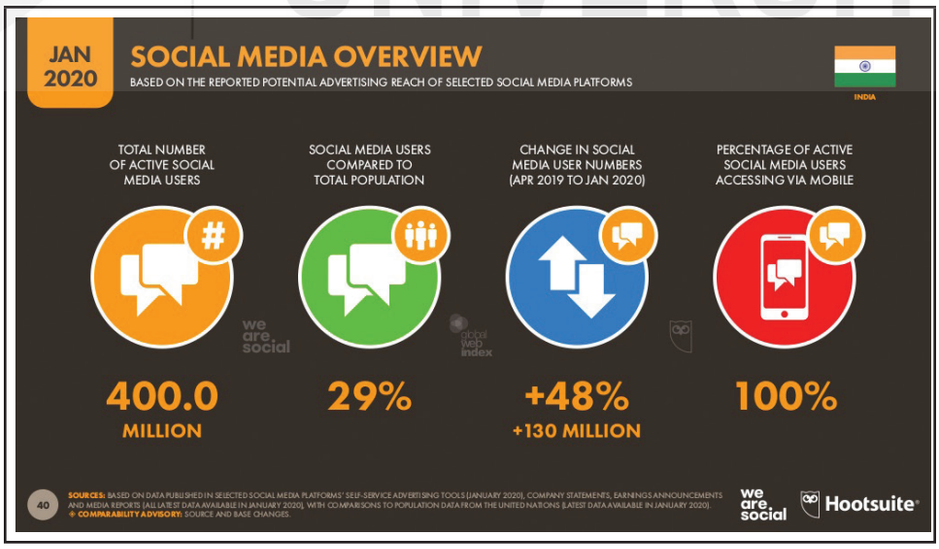
A channel is nothing but a path along which information passes. The various social media channels through which 'users network' are the various social media platforms. Some of the most prominent and most popular social media websites, with over hundreds of million registered users, include Facebook and its associated Facebook Messenger, Instagram and WhatsApp, YouTube, WeChat, QQ, QZone, Weibo, Twitter, Tumblr, Telegram, Baidu Tieba, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Pinterest, Viber, VK, Reddit etc.

India currently has a total population of over 1.36 billion people, of which 604 million are Internet users with about 400 million social media users as of 2020. According to a recent World Bank report year on the status of social

media, "India has more Facebook users than any other country. YouTube's Indian audience has grown 85% in the last year. And WhatsApp has reached 400 million users. The subcontinent is now the largest market for all three networks. Instagram boasts of 69 million Indian users, while LinkedIn has racked up 56 million users. Twitter and Snapchat have relatively small audiences (though Snapchat is growing in popularity)."

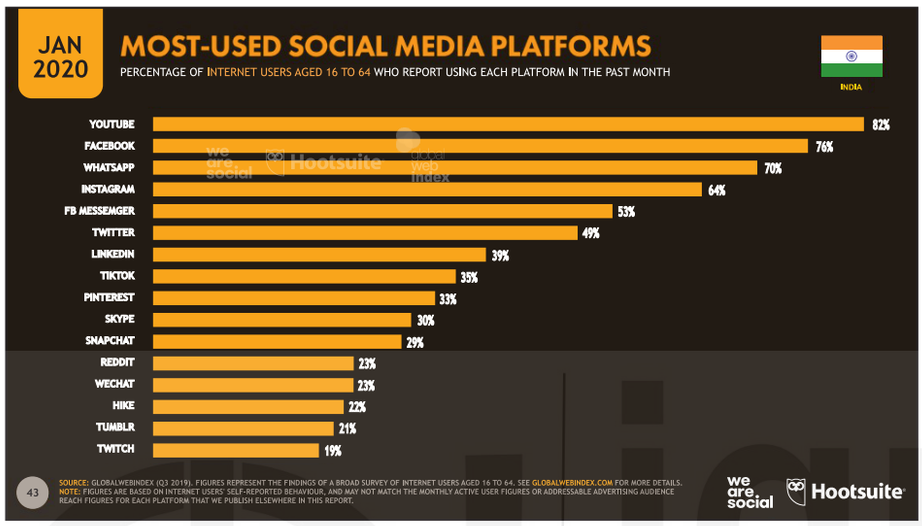


The usage of different channels as a percentage of the total social media users can be seen in the following graph. Youtube leads the pack with 82% of the social media users using this channel followed by Facebook and Instagram. With 49%, Twitter is one of the sixth most popular social media outlets in India, which is quite active in public matters.



The Internet has a reach of 51% in India, while the social media has close to 29% penetration level. Most importantly, all social media users have a mobile data connection. One of the reasons for the popularity of the YouTube

channel could be that it involves creating video content without requiring a user to be literate or know how to write any language, just by using visual cues, youngsters with a smartphone in villages and small towns of India can consume YouTube channels and simultaneously be a producer of content. Video is anyway a more popular format for social media than text which can be seen from the chart below of the most active social media platforms.



5.4 SOCIAL MEDIA ETIQUETTES

The most important thing to remember is that social media networks mimic real-world networks and etiquettes as a code of behaviour within the context of our society. Even if it is a virtual medium one is operating in, the people in the network are real, and they know you, and you know them. Hence the way one operates on a social media network, remains similar as some of the etiquettes remains the same as in real-world networks.

Behave as One would do in the Real World: Do not behave with people on social media in a way one would not behave in real life: Many a time users forget social media works on the concept of a social network of real people, people whom one might encounter in the real world. Just because one operates on the virtual world anonymously, one feels that anonymity allows us the freedom to say or do things which would be frowned upon in the real world. This assumption is wrong, one lives in a real-world with relationships with real people whom one could meet in one's personal or professional life. Hence, the number one etiquette is to behave on social media networks with the same civility and courtesy as one would behave in the real world. Bad Behaviour is generally frowned on. One should not spam and troll or cyberbully as it could lead one into trouble. Abusing and threatening are troll behaviours. If done under one's own identity it can lead to grave consequences, including legal cases.

Context not Understood: The most important thing to understand while on social media is that it is difficult for users to understand the context. For example, in case a user is sarcastic on social media because in real life the user is going through a stressful situation or has undergone a relationship problem, the other users on his her social media network will not know

about it or will not understand this because they cannot connect physically but are connected virtually. What other users see are just words or pictures, and there can be a misinterpretation of the message being conveyed, leading to either loss of a relationship or other consequences which may be difficult to control. It is essential to be clear, concise and direct in communication while on social media networks.

The case study of Justine Sacco, a 30 years old senior director of corporate communications at InterActiveCorp, a US-based company, is significant to understand social media etiquette. During her long flight between New York and Cape Town, she was tweeting sarcastic little jokes about the indignities of travel. As she boarded her flight from London to Cape Town, she tweeted.

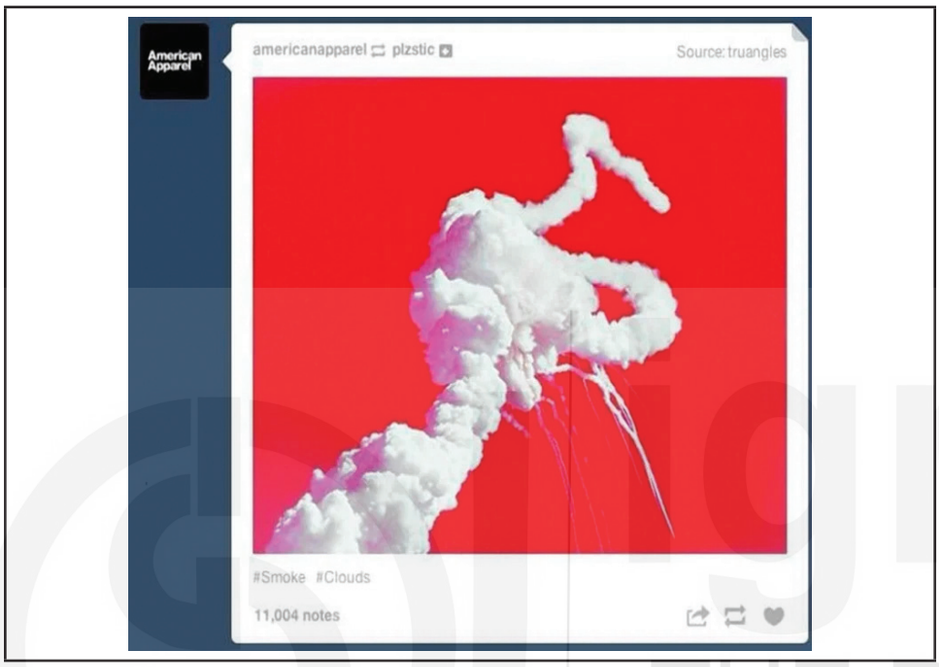
Most viewers of this tweet will not know the context of this tweet, that she was travelling and is tweeting sarcastic jokes. They will also not know whether she is being racist or is raising awareness about AIDS. All the users will see are her words which appear out of context and racist. That is what happened, and she lost her job as well as became a hated person because of this tweet because people thought she was racist and culturally insensitive.

Posting Inappropriate Content: Similarly posting inappropriate content or posting pictures of friends, coworkers or colleagues without taking permission could harm personal or professional relationships. It is essential to understand the privacy settings of each social media platform. Every piece of information about oneself or one's family should not be in the public domain, and hence privacy settings must be set so that personal information should be restricted. One should not take privacy lightly as posting personal information for acquaintances, or the random public can put one at harm's way as well as get people to judge harming relationships.

Copyright Laws: All material on the Internet is subject to copyright even if it explicitly does not say so. Using pictures, text, graphics and videos without appropriate citation or acknowledging sources can lead to relationship trouble or worse legal trouble. When in doubt, better not to share or post.

Excessive use of Hashtags: Hashtag is a method available on social media networks for collating topics or keywords for easy search. For example, searching for #Covid19 will bring up all posts related to "Covid19" as well as user accounts posting on this topic along with related news on the topic. It is bad etiquette to use trending hashtags for one's post to make it part of the trending topic as well as bad practice to use a hashtag for every word of your post.

Inappropriate Comment or Marketing Pitch: Making a comment or a marketing pitch in a difficult situation by an individual or company is looked at as being in bad taste. The image of the 1986 tragic explosion of the Space Shuttle Challenger was misused by US clothing company 'American Apparel' on social media Tumblr. The image was tagged 'smoke' and 'cloud' for the 4th July Independence Day festivities in the USA. Social Media Users immediately pointed it out, and it was considered in terrible taste with the company having to apologise.



Text Format: Using ALL CAPS, **Bold** or large text is a sign of shouting and rage, highly inappropriate for social media networks which are based on relationships, sharing and conversations.

5.5 USES OF SOCIAL MEDIA

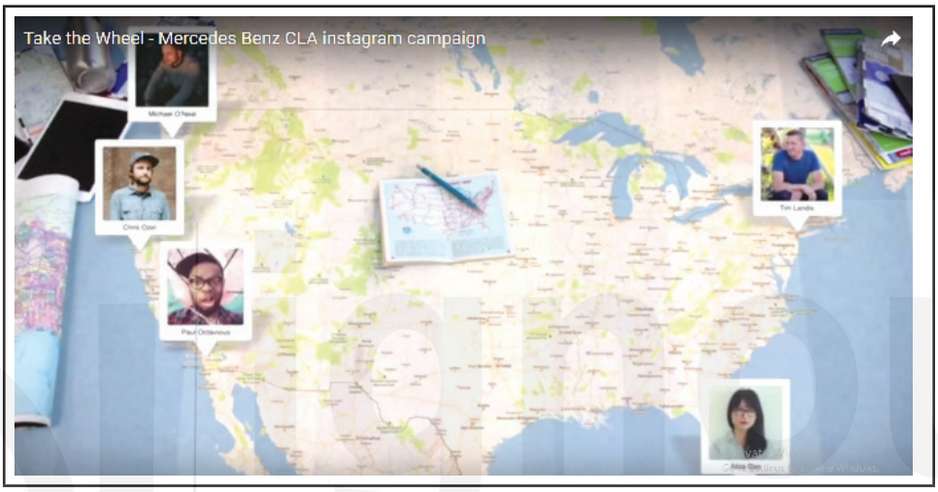
Social media is used by individuals, governments, organisations and businesses today in multiple ways. While individuals may use it as news sources, make new friends and social networks and use it to publicise oneself in terms of skills or other aspects; businesses use it for crowdsourcing ideas and funding, marketing and marketing research, advertising and promotion, publicity and PR, relationship development and organisational development; organisations use it for communications, employee development and outreach; government use it communicating with citizens, promoting government policies and analyse/monitor public opinion. Following are three case studies to understand the scope of social media engagement by businesses and organisations.

5.5.1 Case Study: Advertising

Take the Wheel - Mercedes Benz CLA Instagram campaign. In 2013 Mercedes used the social media platform of Instagram (it was not a subsidiary of Facebook then) for the marketing campaign for its new car. For this, they hired five top Instagram photographers to take the wheel of the new car and hit the road for five days each. Every post they share would

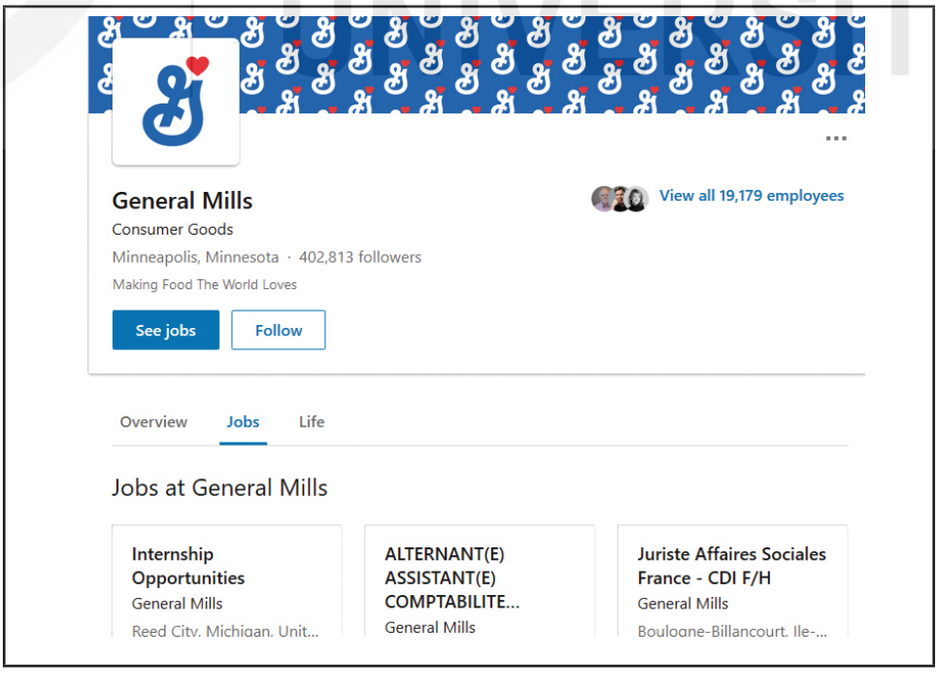
count and whoever gets the most likes on their post during the week keeps the car.

The five journeys and the respective Instagrammers were coordinated through by @mbusa on Instagram. Interested users were given the option to register on the company's website, and the users' Instagram posts became part of the portfolio for the company on which one lucky user also won a car based on his/her posts. The target audience was the younger audience, and by the end of the campaign, Mercedes had received 87million organic Instagram impressions, 2 million Instagram likes and 150 new digital marketing assets.



5.5.2 Case Study: Career

Makers of the American brand of cereals, Cheerios, General Mills, a Minneapolis USA based company, have addressed its recruitment challenge through social media. Not only does this endear the company to the youth on social media, it makes the company stand out with the right talent, but it also conveys the right message to prospective employees.



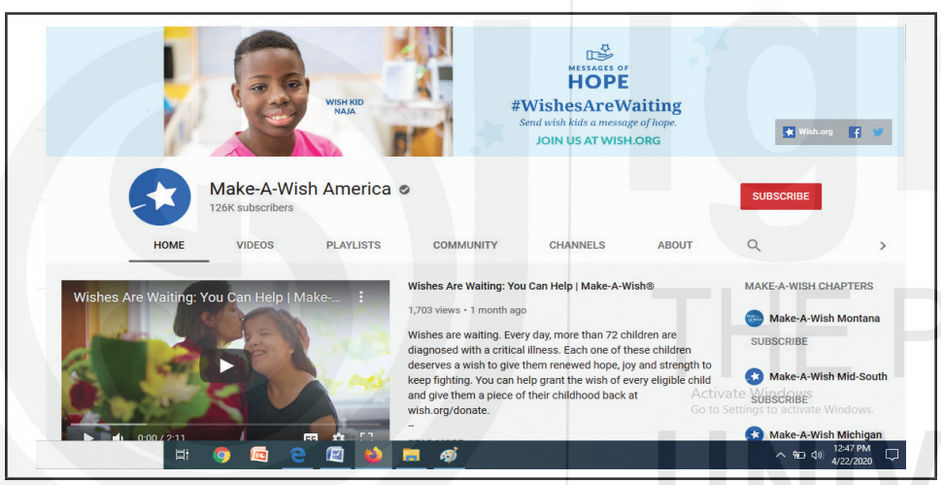
General Mills social media team shares content about what it is to work in the company and what prospective employees can expect on social media channels like Facebook, LinkedIn and Youtube.

For example, the careers page on LinkedIn, as shown above, with over 4lac followers, including over 19 thousand employees, is a way to build relationships and source candidates. There is a discussion on the company and industry topics including employee testimonials, current job opening etc. Information is also available for job seekers to contact GM recruiters.

5.5.3 Case Study: Crowdfunding

A collective effort by a network of people to collect funds for a cause, creative work or a business idea is called crowdfunding. Social media becomes the perfect platform for crowdfunding as it is composed of a virtual network of people of similar ideology or passion. The return on crowdfunding for the people contributing could be monetary or an intangible item like being morally right.

Make –A –Wish Foundation has the goal of fulfilling wishes of ill and vulnerable children of a tour to Disneyland to meet Hollywood celebrities.



The social media page consists of personal stories and experiences, making for compelling content which helps in converting supporters to donors. The social media account leads people to their website shown below to help them donate thus helping fulfil wishes of children.

5.6 SOCIO, CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Cultural Production is the process of creating artefacts,with media being one of them and the product represents the society for the time frame when it is produced, for example, a movie, video, photograph or book. Cultural production is challenged when new players emerge to disturb the existing norms and governance structures. For example, digital technology in the form of social media is leading to significant changes in the way culture is produced, consumed and disseminated as it disrupts by removing traditional gatekeepers like editors, curators, critics etc. impacting the producer-consumer relationship. In the traditional media world, cultural production was done by specialists and controlled by institutions but not so in the world of social media.

Social media is a space where content is being produced, remixed, reproduced, reappropriated and recontextualised by users. All these activities happen within a social context. The remixing is done by various authors contributing to the remix, and this could be an improvement on the previous work. The production of "Memes" is a cultural production by non-organised users reflecting the prevailing social, political and economic landscape. With social media, the balance of production has moved from organised to users, public and citizens who have social media tools at their disposal to create their own culture.

This cultural production creates its own creative economy which operates parallel to the traditional market models. This economy operates outside the traditional institutional control. For example, cultural institutions like a music label want to maintain the role of a gatekeeper by deciding artist and music they want to promote, social media users are creating, storing and archiving their own music and hence another cultural space is emerging within social media from production to consumption helping niche expertise as well as new interesting perspectives on existing production models.

Then there is the culture of everyday life that becomes entwined with the virtual life of social media. For example, even traditional societies are increasingly significantly mediating through social media using mobile phones. Friendships and peer-to-peer relations are increasingly conducted online through social media messaging apps.

Economic: The disruptionist social media democratises information and provides a platform to all users who are on social media. This makes all users their own media brand with the traditional barriers and gatekeepers absent on social media platforms. Due to a changed relationship between producers of messages and consumers, smaller brands, entrepreneurs and niche businesses proliferate with not only an alternate channel for marketing but also a channel to sell their products and services. Location, which used to be the most crucial parameter for a business, is no longer as important.

Social media platforms are the way information spreads. Through content creation by users even with no advertising, a good product or service or creation can be marketed by the new modes of content creation in the social media where users can produce, remix, reproduce, reappropriate and recontextualise good creative content produced by a small brand, making it viral, thereby changing the way the product/service is advertised. This has disrupted traditional advertising models, and social media platforms are today the most prominent advertising companies. For example, Facebook and Google control almost 60% of all online media spending (source: eMarketer). This is creating a new ecosystem which spans industry sectors, media formats and channels.

Businesses are using social media to generate insights on product/service offerings, get feedback of the quality of product/services, stimulate demand by creative content and competitions and create targeted product offerings now that social media platforms can micro-target potential customers based on location, demographics and/or other factors. The flip side of dependence

on social media for sales by businesses is that while on are hand when products attract many shares, it can reinforce sales however, when the reverse is the cost, customers begin to distrust the product and the company, a term called "social proof" coined by psychologist Robert Cialdini (Users go on e-commerce sites and look for "social proofs," a testimony from a celebrity, a rating system is given by users of the product etc.).

Various studies have shown that implementing social networks in the workplace helps in knowledge sharing as well as project management activities by removing boundaries, eliminating barriers in which departments work and helps to raise interaction levels while also creating more skilled and knowledgeable workers.

Social: The social impact of social media is by far the biggest as social media works through the formation of social networks by users in a virtual world. Its most significant impact is the formation of networks which span space and time and leads to the free-flowing of cultures and formation of new cultures which impacts the world. It has impacted how people consume information, how the consumption of media has gone from public to private and personal.

However, on the flip side, social media works on algorithms. The information a user gets through social media is determined by the user preferences, which is self-declared by the user and detected by the algorithm. Hence if one is an environmentalist, then one would get news and user-generated content on environmental activism. This selective exposure of information is harmful to the user as the user is not able to get alternate perspectives, for example, the tradeoff between development and environment. In politics, this can lead to things like political polarisation, of being associated with a political party or ideology which is detrimental to democracy. This is also what is called the "echo chamber" effect. Meanwhile, research has also shown evidence that social media use leads to a persuasion of political beliefs, i.e. individuals who use social media were more likely to have their political beliefs persuaded than those who did not.

Social media, like any media, has the power to increase the scope of stereotypes not only among children but people all ages. One study with Facebook users found its use encouraged people to represent themselves in traditional gender constructs maintaining stereotypes.

Various studies done on social media users have found that social media users are more stressed and anxious. Primack, Shensa et al. (2017) found a linear association between the number of social media platforms used with anxiety and depression, i.e. the more platforms a user used, the more the anxiety and depression. Various reasons ascribed for this, including a distorted view of people's lives, cyber-bullying and feeling the time spent on social media a waste. In fact, studies on social media usage found social media affecting sleep, self-esteem, loneliness and well-being but it is also true that social media affects people differently, depending on personality traits or any pre-existing conditions.

Check Your Progress: 2

Note: 1) Use the space below for your Answer.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this Unit.

1. Describe some social media etiquettes users must follow while operating on social media.

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2. How do algorithms of social media apps or websites influence an individual user?

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5.7 LET US SUM UP

Through this Unit, we have discussed Web 2.0 and its characteristics like social, collaborative, interactive and responsive web, and the tack that social part of the web meant users were just not only consuming information from a static web, but they were also creating it. While tracing the historical dimension of social media evolution, we have observed that the present technology-mediated social media or social media networks as we know them today have evolved from the courier service started much earlier followed by inventions like the telegraph, the telephone and the radio. More importantly, we elaborated on seven functional building blocks, i.e. conversation, sharing, presence, relationship, reputation, groups and identity. These are present in varying quantities in any social media application and can be substituted and enhanced by the integration of applications. We also compared social media with the mainstream media. The traditional mass media is a one-to-many communication where the consumer is passive and isolated. Social media, on the other hand, is one-to-one and many-to-many communication where the consumer is active.

Also, in this Unit, we discussed various social media etiquettes which are a code of behaviour within the context of social media platforms. Social media platforms offer a virtual social network; hence bad behaviour is generally frowned upon like in real friend networks. One should not spam and troll or cyberbully as it could lead one into trouble. In the later part, we discussed social media usage by individuals, governments, organisations and businesses in multiple fronts. Individuals may use it as news sources, to make new friends and social networks or use it to publicise oneself in terms of skills or other aspects.

5.8 KEYWORDS

A prosumer is a person who consumes and produces a product.

Blog (a truncation of "**weblog**") is categorised as social media. It is a discussion or informational website published on the World Wide Web consisting of discrete, often informal diary-style text entries (posts).

Crowdfunding is the practice of funding a project or venture by raising small amounts of money from a large number of people, typically via the Internet.

Crowdsourcing is a sourcing model in which individuals or organisations obtain goods and services, including ideas and finances, from a large, relatively open and often rapidly evolving group of Internet users.

Forum, or Internet forum or **message board**, is an online discussion site where people can hold conversations in the form of posted messages.

The echo chamber is a metaphorical description of a situation in which beliefs are amplified or reinforced by communication and repetition inside a closed system.

The social network is a social structure made up of a set of social actors (such as individuals or organisations), sets of dyadic-ties, and other social interactions between actors.

User-generated content (**UGC**), alternatively known as **user-created content** (**UCC**), is any form of content, such as images, videos, text, and audio, that has been posted by users on online platforms such as social media.

Web 1.0 refers to the first stage in the World Wide Web, which was entirely made up of web pages connected by hyperlinks. Generally believed to refer to the web when it was a set of static websites that were not yet providing interactive content.

Web 2.0 refers to websites that emphasise user-generated content, ease of use, participatory culture and interoperability for end users.

5.9 FURTHER READINGS

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5.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress: 1

1. A user may subscribe to a personality over Twitter or Instagram. That particular personality may continuously be sending messages. The individual who is following may perceive that s/he receives messages and communicates to him or her. Whether a social media user is posting a message or sharing information or commenting on others posts, the mere presence is an acknowledgement of being part of the communication process.

2. Kietzmann et al., (2011) defines seven functional building blocks for social media. These are present in varying quantities in any social media application and can be substituted and enhanced by the integration of applications. While LinkedIn is about reputation, Facebook is about relationships, Twitter is about conversations, WhatsApp is about sharing, TikTok is about identity and Foursquare is about presence, all these social media platforms could be used as a combination of the above mentioned seven functional building blocks in varying degrees. To give an example, Facebook could be used for marking presence in a natural disaster when users mark themselves as "safe."

Check Your Progress: 2

1. The most important thing to remember is that social media networks mimic real-world networks and etiquettes act as a code of behaviour within the context of our society. Even if it is a virtual medium one is operating in, the people in the network are real, and they know you, and you know them. Hence the way one operates on a social media network, some of the etiquettes remains the same as in real-world networks - ***1]*** *Behave as one would do in the real world; 2] Posting of appropriate Content; 3] Follow copyright law; 4] Do not use excessive hashtags, and 5] Do not post inappropriate comments.*

2. The information a user gets through social media is determined by the user preferences, which is self-declared by the user and detected by the algorithm. Hence, if one is an environmentalist, then one would get news and user-generated content on environmental activism. This selective exposure of information is harmful to the user as the user is not able to get alternate perspectives, for example, the tradeoff between development and environment. In politics, this can lead to things like political polarisation, of being associated with a political party or ideology which is detrimental to democracy. This is also what is called the "echo chamber" effect.

UNIT 6 : ONLINE NEWS SHARING

Structure

6.0 INTRODUCTION

The advent of the Internet has changed the way of producing and consuming information. In today's world, half of the population is on the Internet, and they are using this medium to produce and consume information. You must have learnt in detail about the term social media in the previous Unit. When we say social media, it does not mean that there are some media which is anti-social also. It only means that on the Internet, social media platforms have increased the level of interaction between various communities and individuals. The technological features of social media platforms have enabled users to receive and send information instantly.

It is estimated that social media users in India around 400 million in 2020, up from close to 168 million in 2016, and it is expected to reach 447 million by 2023. Most popular social media platforms are Facebook and YouTube. Facebook is projected to reach 444 million users in India by 2023 (Statista, 2020), and currently, it has 346 million users. Similarly, YouTube had 265 million active monthly users in 2019, and by 2021 it is projected that it will

have 500 million monthly active users (Jonnalagadda, H., 2018). One of the popular microblogging sites, Twitter has 17 million users in India (Statista, 2020).

As far as sharing of content on social media is concerned, Twitter and Facebook are widely used. YouTube is used as a platform for video upload, but these video links are shared on Facebook or Twitter for broader visibility. Even media houses are using Facebook and Twitter for this purpose.

The information sharing on social media includes ideas, information, pictures, videos and other digital contents. They share their personal content as well as content from various websites. Now, users don't wait for television bulletin or next day newspaper for information. However, they prefer to get it from the Internet and preferably from social media where they get news as well as happenings in personal lives of their near and dear ones.

News organisations are also exploring social media platforms to disseminate their news. They have made their pages on these platforms and keep sharing online content on these pages. It has expanded their reach, and now they have a wider audience. Online users use several features of social media like share, hashtag, like, and keep multiplying the reach of the news.

However, as social media lacks professional gatekeepers, it is evident that much misleading content would also surface on social media. These types of contents are manipulated and aimed at misinforming the intended audience with malicious intent. It is popularly called as 'fake news', and it may create sociological and political problems in the society. Users have to learn ways to identify fake news so that social media remains a free and open platform of interaction and would not become a tool for propaganda in the hands of a few people.

In this Unit, we shall learn the various aspects of news sharing on social media. We will also learn about the role of online media features to enhance the reach of news.

6.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

After reading this Unit, you will be able to:

- understand the strength of social media concerning news sharing.
- be familiar with various tools of sharing and their uses on social media;
- identify fake news on social media; and
- understand the concept of gatekeeping and how it is different from the gate watchers of social media.

6.2 SOCIAL MEDIA AND INTERACTIVITY

Social media and interactivity are related to each other. Social media is social because of the enhanced level of interactivity in it. Social media is often considered as a platform that facilitates information sharing and participation (Steenkamp & Clarke, H. 2014). Kietzmann et al. (2011) defined that social media is like mobile and web-based technologies it is designed to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals

and communities share, co-create, discuss and modify User-Generated Content (UGC).

Similarly, interactivity is also defined by several scholars, but there is a lack of operational definition. Interactivity, as a conceptual framework, includes synchronicity, rapidity, participation, speed, variety of choices, hypertextuality, connectedness, experience, and responsiveness (Rafaeli & Ariel, 2007).

The strength of social media platforms depends on the level of interactivity between the source and receiver. While going through a media content on newspaper or watching a news item on television, you must have felt the urge to raise some questions and seek answers or add some new perspective in the news item. To do so, we have fewer options. In the case of newspapers, we can at the most write a 'letter to the editor' and in the case of a TV bulletin, we can make a call to the channel. However, in both cases, it is not necessary that your' letter to the editor' would get a place or your phone call would get proper attention.

All this has changed with the emergence of social media. One of the vital features of social media is immediacy. Here you can immediately interact with the sender and also start a discussion with other fellow users. This facility has given greater control over the information to the users. Now, users can not only seek some clarification but can also initiate a discussion on the topic for a greater understanding of the subject.

6.2.1 Interactivity and Interaction

Interactivity facilities are in-built features of social media which enables and promotes interaction between user to user and user to the manufacturer of news. Interaction is not necessarily dependent on the interactive facilities provided by social media. The interaction may take place with the help of an interactive facility or without it.

According to the interactivity model, there are three possible types of processes in it. First, the one-directional or declarative message in which any participant can become a sender or receiver in turn, but this will be one-directional also. The message board is one of the examples, where participants put their messages, but the level of interactivity is significantly less because participants do not feel its requirement. Second, two-way directional messages in which receiver also become sender but messages are related to requested information not beyond that. Computer games are an excellent example of two-way directional communication where the computer responds to the given command by the user. The third is a two-way flow of messages between sender and receiver. In this type of communication, sender and receiver keep responding to each other and focus is on the continuation of interaction.

Rafaeli and Ariel (2007) suggested additional elements to this model by including more players in a set environment. Including more players in communication means that message is not directed to individuals. However, in general, it is shared, and any player can join the conversation at any point in time. In this type of communication, some players may actively participate in the conversation while some players may simply witness the conversation. Social media platforms have provided the opportunity for this type of communication.

Interactivity is defined by various scholars from different perspectives. Ha and James (1998) defined interactivity as a part of the communication process rather than it is specific to a medium. As a process, two-way communication becomes characteristic of interactivity.

Schumann, Artis and Rivera (2001) gave a psychological perspective to interactivity. According to them, interactivity is a choice of the consumer, not the platform. The platform simply facilitates interaction. McMillan (2000) gave technological dimension to interactivity and listed 13 interactive features on online platforms, which includes email links, chat options, comment options, search options etc.

After going through all these definitions of interactivity, we can conclude that interactivity is a two-way flow of information sharing between user and producer in which receiver and sender interact with each other and new information emerging from the interaction is incorporated for greater visibility or acceptance among users. This process of interaction goes on.

6.2.2 Social Media Platforms

Social media platforms can be broadly divided into four types:

- Social networking sites-Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+.
- Microblogging sites-Twitter, Tumblr
- Photo Sharing sites-Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest
- Video sharing sites-YouTube, Facebook Live, Periscope, Vimeo

For the purpose of news sharing, social networking site Facebook, microblogging site Twitter and video-sharing site YouTube are popular ones. Most prominently Facebook and Twitter are important for sharing purposes as YouTube video links are shared on these platforms for greater visibility. News organisations are also using these two platforms, prominently for news sharing purposes.

6.2.3 Facebook vs Twitter

The characteristics of Facebook and Twitter are different. Twitter is more personalised where users go and share their thoughts in limited words. Recently, Twitter has increased the word limits, but basically, people still use it for a sharp and precise comment on issues. Twitter has created a *niche* among influential people of societies. They use their Twitter account to give their comment on specific issues. Twitter has made it possible for the important personalities to give their comment without waiting for news organisations to contact them for their opinions. In that way, Twitter has an elite orientation. Urban young adults and politically engaged people are in the majority to use this platform for sharing of news and opinion (Bastos, 2014).

News organisations also exploit the nature of Twitter accordingly, and they share their story link to the platform. For this purpose, news organisations create their respective pages on Twitter and add as many news as they can. After sharing some new content, all the followers of the pages receive notifications for the same. In this manner, they are using this platform to reach out to a broader audience.

On the other hand, Facebook is different, and its focus is on the general population. Facebook users tend to share a variety of things on the platform. It ranges from pictures to videos and their ideas on specific issues. They also share website links on their wall. On Facebook also news organisations have created their pages, and with the brief description, they post content with links for further reading. The content shared on Facebook is entertaining in nature. The reason behind this is the presence of personal networks. This seems to be restraining for discussion on news items. Facebook users prefer to interact with friends more than discussing news items (Costera Meijer & Kormelink, 2015).

Users may use Facebook or Twitter for sharing or commenting purposes that depends on users' preferences what they find fit. How users comment or share content on these two platforms are referred to as participatory practices. Indeed, this feature of social media has increased the interaction among users and between news creators and readers.

Activity – 1
Search trending #hashtags in Twitter and make a comprehensive report on that. Use those hashtags in your post also and try to be a part of the discussion.

Check Your Progress: 1

Note: 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this Unit.

1. What makes social media different from conventional media?

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6.3 CONTENT SHARING

Content which is in the form of data is widely shared as information. Information by definition, is informative and tells us something. This means any digital content-pictures, videos, text which are being shared online are informative. The critical point is whether this information translates into the knowledge or not? Knowledge is directly related to our capacity of deriving meaning out of the information. Therefore, content sharing can be just the sharing of information.

Sharing is a process in which exchange is an essential part. Exchange of data between a source and recipient must take place. That data may be some information or information framed within a context. Nevertheless, in both cases, the knowledge creation at every individual level will be different as the process of interpretation is subjective, and it is dependent on the individual's existing knowledge and identity.

6.3.1 Organisational Content

News organisations share organisational content in the form of news and views. These types of contents are written and analysed by professional writers. Therefore, the possibility of misinformation is very low. Generally, news organisations use social media platforms to popularise their content.

Otherwise, they have their platforms in the form of newspapers, websites or news channels. As news organisations, they have certain responsibilities. They have to adhere to the principle of news writing, which is maintaining objectivity, accuracy and following unbiased approach.

The most common practice among news organisations is to create their respective pages on social media platforms and share their original content in the form of a web link there. Followers of that page receive a shared link and visit the respective website of the news organisation by accessing it through a shared web link. There is software also which allows selected news content to surface on Facebook page and Twitter account automatically. This process is called seeding. This depends on the organisational policy based on appealing news and automating seeding based on social media trending.

Principally news organisations focus on sharing news, not views. In this way, news organisations do not try to contextualise content, but they just share information and knowledge creation depends on users' individual capacity.

6.3.2 User Generated Content

With the emergence of web 2.0, which enables real-time interaction among users, theorist Henry Jenkins (2006) notices a paradigm shift in the way content is produced and received. It has created a new participatory culture in which common users want to use media technologies and express themselves as they seem fit.

User-generated content comes from common users. They voluntarily generate a variety of content which appears before other users in useful or entertaining ways. The use of such content has seen rapid growth as it is readily available with no extra expense. Content creators are interested in generating content as it gives them recognition among fellow users. For other users, it may be beneficial as such types of content come to them as raw and without any treatment by professional media outlets.

If we see the sharing pattern of users, we find that apart from sharing their self-generated content, they also share news links on Facebook and Twitter. The sharing of such content is called a social plugin. This sharing pattern is dependent on users' preferences and choices of content.

6.3.3 Prosumer and Produser

Various media platforms require different types of agency as recipients of media content. For print, content recipients need to be literate. With the emergence of electronic media, illiterate people also became consumers of media products. However, until the emergence of web 2.0, media consumers remained passive. The content was distributed to them in a linear process. They had minimal opportunity to become part of the content creation. Web 2.0 has changed the whole dynamics of content creation. Now when a user is getting information from an interactive platform at the same time s/he can add certain things using various tools of engagement. Now users are not only passive recipients, but they are considered active contributors. They put in a certain amount of creative effort which is created outside of professional routines and platforms.

Since 1980 the term prosumer has been used by various academicians to stress on the bipolar agencies of online users where they are producers and consumers of the content at the same time. Now the term produser and co-creator are being widely used.

The term produser is coined by Bruns (2006) and widely used by Jenkins (2006). Produser and prosumer became a reality after the emergence of web 2.0 technology. This has made the multidirectional audience generated content a reality (Gross, 2009). Before technology-mediated communication, when audience had less control over the content, there was a clear distinction between content producer and user of the content. New media has changed the whole scenario, and now web users act as both producer and user. In this changed role at the time of getting some information, s/he might add some new information also. In this manner, at the same time, a user may be both producer and user.

It is believed that social media has enabled users to actively participate in news-making processes. But at the same time, many studies have shown that news producers restrictive strategies for users' participation. Producers of news sites have shown a preference for letting users discuss and interpret rather than letting them contribute content of their own (Domingo et al. .2008; Hermida & Thurman, 2008). This is done through procedures like moderation before letting content from users to get surfaced on the website. This has minimised the interaction of users to news content.

Check Your Progress: 2

Note: 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this Unit.

1. Differentiate between Seeding and Social plugin?

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2. Define 'Produser'?

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6.4 SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS AND ENGAGEMENT

With the rising use of social media, common people find new ways of engagement in public and personal affairs. Participation in public affairs has been divided by scholars into three levels, first civic engagement, second offline political participation and third online political participation.

Civic engagement aims at resolving problems of the community, whereas political participation both offline or online is directed towards influencing government and policymakers.

Undoubtedly, Social Networking Sites (SNS) have increased both types of engagement civic and political. The technological facilities of SNS enable users to create their own profile, connect with other users – usually, those people who have known offline – and navigate through these contacts (Boyd and Allison, 2007). Users can communicate with each other through

a variety of tools like chatting, sending private messages, sending public messages on the wall, posting to others walls, sharing photos, videos and linking outside content.

Indeed, most of the engagements that take place on SNS is not related to public affairs, just as most of the contents available on television is for entertainment, not news (Correa, Willard Hinsley & Gil de Zunga, 2010). People indeed use SNS for personalised use, online identity construction, social relationship or entertainment. However, there is no reason to think that these personalised uses hamper sharing of information that is public-oriented in nature (Hilbert, 2009).

A study done by Robertson et al. (2010) shows that at the time of 2008 US presidential election users shared links of news organisations and also actively commented on that. Users use social networking sites as a source of news and information related to public affairs.

6.4.1 Like, Share, Hashtag, Comment

Social media platforms have provided several tools of engagement. By using these tools, you can start sharing your thoughts and opinions on specific issues.

Like : Like button is given on both the platforms of Facebook and Twitter. Like buttons can be used for merely showing agreement to the given content. If you click this button that indicates you to like the content and your action is shared to all your followers or friends. It gives a message to them about your opinion on the content.

Share: On Facebook, you can share the content directly. Here you have different options of sharing. You can share the content directly as public without adding any comment. You have another option to share the content with your comment. You can also share the content as a private message, to any friend's timeline or to any page or group managed by you. Sharing enhances the level of engagement. By liking, you simply give your agreement but by sharing you not only show your agreement but disagreement also in the form of a comment. You start working here as an opinion leader for your friends and followers.

On Twitter, the same sharing facility is provided on the retweet button. By retweeting, you post the same tweet on your wall also.

Hashtag: If a word or phrase is preceded by a hash (#) mark, it creates a topic of interest. Social networking sites index it and make those words and phrases searchable for other users. The hashtag is used to draw the attention of other users towards important discussions. It is also used to organise events or processions. It was started by Twitter to make it easier for people to find a topic of interest, follow it and be a part of the conversation. Later on, Facebook also started this feature for its users.

Comment: Commenting is different from other features like sharing and liking. When you comment on a news story, then you are commenting on a brand website and connection with unique users of that website.

The comment feature was considered the most common way for users to contribute, but slowly other features became more critical. Now if a news story is shared on social media, users don't go to the web site's comment

section; instead, they prefer to comment on the social media thread itself. By this way, they connect to bigger and varied users. Moreover commenting is restricted through message moderation (Singer et al., 2011). Users tend to comment on lighter stories on sports and entertainment (Almgren & Olsson, 2015).

Whether users prefer to comment, share, like or retweet, their decision depends on users' preference of news content. It also depends on the nature of the social media platform they are using. For instance, sharing news on Facebook is connected to light stories, whereas on Twitter, serious contents are shared (Newman, 2011).

6.4.2 Social Recommendation vs Professional Recommendation

In the process of engagement we like, share or comment on news, and by doing this, we recommend that news to our social media friends and followers. These recommendations are divided into two groups, social recommendation and professional recommendation. The social recommendation can be made by amateurs or non-professionals. According to OECD definition, amateurs are those who work outside of professional routines and practices. These types of people are also called hobbyists, unpaid labourers or volunteers. In contrast to this, professionals are those who work in professional routines and practices. They are also called paid experts and employees.

However, web 2.0 has blurred the line between social recommendation and professional recommendation. As the market of user-generated content increased, it was commercialised by new media conglomerates. Due to this, a new mixed model of labour came into force for new media platforms. YouTube is a perfect example of this mixed model of labour where amateurs' efforts are also paying off based on the views of the content. Barbrook (2002) describes it as a gift economy for information exchange.

In this gift economy, amateur content is being commercially used, users do not have greater control over their own content because user-generated content is governed by specific technological and social protocols (Galloway, 2004). Technological protocols are based on rating and ranking systems, while social protocols are based on how uploads are filtered by experts or peer users. Considering all this, it can be said that UGC is exclusively produced by neither amateurs nor professionals. It is blending of work done by both of them. News shared on the pages of news organisations is obviously a professional recommendation. However, amateur content is very much popular among social media users, and it is also commercialised though it hardly matters whether the content is professional or amateur.

6.4.3 Gatekeepers and Gatewatchers

In a traditional medium, the content has to be approved at various stages for publishing or broadcasting. At each stage, contents are processed based on their newsworthiness and truth. At the time of gathering information, the reporter decides on his own regarding which fact is important and which is not. When it comes to the editorial table, editors again process the information given by reporters based on news value. This process of filtering is called gatekeeping. The content we receive in traditional media is filtered content which is the work of gatekeepers.

The role of gatekeepers is crucial for the consumer of media content. These gatekeepers lead them to newsworthy and truthful content. Nevertheless, with the emergence of social media where anybody can publish their content, gatekeeping has become non-existent, and gate-watching has emerged. Gate-watcher's keep observing various platforms of social media and gather information from various sources to ascertain the amount of truth in it. By doing this, they lead their followers and friends to valuable and objective information. All the social media users have some friends in their friend list whom they consider gate-watchers. News sharing activity of gate-watchers enhances the further sharing of the story.

Activity – 2
Create a Facebook page for content sharing. Make your friends as contributors to that page. And observe over a period of time on news sharing trends. Write a report based on your observation.

Check Your Progress: 3

Note: 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this Unit.

1. What is the purpose of using a hashtag?

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2. Define the gift economy in social media?

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6.5 IMPACT OF NEWS SHARING ON MAINSTREAM MEDIA

Online news sharing has an impact on media also. The event or happenings which are viral on social media, cannot be ignored by the mainstream media also. Mainstream media are those who are professionals and work under set practices and hierarchy. There are so many stories which became viral on social media first and same then picked up by mainstream media. Egypt Revolution was one such event which became viral on social media first, and then mainstream media started focusing on it.

Now users just do not want to see linear presentations on TV or newspaper, but they go to social media and get viewpoints of first-hand witnesses. Further, they go to blogs and citizen journalism platforms to understand analytical perspectives. In that way, users get a comprehensive understanding of the event much before TV or newspaper would provide.

This nature of social media has affected mainstream media in such a way that they have to keep a watch on these platforms to know about the preferences of users and the point of discussion among them. Popular social media content has also become one criteria of newsworthiness. Editors also keep visiting these platforms to get first-hand information and comments of well-known personalities for news. More generally, social media has improved the processes of identifying stories.

6.6 FAKE NEWS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

The term 'fake news' may seem new, but the term propaganda was always there. The Internet is a new addition to this sort of communication. Propaganda was also manipulated stories with some motivation. When we see propaganda through the Internet, sometimes it is called fake news or cyber propaganda. Fake news requires three different elements to succeed, which are called the triangle of fake news (Lion Gu. Et.al, 2017). The first element is tools and services to manipulate the spread of fake news on social networks. The second element is social networks which need to exist as a platform to spread fake news. The third element is motivation. Sometimes it is merely for monetary gain, and sometimes it can be political or criminal reasons also behind the spread of fake news. The reach of fake news is dependent on the fact of how much it has affected the real world.

6.6.1 Organisational Effort to Identify Fake News

Google, along with other social media operators, have signed a code to combat fake news. This code is pushed by the European Union, which focuses on disrupting the revenue of accounts and websites that spread misinformation. This code also enables users to report misinformation (Gross, G. 2018). Based on the code, Facebook and Twitter have come up with some measures to fight fake news.

Facebook has introduced third-party fact-checking, user ratings, page info and ad insight. facebooks third-party fact-checking was introduced in 2016. For this, Facebook uses both technology and human intervention. Facebook has a feature where users can give their feedback on a story and report it as false. If people report the story as false or misleading, then the technology blocks that particular user's ID. Facebook also works with fact-checkers who are certified by non-partisan international fact-checking networks. These people identify fake stories, check facts, and if they term it as false, then it will show lower in the news feed. This significantly reduces the number of people who see it. Facebook also takes action against repeat offenders. Facebook reduces the ability to advertise by these offenders. Recently, Facebook has also introduced new technology to identify fake news through pictures.

Facebook has also started user ratings to know users' trustworthiness. If a person regularly reports fake stories and Facebook finds it fake, then user rating will go up, but if it is otherwise, then users rating will go down. This feature is used to weed out misinformation based on reports from users.

Page info and ad insight are also introduced by Facebook to fight fake news. It lets users know who are the page managers and where they are located. Users also come to know the other names the page might have.

Twitter has implemented new API restrictions to fight fake news. One of the big problems with Twitter is bot problems. Bot means artificially inflating the followers, retweets and likes and then using those higher counts to generate income by framing them as influencers. New API system also deals with multiple accounts of a single person and mass posting of similar content. Indeed, all these measures are taken to stop manipulative and fake content. Twitter is deleting accounts in an unprecedented manner. In February 2018, around 3.18 million accounts were deleted or suspended (Hutchinson, A. 2018).

All these measures taken by Facebook and Twitter would certainly go a long way in identifying fake news and making the platform more accountable.

6.6.2 How to Identify Fake News

Identifying fake news is not the responsibility of organisations only, but users also have some responsibility. Facebook has given some tips to identify fake news.

- **Be sceptical of headlines:** Fake news uses catchy headlines with exclamation signs. If you find unbelievable claims in the headline, be sure to re-check it from other credible sources.
- **Have a close look at the link:** False news sites try to mimic authentic news sources. If you find such a link, it might be fake news.
- **Ensure source:** If you find news from unfamiliar sources it is better to check the 'About' section to know the source before believing the information shared by them.
- **Check photos:** Fake news often uses out of context photos or morphed photos. Search the content through the image section to find out the real context of the photo.
- **Date of update:** Authentic news organisations keep their websites updated at regular intervals. If the website is not updated from where the story is shared, it means the source is not authentic. Also, check the date of the incident and the date of the upload. If you find a mismatch, the source is not authentic.
- **Check other websites:** If you find some exaggerated claims, search the same stories on other websites. If other websites have not covered it, then it is fake. Also, check the author of the story. If the author is not reputed to make such big claims don't believe in them.
- **Know the intention:** Some stories are uploaded with bad intentions. It may be for character assassination of political leaders, and it may be related to some conservative organisation making false and manipulative claims for some kind of propaganda. Think critically and try to know the intention of the writer behind sharing such information. If the intention is bad, then certainly it is not neutral. Biased stories cannot be taken as news.

Check Your Progress: 4

Note: 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this Unit.

1. What is the bot problem on Twitter?

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2. How do page info and ad-insight features in Facebook help fighting fake news?

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6.7 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit, we have discussed the key features of social media interactivity. We also discussed how this feature has made it more inclusive for users. We have learnt various types of social media, and which types are important for news sharing. We differentiated between Facebook and Twitter and understood the nature of these platforms.

We came to know the difference between organisational content and User Generated Content. We also looked into the new era of news consumption where consumers became the producer of the content also and became 'Produser'. Later we have learnt about various tools of engagement on social media and its uses. In this Unit, we traced the impact of user-generated content on editorial media. We understood the problem of fake news on social media, and we learnt how organisations are taking decisive steps to fight with it and learnt how to identify fake news on social media.

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6.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check your progress: 1

1. Social media is different from conventional media because it has greater interactivity. Here users may give their feedback and add the existing information instantly. This is not possible with traditional media.

Check your progress: 2

1. When selected news content is shared on the Facebook and Twitter page of the organisation automatically, this process is called seeding. When users share news items to their wall, this process is called social plugin.
2. The term 'Produser' was coined by Bruns in 2005. Produser means the dynamic role of online users in which users become producers and consumers of the content at the same time.

Check your progress: 3

1. The hashtag is used to draw the attention of other users to a topic of interest. Through the hashtag, users may search for a topic and start contributing to that.
2. When new media players commercialise user-generated content, and it starts sharing its income with the users also then this is called a gift economy.

Check your progress: 4

1. Bot's problem in Twitter is artificially inflating the followers, retweets and likes to increase the counts. This is done to declare such users as influencers wrongly.
2. Page info and ad insight let users know who are the page managers and where they are located. Users also come to know the other names page might have. By letting users see ads on the pages will mean increased accountability for bad actors.

UNIT 7 : SOCIAL MEDIA AUDIENCE

Structure

7.0 INTRODUCTION

Interestingly the journey of web traversed along the fast highway since the 1990s as it grew from web 1.0 to web 2.0 and lately to web 3.0. In a nutshell, while web 1.0 was all about the presence over the web, web 2.0 is about participation, collaboration, sharing and open network. Web 3.0, growing out of this democratic nature of the web, is about semantically connecting every sign made online, with a growing threat of capitalist take-over of the Internet. In this fascinating background of political, philosophical, ethical, social, cultural, economical and technological dynamics, the social media audience comes to the centre of deliberations and centre of the action. Social media is the culmination of democratisation of the Internet; it is a robust platform of public opinion that the world has never witnessed before. The audience is the primary benefactor as well as the beneficiary of this segment, making the web for the people and by the people. In this regard, social media audience becomes an essential element to explore and understand as part of any digital media course.

In this Unit, we shall discuss the concept of audience, its nature and evolution with particular emphasis on social media along with exploring a few audience theories, social media marketing strategies and exciting case studies.

7.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

After reading this Unit, you will be able to:

- outline the evolution of media audiences and its changing nature;
- infer the validity of the term 'audience' in case of social media;
- distinguish social media audience from other media audiences;
- relate prominent audience theories with social media audiences; and
- apply tools and strategies particularly for social media marketing.

7.2 AUDIENCE - THE TERM AND CONCEPT

Jay Rosen, Professor of Journalism of New York University, in 2006 wrote in his Press Think blog post titled *The People Formerly Known as the audience*, "The people formerly known as the audience are those who were on the receiving end of a media system that ran one way, in a broadcasting pattern, with high entry fees and a few firms competing to speak very loudly while the rest of the population listened in isolation from one another— and who today are not in a situation like that at all." Rosen with this blog post raised the issue of growing invalidity of the term audiences and the need to identify more relevant terms in the changing situation.

There is a long tradition of placing the audience in a lower stratum of hierarchy as gullible fools who lack knowledge and understanding. For Plato or Socrates, as can be found in *Gorgias* of Plato, the orator should carry the responsibility to enlighten these ignorant audiences or the so-called *hoi polloi*. However, for Aristotle, the demographics, emotional state and character type of the audience members are essential elements to define an audience. As he explained in *Rhetoric*, the audiences can be passive spectators or engaged publics or judgmental individuals. In India as well, Bharata's *Natya Shastra* considers audiences more like judges than as critics. Quite similar to the Western concepts Bharata's Natya Shastra acknowledged the incapability of audiences to grasp superior messages. However, *Ras* or emotional states are invoked among audiences through the *Patra* or the message mediators – more profound the invocation, more successful is the message.

More towards the current understanding of the term audiences, Shaun Moore in his book *Interpreting Media Audiences* wrote, "There is no stable entity which we can isolate and identify as the media audience, no single object that is unproblematic 'there' for us to observe and analyse." The audience has been defined by categories of people, by the medium chosen, by type of messages and by the time as in era or as in preferred moments of exposure. As James Hay wrote in *The Audience and Its Landscape* that living in a mediated world amidst the continuous flow of messages, the audience becomes the audience about a particular social or cultural site. Thus the concept of audience though is highly context and text-specific, but they have always been the receivers in the traditional perspective of the term.

For the term audience, there have been many other alternatives used over the decades. There are *readers* for newspapers and magazines; there are *listeners* for radio and music, and there are *viewers* for television and cinema. The term audience encompasses all these types. In place of the audience, the word *public* has also been used by many, particularly concerning media

marketing and public opinion development. The term *mass*, in the mass audience, also has been used to convey a particular type of audience that grew out of mass society. Further going more towards the latter half of the twentieth century, the term *consumers* has been used in place of the audience as global conglomerates of media corporate houses rose to power-producing and selling their products in the form of news, cinema, soap operas, songs etc.

However, lately, after the rise of social media and the Internet, the role of the audience as a receiver has been changed. From their role as consumers against the producers of the media content, they became the producer of the content themselves. With the democratisation of new media, the earlier audiences now became the message sender as well as the receiver – they became the producer as well as the consumer of the content. Thus in the age of social media, the term audience to be replaced with the term *prosumer*, as coined by Alvin Toffler.

Furthermore, even for those who were not producing any content, they ceased to be an audience anymore; they became the *user* of the content which is much more an active role than merely being the audience. Further, with the growing population of social media and the engaged role of people in it, these users of the Internet became the *netizens* of the virtual world. It became almost like living in a parallel nation with rights and responsibilities of citizens in it. Moreover, more recently going against the corporate trend of the consumer-producer role of audiences, the term *produser*, as coined by Axel Bruns, has become more popular which acknowledges the role of producing content and the role of using that content rather than only consuming it. Thus it has taken a step against considering news, cinema and other media content as products to be consumed, from a political-economic perspective.

Activity – 1
Discuss with your grandparents and parents how they used to get news in their childhood and what they used to do for entertainment. Now discuss with your younger siblings or cousins how they get news nowadays and what they do for entertainment. Based on your discussion, list down all that has changed for them as an audience.

Check Your Progress: 1

Note: 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this Unit.

Fill in the blanks:

1 The term prosumer is coined by ……

2 *Produser*s are the social media audiences who are both the ……. and the …… of the content.

7.3 SOCIAL MEDIA AUDIENCE

So far, we have explored the evolution of the audience and its concept along with surveying the prevailing debate of the term, the questions surrounding its validity, with particular reference to the rise of social media. So, of course, social media have developed a new breed of the audience, which is different from before. However, the question is, how different is it. In the following section, we will look into the differences as we explore different types of social media audiences and various concerns related to it.

7.3.1 Characteristics

We have seen earlier that Marshall McLuhan categorised the evolution of communication media and media audiences in four stages-tribal age, literacy age, print age and electronic age. However, influenced by his work, Professor Robert K. Logan of the University of Toronto updated the categorisation including the age of new media. Following his categorisation, the five stages are as follows:

i) The age of non-verbal mimetic communication

ii) The age of orality

iii) The age of literacy

iv) The age of electronic mass media

v) The age of digital interactive media

Marshall McLuhan proposed that the concept of *the medium is the message* which means that the meaning and effect of the message is shaped to a large extent by the medium of the message. In that respect, with the rise of digital interactive media, the effect of the message changes, affecting the nature of the audience. In comparison to the audiences of the earlier era, the audiences in the digital era are active or passive-active. The true spirit of the global village has emerged in the digital era where the horizontal communication between individuals residing in geographically far off places is fluent and dense, while the direct face-to-face communication between individuals living in small geographical communities is becoming less. The concept of community itself has changed, challenging the concept of time and space. Virtual communities or global communities have emerged. Geographical communities have become highly heterogeneous, while the homogenisation of global culture has reached a high. The speed of communication has been revolutionised. From the core-periphery model, where unity in diversity was innate in the electronic age, the audience has become highly fragmented based on the break-up model of audience fragmentation. Communication has become highly mediated with a drastic fall in face-to-face, and direct communication. The close-knit bond among geographical communities has faded, increasing the alienation among the individuals living nearby. Moreover, the power of gatekeepers and the hegemonic control by global media corporations has fallen with the rise of social media. This has resulted in information explosion and exposure to alternative views for the audiences. As a result of all this gradual inclusion of so-called subaltern voices and perspectives have become more frequent among the social media audience.

Prof. Jan A. G. M. Van Djik of the University of Twente, the Netherlands in his book *The Network Society: Social Aspects of New Media* presented the characteristics of new media where he included various aspects of the new media audiences. Based on his criteria, the following are a few essential characteristics of social media audiences –

i. **Component**: While earlier, the audience had a collective representation, the social media audiences are demassified – they are separate individuals who are continuously connected over a network.

ii. **Nature**: Social media audiences are more heterogeneous when compared with any other audience. They can belong to any age, gender, race, class, caste, nation or section of the society with diverse socio-psychological backgrounds.

iii. **Scope**: The global village dwellers of the electronic media era have become netizens which have changed the scope from global to glocal – a combination of global and local. The audience transforms local elements onto global platforms using universal resonance.

iv. **Connectivity**: The social media audiences enjoy high connectivity among individuals, rather than between communities. The communication frequency is higher at individual levels, at times crossing beyond geographical distances, rather than between communities.

v. **Density**: Earlier local communities were closely knit, creating a strong communal bond. However, the density of local communication and bond has decreased as social media audiences spend their time interacting in a mediated environment with people from geographically scattered places.

vi. **Centralisation**: With increasing audience fragmentation, centralisation of communication and power distribution decreases, creating a polycentric nature of the audience as well as communication systems.

vii. **Inclusiveness**: As the social media audience is fragmented, alienated and scattered, the inclusiveness of relations are rather loose. With rising individualistic society, the representative inclusiveness in the socio-political process has become more and more difficult.

viii. **Type of community**: Though the role of communities has sharply decreased, yet, the community of audiences seems to have transferred mostly to the virtual world, enhancing the diversity of these audience communities.

ix. **Type of organisation**: The organisations rather than being ruled by bureaucracy are being ruled by infocracy, where audiences are horizontally differentiated rather than vertically integrated. That is to say, even though the hegemonic control of power has receded, but rather than developing integration or unity based on increasing horizontal communication, they have developed more and more horizontal differentiation.

x. **Type of household**: The nuclear family set up that was already growing has now traversed into individual family relation as social media is taking out most of the time away from family interaction. The alienation between individuals even within the family has increased as family members have turned into dedicated audiences for social media. Communication has become mediated even among family members, relatives and friends.

xi. **Type of primary communication**: The audience of social media use mediated communication extensively, with a gradual decrease in face-to-face communication.

xii. **Kind of media**: The social media audiences use narrowcast interactive media in place of broadcast mass media. Due to this, audiences are much more active in their media choices. They are participants in

experiencing media, rather than as passive consumers. They are getting habituated to personalised content with high interactivity.

xiii. **The number of media**: Social media audiences are getting habituated to handling a high number of media or source of information. As the issue of space limitation in publishing has decreased, so the revolution of information and information sources have become an obvious extension.

7.3.2 Types

Dennis McQuail categorised the audience of mass media by place, by people, by type of medium, by content and by time. The social media audience with their transnational nature has now attained different dimensions for these categories, particularly for the categories by place and by type of medium. However, still in many cases, this categorisation remains intact.

i) **By place**: Earlier the categorisation was mainly local, regional, national, international etc. However, the social media audience becomes transnational in nature, more and more complexity of the categorisation by place increased. In a few cases, the audience is categorised more in terms of the similarity of users' behaviour rather than the geographical proximity. However, still, with increasing glocal communication, the audience in a few cases are classified by place to personalise the message as accurately as possible.

ii) **By people**: This category has gained immense importance in the age of social media. The audiences are categorised based on their age, gender, race, class, political leaning etc. With targeted users' behavioural pattern in the age of social media, the audiences can also be classified based on the strength and quality of network they have in their social media accounts, along with their cultural tastes based on their activities online.

iii) **By type of medium**: The audience, was done as earlier, can still be classified based on their usage pattern of the social media platforms. There are multiple social media platforms, and audiences may choose to use particularly one or two. Further audiences may have their accounts in multiple platforms, but still, be active users of one or two. Thus, audiences can be classified according to the platform they are using.

iv) **By the content of messages**: As was done earlier, the audiences are still classified based on the content of their preference. However, particularly for social media, the audiences are not only audiences, but they are also producers of content. So we need to identify not only the type of content the audiences are liking or disliking, but also the type of content they are sharing and the type of content they are creating. This categorisation again can be based on genre, beats, subject-matter or even style.

v) **By time**: This category earlier was more for identifying day time audiences, prime time audiences or fleeting audiences and dedicated audiences. Interestingly in the case of social media, this categorisation becomes essential with added dimensions. Not only the audiences categorised based on the time they prefer to use a particular social media platform, but also based on the length of time they spend on a platform. Further, social media audiences can be followers, can be subscribers or even can be active participants.

Beyond these established categorisations, social media audiences can also be classified depending on their degree of involvement.

There can be passive audiences who have just created their profiles and do not use a particular platform. There can be active audiences who have created their profiles and just check the updates without engaging any further. There can be passive users who have created their profiles, check the updates, but without engaging any further on that particular medium, they use the information received from the particular platforms for various purposes of their lives. For example, while an active audience will check all the updates from friends and family seen as feeds and then will forget about it. However, a passive user will look for a way to do a video on YouTube and will treat that thing as learning from YouTube. The passive user although will not like or comment or act otherwise online for that particular video.

Further, there can be active users who will act online as well as apply the information received from social media platforms in their lives. There are participants who not only watch, comment or like, but also who share or post or proffer their contribution to the particular social media platform. We have to keep it in mind that an individual does not necessarily always fall under a single category – the individual might change categories depending on the platform and time. So there is no airtight compartmentalisation of social media audience as such.

7.3.3 Concerns

So far, we have seen how social media have democratised the information society and how social media have unsettled the hegemonic power hierarchy and control of corporate media. However, the glory of the medium is not entirely unstained. There are significant concerns that are troubling the true spirit of the medium.

One of the significant concerns with social media is its failure to include the marginalised section of society. Though it has succeeded to include alternative voices more than any other medium, yet there are limitations. Social media runs on a platform which requires not only literacy but also computer literacy. Further, it requires not only an electric connection but also speedy Internet connections. For accessing many social media, there is a requirement of a high-speed broadband network. Though social media operates in regional languages, a large amount of content and audience are unreachable if the English language is not known. English dominates the Internet, thus suppressing the content for other language speakers. Such requirements to become social media users, restrict the access of these media to a large extent. Not everyone, therefore, can be a social media audience. Thus social media, to some extent become an elitist media platform, particularly in countries where broadband penetration is very low, electricity does not reach all households, literacy and computer literacy rate is low. In such countries a large number of its citizens live outside the realm of social media, thus never being able to be a part of the medium that can change their lives for betterment.

Also, the issue of the digital inequality has inflicted the positive image of social media with major drawbacks. As there are few countries in the world with higher broadband penetration, higher literacy rate, etc., so those countries are the privileged ones in the present scenario. Those countries with lower rates have lesser access to information sources and social media. The same division exists even within a country between its urban and rural areas. While metropolitan urban areas in India are gradually shifting towards the fifth generation of Internet connectivity, the rural areas still

strive with second-generation or lower or a bit higher connectivity. Thus, with limited access to social media, the audiences of these areas have less access to socio-political debates, information and opinion development platforms of the nation. This results in structural backwardness dividing the nation between those who have access and those who do not.

Apart from these, there are also growing corporate take-over of social media platforms. Social media have so far been a platform for the people and by the people. However, the owners of various social media sites are already making huge profits. They are exploring avenues to monetise by selling the audiences not only to advertisers but also to political parties, to propaganda generators and other interest groups. Privacy of social media users is at stake. Detailed data of netizens are available almost to anyone in the world, as the data are transmitted beyond political boundaries and geographical distances.

Further, like earlier systems, gradually social media platforms are also becoming an extension of a few global media corporate houses which are monopolising the industry. Due to this, the audience is at risk of a digital era of hegemony which is at its best than ever before. With web 3.0 or the semantic web, the propaganda and hegemonic powers become so subtle that it even becomes difficult for audiences to identify.

This triggers another major concern. Social media offers a platform for all, which includes audiences who are not media literate. This proposes a danger for the democratic functioning of a nation. There have been multiple instances of mob lynching in India, which were caused by messages and fake information shared via social media platforms. It also provides a glimpse of the audiences of social media who are vulnerable enough to be misled to this extent. So on one hand, though the audiences have become active information seekers with opinions of their own to debate on the social media platforms, there are, on the other hand, those who can easily be brainwashed by this overpowering media.

Moreover, if one looks at the micro-level interaction, the psycho-social profile of the audiences has changed a lot with social media. Here the concerns are growing alienation, identity crisis, weakening family ties, the virtual transformation of life and living, para-social relations, media dependency, egocentric society, detachment from the immediate environment, mediated emotions, social media burnout, decreasing attention span, increasing irritability etc., all these and more have been identified as symptoms of heavy users of social media. So even though social media platforms are helping people with information, alternative views and knowledge, they are also simultaneously causing various negative effects on their audiences.

Activity – 2
Chat with your friends and acquaintances who use social media. Discuss with them about what platforms they use, which ones they prefer, how frequently do they use, when do they use, what all they do there, why they use those platforms, what are their preferences etc. Now try to categorise them depending on their usage pattern and create audience profiles.

Check Your Progress: 2

Note: 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this Unit.

1. State four characteristics of social media audiences.

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2. What is the difference between passive audience and active users of social media?

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3. State four types of social media audiences.

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4. State four significant issues affecting social media audiences?

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7.4 THEORIES OF AUDIENCE

Now you might think about why it is essential to know any theory, particularly when you are learning about such a dynamic and real-life based subject as digital media, social media and audience. What is the need for any theorisation in this field then? Well if you have done algebra in your school mathematics classes, then you might remember the formulae based on which you had to solve problems. Consider the theories similar to the formulae. These theories are developed based on reality with a generalised approach to understand reality and then to solve any problem. Theories will give you a macroscopic understanding of the events and elements around you, which as a practitioner will help you to develop your strategies, be careful with implementation, analyse the result and predict the possibilities. Theories on social media audiences are going to help you to know these audiences better.

7.4.1 Public Sphere

Richard Butsch wrote in his article *Audiences and Publics, Media and Public Spheres* published in the *Handbook of Media Audiences* that "To define audiences as publics is to conceive them enacting their role of 'good citizens." As outlined in the book *Structural Transformation of Public Sphere* written by Jürgen Habermas, the concept of a public has evolved from the town gathering in ancient Greece and Rome to the gatherings in public cafes and tea shops, to the mass audiences of mass media and lastly to the users of new media. In simple terms, the public sphere has been a platform where people participate in debate and discuss issues of general interest and in the process form public opinion. As seen in the historical development of audiences, the public sphere has changed from direct face-

to-face communication to indirect mediated communication. Mass media have long replaced the platform of direct communication. In the forms of letters to the editors, phone-in programmers, panel discussions – mass media have long served as a platform for public debate and public opinion formation. However, the concept of an ideal public sphere that serves democracy, good governance and citizens stands different from what the mass media present.

A public sphere ideally should be a platform accessible to all citizens, where they would be able to debate over issues of general interest without any external control. That will result in the formation of public opinion. Mass media do not provide access to all. Mass media lack enough space and time to accommodate public participation, besides the participation is heavily controlled by gatekeepers. The mass media platforms are not free of control, as well. More so in the corporate media set up, whether it is a public-owned platform or privately owned platform, the media merely carry an illusion that it is providing the public opinion. At the same time, it manufactures the opinion to a large extent for sectional interest. This hegemonic control of public opinion by corporate media houses has gradually overtaken the public sphere reducing the public to mere consumers.

The rise of the Internet and social media, however, has changed the scenario more in a positive way. With the gatekeepers getting obsolete in social media, the control over the content generated by public or social media users is control free to some extent. Social media audiences are debating freely on issues of general interest over social media. There are groups, pages, channels and hashtags on various social media platforms, where citizens are coming together to debate, discuss, share and at times, even act on various social issues. Access to social media platforms is unrestricted – in the sense that anybody can make a profile, and anybody can post anything they like. There is no discrimination based on gender, race, religion, caste, creed or nation. The Internet, with its limitless space to publish content, also does not have the restriction on publishing. Thus, there has been a virtual transformation of the public sphere, which for many was closest to the utopian concept of the public sphere that Habermas proposed.

Nevertheless, if we look closely, the digital inequality is a significant hurdle and does not permit all citizens to have access to this public platform. As discussed earlier, beyond literacy, computer literacy, and electricity, the issue with social media is access to high-speed Internet connectivity. Sadly in developing countries, Internet penetration is low, and there is a gap between the number of urban users and rural users. Internet speed also drastically decreases as one moves from urban areas to rural areas. Thus, accessibility is still a practical issue to be solved for developing social media as a public sphere. Also, the control over content is another debatable issue. With only a few companies ruling over the Internet and social media content, the ownership concentrated with a few are creating a new threat for content creation. Also, there have been instances where social media have been used as surveillance tools, as tools to control and sway public opinion and as a tool to control and influence purchasing choices. Instances, where Facebook confessed of selling users' data to Cambridge-Analytica.

7.4.2 Media Effect

Aristotle defined effect in his book Rhetoric as "which leads one's condition to become so transformed that his judgment is affected." In this sense, media often transforms the audience as much as to influence their critical

analytical ability and their judgment making power. This has developed the concept of media effect. Not only immensely compelling media like cinema or soap operas are responsible for media effect, but also news media create their media effect by influencing people's judgment. Marshall McLuhan highlighted this fundamental role of the media for changing human behaviour. For him, the medium is the message. However, few postmodern theorists like Fredric Jameson argued that human effect has gradually faded, creating people with lesser emotional capability. On the contrary, Brian Massumi explained that the modern era is suffering from an abundance of effects. Massumi effect is a 'state of suspension' where passion takes over the rationality.

This development of the concept of media effect takes an exciting turn with the rise of digital media - the online media. B. N. Hansen is his essay *Affect as a medium, or the 'Digital-facial-image'* explained that effect provides an "interface between the domain of information (the digital) and embodied human experience." For Hansen the interactivity of the screen blurs the differentiation between the world outside it and the world inside it, creating an effect linking humans to digital in a continuous loop of feedback. Considering the power of effect, it makes the audience vulnerable to emotional manipulation. This is where social media becomes essential for creating media to effect in a changing environment.

Social media audiences are exposed to a wide variety of feeds emerging from diverse sources with different intentions and treatments. This offers an entirely new experience for the audiences considering the media effect created. Social media addiction is evidence in hand, which shows a state of suspension created for the audiences. The state of suspension is further raised with the mediated emotions controlling human lives. Social media effect develops a situation when the audience feels compelled to keep on checking for updates, to keep on checking for reactions on their posts, to be happy or sad or angry based on the reactions they receive on social media. There have been multiple instances where social media feeds have led the users to depression. Social media affects human relations to the extent to develop new friends as well as to lose old friends.

Furthermore, from a broader perspective, social media celebrities maintain a strong influence on their followers, more compelling than ever before. Political parties with their social media feed influence prospective voters. Social media effect has gained such momentum that political parties maintain social media teams whose work is to influence the audience through feeds and updates at various social media platforms. Due to its targeted, personalised, continuous exposure, social media effect becomes distinct from any other type of media effect.

7.4.3 Online Disinhibition Effect

Unlike the other two preceding theories, online disinhibition effect has originated from a study on online users only and discusses mainly the users' behaviour of online platforms, mainly social media. John Suler, Professor of Psychology from Rider University advanced the concept of online disinhibition effect with his study published in 2004. Online disinhibition effect shows the waning social inhibitions and norms that generally rule face-to-face communication in the online environment. According to Suler, there are six aspects of online communication –

i) **Dissociative anonymity**: In social media, users control their identity, and their online persona. Many times they create an avatar, they

use photos of other individuals as their profile display picture; they even at times hide information about their age, gender or location. Thus, they maintain anonymity online, which is dissociated from their offline self.

ii) **Invisibility**: The invisibility of others' presence in communication over social media provides a distinct communication environment for the participants. This influences the quality of communication on a large scale. People tend to speak in a certain way which they otherwise would not do if the message receivers were present in front of them controlling the conversation with physical reactions.

iii) **Asynchronicity**: Online communication in most of the cases is asynchronous communication – that is to say that the receivers of a message can take time to read, understand and reply at their own convenient time. There is no compulsion for the feedback or response to be immediate or spontaneous. That results in much carefully fabricated messages, lack of spontaneity and thus deliberation in developing online identity.

iv) **Solipsistic introjection**: Social media users, most of the time, communicate among themselves based on text messages. Based on the textual language, the communicators develop an image of each other – they imagine the facial expression – at times with the help of emoticons, they imagine the voice and the way the person speaks. This results in the development of the imaginary persona of each other, based on the texts and based on the expectation of the communicators.

v) **Dissociative imagination**: Interestingly, the preceding case of imaginary development of communicators' identity based on the textual conversation creates a different communicative dimension which might not be true to the real persons involved. Many times it so happens that the communicators when they meet in person, do not find each other as they have imagined resulting in discontinuation of the communication. This difference between the real person and imaginative person creates dissociation between the real world and the imaginary world. This leads to waning gravity of communication and social relations.

vi) **Minimisation of status and authority**: When communicating online, the communicators are not bound by their age, gender, religion, race, caste or physical appearance. The most important thing that matters in online communication is the content and treatment of the message. Thus power relation based on other aspects like race, gender or physical appearance becomes less important in an online communicative environment. This leads to the free flow of communication without much concern to the power play and inhibitions associated with it.

Even as there are positive sides of online disinhibition, there are also negative sides that comprise cyberbullying, trolling and many others.

Activity – 3
Discuss with social media users on what they think about social media usage has affected them. Summarise, categorise and list down different types of social media effect on audiences.

Check Your Progress: 3

Note: 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this Unit.

1. What do you understand about the virtual transformation of the public sphere?

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2. How did Aristotle define the concept of effect?

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3. State four aspects of the online disinhibition effect.

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7.5 MARKETING AND SOCIAL MEDIA AUDIENCE

Now that we have discussed the foundation to understand the social media audience, let us take a look how we can communicate with these audiences, what are the best ways to connect with them, when and how to connect with them. Many business organisations, political parties and various other interest groups are exploiting the medium and opportunity at its best to convey their messages and attain their objectives. It is essential to be aware of such actions before taking any decision and to know how to use the same medium for the betterment of society. Marketing through social media is different from marketing through other media, as this includes a lot of social media-specific tools and strategies.

7.5.1 Audience Segmentation

We have already seen that there are different types of social media audiences. However, audience segmentation is done for increasing business intelligence, for the ease of marketing and public relations and to be able to take the right decision for the best interest of any organisation. Audience segmentation is also a part of social media analytics which gathers, arranges, analyses and presents the social media data for more informed publicity or marketing decisions. There are multiple ways of audience segmentation. While a few of the segmentations are the same as that of the other media, some are distinct to social media only. Audience segmentation for social media is generally done based on the following:

i) **Type of account**: For example, whether it is personal, professional or organisational account.

ii) **Location**: Depending on the location of the user, the message can be targeted with customised geo-location based services or products.

iii) **Gender**: Same as the location, the message can be targeted based on the gender of the user, shaping the content of the message accordingly.

iv) **Age**: While most of the social media users are young adults, yet there are some people from older generations in social media as well. Depending on the age of the user, the message can be customised.

v) **Social status**: The social status of the users can be segmented based on, for example, their economic status, their cultural status, their lifestyle choices etc. All this information becomes important in knowing what kind of product or service can be offered to a particular user.

vi) **Relationship status**: Depending on whether the user has a family or not, can also be useful in offering a particular service or product. For example, a married woman with children can be targeted with a message for buying bigger cars, while a single working woman can be targeted with a message for buying smaller cars.

vii) **Job profile**: Depending on the type of job the user is associated with, messages can be customised. The job profile may include working hours, type of responsibilities, average monthly income etc.

viii) **Time spent on social media**: This and the following few social media-specific categories are also important for audience segmentation. One can thus identify the heavy user, the moderate user and light user and shape the message accordingly.

ix) **Social media platform used**: Nowadays, a user is using more than one social media platform. Depending on the various types of platforms used, social media audiences can be categorised in such a way to get information about their interest and requirement.

x) **Time of the day when social media are used**: Depending on the time of the day, the user generally uses social media, the audience can be segmented. The messages can be sent during that time of the day when a particular user is generally online.

xi) **Type of activity done in social media**: This can be whether the user is passive or active. This can also be whether the user likes or comments, or both. This can further be whether the user shares content or posts original content or does both. This gives an idea of the user's potential to influence others.

xii) **The intensity of activity done in social media**: This is not only how much time the users spend online, but also how much activity they are and in what way. For example how often are they posting something, how often do they like something, how often are they commenting, how often are they logging in etc. This gives an idea of how useful and effective the particular medium would be for communicating with the particular user.

xiii) **Social network pattern**: This is based on the kind of people the users are connected with. For example, the network pattern for a particular user can be young college students, or for another user can be doctors.

xiv) **The number of followers**: This is simply the number of people the user is connected within a particular social media platform.

xv) **Users' behaviour**: This is basically what the user is posting about in social media. The segmentation is generally done based on a few keywords and searching the users' posts to see whether those keywords are there.

xvi) **Users' interest**: This comprises the interest area of the user – that is to say, what they generally like, what type of groups are they part of, what or whom they are following. This can be segmented in hierarchical categories. For example, someone may like arts, under the arts it might be paintings, under the paintings, it might be modern paintings etc.

Above are the few categories based on which social media audience segmentation can be done, however, the list is not exhaustive. Depending on the need, objective and utility of the product, further segmentation can be done as required. Above are a few basic types based on an article titled *Audience Segmentation in Social Media* by Verena Henrich and Alexander Lang. There is much social media analytics software which can pull data from social media as specified and develop a database with the above information or more as required. Many social media accounts include free analytics services comprising necessary information for example if you are using a blog, in your blog's analytics section you can find how many people the audience is visiting your blog, how often they are visiting, from which area of the world they are visiting etc.

7.5.2 Marketing Tools

As social media marketing is booming, so is the variety of available marketing tools. Beyond the traditional online advertising, there is a surge of various applications, services and software that are useful for targeted social media marketing. To get an idea, the following five popular tools that serve various purposes of social media marketing:-

i) **Buffer**: Buffer enables one to schedule posts on various social media platforms at once based on the day of the week, time of the day, controlling the frequency of the posts. It also helps to generate feedback on the posts, and evaluating its effectiveness. Similar to Buffer is Hootsuite, which has a free version and relatively cost-effective version for almost the same purpose.

ii) **Google Analytics**: Google Analytics offers a free version as well as paid one with much more detailed social media analytics reports. The service generates detailed reports on the audience traffic.

iii) **BuzzSumo**: BuzzSumo is a content aggregator and social listening service which gathers social media content on a specified topic or keyword. BuzzSumo offers a breakdown of most trending posts on specified keywords or topics along with listing the significant influencers who are sharing that content online. Feedly, Tagboard are other similar services available online.

iv) **Sprout Social**: Sprout Social is a compact package of social media marketing needs, serving various purposes through one single application. Like Buffer and Hootsuite, it offers one to schedule messages for posting on various social media platforms. It also offers detailed social media analytics like Google Analytics. Moreover, like BuzzSumo, Tagboard offers a social listening service to understand the usage of social media platforms.

v) **Social Mention**: Similar to social listening services, SocialMention offers one to track and measure what social media users are talking about a company, a service or a product. This free service offers the analysed data based on four categories of strength, sentiment, passion and reach.

Apart from these five, there are other multiple social media marketing tools designed for specific purposes. For example, Facebook Power Editors used for marketing, particularly on Facebook, Tailwind for Pinterest and Instagram, Tweepi for Twitter and so on. Then there is Bitly which one can use to shorten a long URL that makes it easier to be shared as social media feed. So the number of tools available is numerous which one should explore further online as per one's requirement.

7.5.3 Marketing Strategies

Social media marketing is unavoidable at present for any successful business or communication planning. It is not only that a large section of prospective buyers is social media users, but also a large section of the socially aware and active population is also on social media. Thus social media not only becomes a highly cost-effective way of promoting one's brand, but it is also a highly effective medium to spread social awareness. There are various marketing strategies already existing for various requirements. Here we will concentrate on strategies only applicable for social media marketing. These are not general strategies applicable to any media marketing planning. Among various social media marketing strategies, the following are a few important ones –

- Identify the goals to be achieved through social media marketing.
- Research social media platforms.
- Research social media audience.
- Identify social media demographics and target audiences.
- Research social media competition.
- Set social media marketing metrics like reach, engagement, clicks, sentiment analysis etc.
- Create social media accounts and be active.
- Develop a brand image through the same logo, colour sequence as display picture over various social media platforms.
- Generate social media hashtags, social media groups and pages.
- Identify the type of content most popular with the target audience and generate such content.
- Identify the time of the day target audiences are mostly online and schedule messages during that time.
- Do not post very frequently; space out the posts keeping in mind the audience's requirement.
- Tag related influencers in the post.
- Share useful content, and only quality content persists in social media.
- Try to avoid directly selling your products or services, instead inform, educate, collaborate and contribute.
- Use social bookmarking sites.
- Be very just and ethical in your posts and comments.
- Add your URL with the comments or posts for more information for the audiences.
- Develop and create good content over social media – for example, create entertaining YouTube videos, interesting Podcasts, useful blogs etc.
- In crises, do not hesitate to apologise and take necessary steps.

Activity – 4
Develop a social media marketing plan for a product of your choice.

Check Your Progress: 4

Note: 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this Unit.

1. State four types of social media audience segmentation categories.

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2. What is the usage of Sprout Social?

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3. Mention four strategies for social media marketing.

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7.6 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit, we have discussed different aspects of the social media audience. First and foremost, we have seen how social media audiences have evolved. In this context, we have also seen how the chronological approach of history has been replaced with the genealogical approach, focusing more on the evolution of interactions between different social institutions and elements. Then we have discussed how different elements of society have affected the changing concept of audiences. Along with it we also came to know of ongoing debate with the term *social media audiences,* which is being replaced by other terms as *prosumers* or *produsers*.

After understanding the foundation of the concept of audience, we have delved deeper into the concept of social media audience. We have seen how social media audiences are different from audiences otherwise. We have discussed distinct characteristics of social media audiences, along with exploring different types of audience based on diverse attributes. We also came to know of vital issues and concerns surrounding the social media audience from social, political, economic and cultural perspectives.

We then discussed important theoretical aspects associated with social media audiences. We explored the concept of the public sphere as developed by Habermas and how there has been a virtual transformation of the public sphere. We have discussed how the concept of effect has transformed from ancient to recent times and how social media can manipulate human emotions to sway in favour of a particular group or individual. At a micro-level, we have discussed the online disinhibition effect and seen how social media trolling, cyberbullying is resulting from this effect.

Along with the theoretical dimensions, we have also explored the practical applications of different social media marketing strategies. We have seen how social media marketing is different from other forms of marketing. We learnt various ways social media audiences can be categorised for better application of marketing strategies. We have also explored interesting online tools useful for social media marketing.

7.7 KEYWORDS

Hashtag Activism: It is a kind of activism done over social media to spread awareness by using and re-using the same catchy hashtag and sharing with all. It is an act in social media to support a cause by like, share, comment or post using a particular hashtag.

Produser: They are the new age social media audiences who are at once producing content for the social media and using the contents available in social media.

Social Media Marketing: Social media marketing is traditional marketing, but only through social media platforms, for social media audiences, through online marketing tools and strategies.

Web 2.0: It is a phase of the development of world wide web which emphasises collaborative, sharing, participatory, open network, culture and communication.

7.8 FURTHER READINGS

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7.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress: 1

1. Alvin Toffler
2. producer, user

Check Your Progress: 2

1. Four characteristics of social media audiences are:

i) Social media audiences are more heterogeneous in comparison to any other audiences.

ii) The social media audiences enjoy high connectivity between individuals, rather than between communities.

iii) As the social media audiences are fragmented, alienated and scattered, the inclusiveness of relations are rather loose.

iv) The audiences of social media use mediated communication extensively, with a gradual decrease in face-to-face communication.

2. Difference between passive audience and active users is mainly that passive audiences of social media are the ones who have just created their profile or account in social media, but do not use it; on the other hand, active users of social media are the ones who not only have an account, but they are involved in their social media activities at its best by liking, posting, sharing, commenting, talking about it offline and using the knowledge otherwise in their lives.

3. Four types of social media audiences are:

i) Passive audience

ii) Active audience

iii) Passive users

iv) Active users

4. Four significant issues affecting social media audiences:

i) Dominance of a section of society and world over social media

ii) Digital divide

iii) Corporate take-over of social media

iv) Vulnerable audiences lacking media literacy

Check Your Progress: 3

1. Virtual transformation of the public sphere means the transformation of the public sphere to online media. Habermas explained in his article, Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere that the space for public discussion, debate and opinion formation has seen a transformation from ancient agora to the coffee house to mass media. After the emergence of the Internet and social media, the public sphere has now become virtual.

2. Aristotle explained the effect in his book Rhetoric as "which leads one's condition to become so transformed that his judgment is affected." Media effect leads media audiences to a condition that suspends their rational thinking and critical judgment. Social media also is responsible for such effect that can suspend heavy users' normal lifestyle.

3. The four aspects of the online disinhibition effect are:

i) Dissociative anonymity

ii) Invisibility

iii) Asynchronicity

iv) Solipsistic introjection

Check Your Progress: 4

1. The four types of social media audience segmentations are:
   i) Based on the time of the day when social media are used
   ii) Based on social network pattern
   iii) Based on social media users' behaviour
   iv) Based on social media users' interest
2. Sprout Social is a compact package of social media marketing needs, serving various purposes of message scheduling, social media analytics and social listening through one single application.
3. Four strategies for social media marketing are:
   i) Develop brand image through the same logo, colour sequence as display picture over various social media platforms
   ii) Identify the time of the day target audiences are mostly online and schedule messages during that time
   iii) Tag related influencers in the post
   iv) Try to avoid directly selling your products or services, instead inform, educate, collaborate and contribute

UNIT 8 : APPLICATIONS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Structure

8.0 INTRODUCTION

The inception and development of social media have been the most crucial factor in recent history. Social media have not only changed the lifestyle of people or how information is distributed and received or what people choose for entertainment, but it has changed the politics, business, governance, arts, culture, education, social movements and media functions of the world. To understand social media, one has to know the breadth and depth of social media applications and their impact on society.

In this Unit, we shall discuss how social media are being used for different purposes by different institutions and citizens. From government, politics, and development to business, arts and education – there is hardly any sector left which is not using social media at present. However, the utility, strategies, functions and requirements of social media are vastly different from each other. The following sections explore this diverse application of social media by different sectors of society.

8.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

After reading this Unit, you will be able to:

- outline the applications of social media for different purposes;
- illustrate the importance of social media in present times;
- understand the role of social media as an agent of social change;
- relate social media with different sectors and institutions of society;
- apply social media usage strategies for different purposes; and
- demonstrate the power of social media through various case studies.

8.2 SOCIAL MEDIA AND GOVERNANCE

There is a popular notion that social media are used mainly by corporate sectors and citizens. Contrary to this perception, different governments all around the world have taken multiple initiatives to include social media for better connectivity and transparency. Not only that, but social media have also become part of information dissemination, surveillance and implementation of many government policies. Along with governments, various non-government organisations are also using social media platforms to attain their goals. Apart from information and entertainment, citizens have started using social media for social and political causes extending their roles as responsible citizens. Let us find out more in detail how government, non-government organisations and citizens use social media.

8.2.1 By Governments

Anatoliy Grutz and Jeffrey Roy in their article titled *Social Media and Local Government in Canada: An Examination of Presence and Purpose* published in 2016, stated that "At the heart of Gov 2.0 are notions of collective intelligence stemming from more open, flexible, and collaborative forms of governance associated with the Internet as a platform for not only communicating but also generating content and engaging with one another."

The concept of Gov 2.0 has originated from the technology of Web 2.0, which has already been characterised as participatory, sharing, open and collaborative. The essence of Web 2.0, adopted into governance, has echoed a similar tendency in developing, implementing and managing policies. From the perspective of Gov 2.0, social media have been understood as "technologies that facilitate social interaction, make possible collaboration, and enable deliberation across stakeholders," as pointed out by T. A. Bryer and S. M. Zavattaro in their 2011's article on *Social Media and Public Administration: Theoretical Dimensions and Introduction to the Symposium*.

According to Ines Mergel and Stuart I. Bretschneider, three stages for adopting social media by a government organisation are –

(i) ***Experimentation***: This is a phase of information experimentation where social media is tried out for a particular service or product without any established internal process. Information dissemination and feedback collection are two major activities in this phase.

(ii) ***Constructive Chaos***: The first phase of everyday use of social media

most of the time is bound to produce chaos as it is run without an established internal process. Experiencing the chaotic implementation, but simultaneously acknowledging the benefit of using social media, this stage involves developing internal systems for establishing policy, procedure and management, ensuring the best outcomes of using social media.

(iii) ***Institutionalisation***: In this final stage policies, procedures, management and guidelines are developed, and they are further standardised based on trial runs and actual experiences. In this stage, social media are established as an official channel of communication of the government.

Social media are used by governments for different purposes, such as human services, disaster management and resilience, transport, policy and planning, participation, developing citizen trust, government transformation and campaigning. Social media have been used by government heads to convey official messages and connect with people in India and other countries. Social media have been used multiple times for disaster management, for example, in the case of Nepal earthquake or Indonesia flood help were rendered using GeoSocial intelligence. Dubai has been a case where political leadership has relied on social media to drive citizen's engagement. Social media have been used to gauge public opinion and predict popular movements in many cases, such as in Arab uprising. Social media have also been used for internal communication and government advertising.

8.2.2 By Non-Government Organisations (NGOs)

Since the rise of the interventionist school of thoughts in development theories, the role of non-government organisations has been acknowledged and hailed for ensuring good governance. Kennedy M. Maranga, in an article titled *The Evolving Role of NGOs in Governance* published in 2010, lists down *six* reasons behind the rising importance of non-government organisations in policymaking and service providing and ensuring good governance. The reasons, according to Maranga, are –

(i) Global and more complex nature of new problems;

(ii) The collapse of public services;

(iii) Increase in democratic regimes;

(iv) Donor incentives for the development of NGOs;

(v) Changing UN-NGO relations and interactions.

In this background of the increasing importance of NGOs, the usage of social media by NGOs becomes a significant factor in ensuring good governance. In an article published in 2013, titled *Modelling the Adoption and Use of Social Media by Nonprofit organisations*, S. Nah and G. D. Saxton identified *four factors* social media usage for NGOs. These are – strategy, capacity, governance and environment. In an explanation of the above Ayten Akatay, Güngör Hacioğlu, Abdullah Kiray and Serkan Özdemir elaborate in their 2017's article titled *A Qualitative Research on NGOs' use of Social Media in Çanakkale* that –

Firstly, the NGO determines the communication strategy to realise its

mission. After this process, the ability to realise the mission is determined by the NGOs' inner resources and capacity. After the specification of strategy and capacity, the NGO decides whether or not to use social media. However, governance structures, as the third dimension, also play an essential role in the effective use of resource and strategy implementation. The environment in which the NGO exists becomes the final determinant of communication strategy and success of the NGO.

G. A. Auger in 2013's article titled *Fostering Democracy through Social Media: Evaluating Diametrically Opposed Nonprofit Advocacy organisations' Use of Facebook, Twitter and YouTube* lists 13 areas where NGOs are using social media –

- Informing about the organisation;
- Announcement of global, national or local events;
- Conveying gratitude and contributions;
- Replying to requests;
- Donation declarations;
- Sales of products;
- Promotion of organisational cause;
- Voting or registration for the organisation;
- Participatory identification of problems and their solutions;
- Recruitment and volunteer requirement announcements;
- Lobbying and advocacy activities;
- Information sharing in multimedia formats.

8.2.3 By Individuals

Citizen participation in governance has been emphasised again and again in recent times. This participatory process is now part of government policies in many countries around the globe, particularly in an attempt for digital inclusion. There have been many e-Governance initiatives where citizens can fulfil many of their duties online, along with communicating with public bodies.

The rise of social media has developed that space where citizens can communicate with each other in a horizontal communication dimension, rather than any top-down approach of communication. This has made social media the closest realisation of Habermas' public sphere, which for the first time is witnessing the power of people to publish without any gatekeepers and with a global reach. This horizontal connectivity has allowed debate and discussions and developed a strong public opinion about various social and political issues. Public agenda has never been so robust as being witnessed after the rise of social media.

According to a research report by Evie Brownie, citizens use social media for political participation, transparency and accountability, peace-building and internal governance. In many cases, citizens use social media to develop and file a petition for change, to comment on policies and even to report the crime. Social media have been used to convey and map social issues,

thus increasing pressure on governments to take actions. There have been multiple cases where social media have been used to monitor violence in support of peace-building.

Check Your Progress: 1

Note: 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this Unit.

1. Explain the three stages of social media adaption by government organisations?

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2. Give a brief account of individuals' usage of social media?

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8.3 SOCIAL MEDIA AND BUSINESS ORGANISATIONS

We have seen that social media is being used for different purposes by government, non-government organisations and even by the general population. Similarly, business organisations and media houses have started using social media to meet their goals – rather the pressure to incorporate social media in corporate sectors is higher than in public sectors. Following is an outline of how business organisations, media and even individuals are using social media.

8.3.1 By Business Organisations

One of the sectors that started using social media early was business and marketing. Business sectors always look for higher profit which is influenced by their brand image, stakeholders' relations and brand value along with many other factors. Social media plays a significant role in developing and maintaining all these factors.

Business enterprises use social media for both internal and external communication. In a study conducted by Donald L. Amoroso, Tsuneki Mukahi and Mikako Ogawa, published in 2014, titled *Impact of General Social Media Experience on Usefulness for Business in the Workplace*, it has been pointed out that social media is providing that "community home space" where not only employee relation is strengthened, but also motivation to work, involvement in organisational success, connectivity beyond geographical limitation, sense of responsibility and teamwork spirit get enhanced.

Vigneswara Ilavarasan and Ashish Rathore wrote an article titled *'Social Media use in India Businesses: Inputs for Appropriateness*,' in 2015 where they discussed social media usage for business houses both for internal and external communications. The authors have categorised popular social media platforms based on their business functions, as below –

- ***Facebook***: Helps moderately in developing identity, firmly in conversations, strongly in sharing, strongly in developing presence,

firmly in maintaining relationships, moderately in reputation and strongly in maintaining groups.

- ***YouTube***: Helps to some extent in developing identity and presence, in conversation and relationship; however, it moderately helps in sharing, reputation building and maintaining groups.
- ***Twitter***: Helps enormously in developing identity and building reputation, while moderately helps in sharing and maintaining groups, and helps to some extent in conversations, in developing presence and in relationship building.
- ***LinkedIn***: Helps enormously in identity development and building reputation while helps to some extent in conversation, sharing, building a presence, maintaining relationships and groups.

According to these functional characteristics, Ilavarasan and Rathore showed how different business sectors are using or can use social media, as below –

(i) *Energy sector*: Uses social media for conversation, for sharing and maintaining relationships.

(ii) *Manufacturing sector*: Uses social media for conversation, for sharing and for maintaining groups.

(iii) *Financial services*: Use social media for developing identity and presence, for sharing and maintaining groups.

(iv) *Service providers*: Use social media for developing identity and presence, building reputation and maintaining relationships.

(v) *IT sector*: Uses social media mainly for conversation, sharing and maintaining groups.

(vi) *Construction*: Uses social media mainly for developing identity, conversation and building reputation.

(vii) *Others*: Use social media mainly for conversation and sharing purposes.

8.3.2 By Media Houses

Media houses use social media for various purposes. Like business organisations, they also use social media for brand image building, stakeholders' relations and brand value. Like business organisations, most of the media house also functions with profit in mind. Thus, these media houses utilise social media almost as business organisations use. However, there are undoubtedly other activities and objectives that these media organisations fulfil by using social media.

(i) *News organisations*: Most of the news media organisations now-a-day maintain their social media accounts to provide instant and up-to-the-minute news feed. They use such platforms to gauge popular opinion and feedback on their programmes along with sharing various information and works that are not otherwise possible to share. Journalists are asked in many cases to maintain their social media profiles in line with the organisation's policy and requirement.

(ii) *Entertainment media*: Like news organisations, entertainment media also maintain their social media profiles. For example, before launching a cinema, the marketing team of the cinema launches a particular hashtag on their social media accounts through which they promote the movie. For television programmes, social media are used to develop a prospective audience base while maintaining the existing ones. Social media have also become a platform for new forms of content. Established media houses are developing new content, particularly for social media platforms, while maintaining content for older platforms. For example, various radio stations are video recording interviews for placing it on YouTube as well as developing short skits to develop a new audience base. Same time, there are other media houses which have developed solely based on social media platforms like TVF, Film Companion, ScoopWhoop and many more.

(iii) *Advertising and Public Relations*: Along with news and entertainment media, new forms of advertising have evolved based on social media. Push messages, pay per click, pay per activity, pay per impression, skyscrapers, banners, tweets, posts, search engine optimised messages, social media campaign, social media marketing and many other new forms of advertising have evolved over the years which has revolutionised the advertising and public relations industry.

8.3.3 By Individuals

Social media came as a boon for many individuals who were looking for avenues and opportunities to start a business enterprise. The power of networking, connectivity, ability to reach beyond geographical limitation and highly personalised marketing has revolutionised the prospects of small industries and individual entrepreneurs. The concept of crowd-funding has strengthened the possibility of launching various start-ups which were almost unimaginable before the rise of social media.

E. M. Fischer and A. R. Reuber in their 2011's article titled, *Social interaction via new social media: How can interactions on Twitter affect effectual thinking and behaviour?* Discussed that social media usage develops new effectual pathways offering new insights and resources to entrepreneurial individuals. It is not only the social capital that has strengthened the business opportunities of the individual, but the financial capital has also been an essential element for which social media has provided strong support. Different crowd-funding platforms like Indiegogo, Kickstarter, Causes, Patreon, Go Fund Me, Circle Up, Lending Club have for long offered help to business entrepreneurs. For example, Kick-starter raised more than four billion US dollar for more than 1,55,000 projects within ten years of its inception in 2009.

Besides not only helping individuals in their business achievements through connectivity, fund and marketing, but social media have also given birth to an entirely new form of business – social media entrepreneurship. Since the first decade of the new millennium, with the rise of social media, many young entrepreneurs started earning through their blogs. Later on, with YouTube, Instagram and TikTok, the concept of social media entrepreneurship has taken an entirely new dimension. At the first layer, YouTube itself was

invented by a group of young professionals coming from the background of computer science and design. At this level, launching a new platform of social media has been a strong business enterprise of which Mark Zuckerberg and Facebook might be the most potent example. At another level, Felix ArvidUlf Kjellberg, popularly known as PewDiePie, has been the most successful YouTuber. Thus social media itself has been the platform for entrepreneurship for many.

Check Your Progress: 2

Note: 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this Unit.

1. Enumerate the business functions of popular social media outlets?

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2. How entertainment media utilises various social media facilities?

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8.4 SOCIAL MEDIA, POLITICS AND DEVELOPMENT

One of the primary usages of social media has been for political and social activism. Social media, since its inception, has become a handy tool for electoral politics, of political campaigns and even of political propaganda. Simultaneously, it has been used by various organisations and people to voice their dissent, to organise a protest and even to topple the governments. Not only that, but social media have also given a tool in the hands of policy developers and implementers to reach different sections of the society and work for their betterment. There have been multiple examples of social media usage for development purposes, by governments, non-governmental organisations and even by citizens. Following is an exploration into the application of social media for all such purposes.

8.4.1 By Political Organisations

Media and politics have shared a robust inter-dependent relationship for a long time. There have been numerous researches that explored the relationship between these two since the beginning of media studies. When Walter Lippmann was writing Public Opinion published in 1922, he showed how perception rather than reality form the public opinion in which media plays a significant role. Propaganda studies, particularly of the Second World War, have shown the impact and strength of the media in attaining political objectives. Maxwell McCombs and Donald L. Shaw's phenomenal studies on the role of media in election campaigns have shown the interrelation among media agenda, public agenda and policy agenda. After the rise of social media, this relation between media and politics has become much more complex and much more integral.

Considering the critical role of media in politics, it has been referred to as the fourth estate of democracy by Edmund Burke way back in 1787. Similarly,

social media and the Internet have been called the fifth estate of democracy. Social media like traditional media perform the role of watchdog of social institutions, it acts as a bridge between citizens and their government, and most importantly, it shapes public opinion. Social media, in many senses, have come close to the utopian concept of 'Public Sphere' as idealised by Habermas. There have been multiple instances where political organisations realising this strength have used social media intensively for achieving their goals. Back in 2002, South Korean citizen journalism news site OhmyNews played a crucial role in shaping the presidential election result.

The integral concepts of Web 2.0, like participation, open network, collaboration and sharing nature have influenced political theories and activities since early 2000. Social media have made politics much more participatory, giving power to the public agenda more than the media agenda. Access to alternative information and opinion has changed the way people perceive political parties and political actions. This has influenced political parties all over the world to include social media for their election campaigns. There have been multiple studies analysing the use of Twitter and Facebook during the presidential elections of the USA in 2012 and 2016. Even in India, political parties have used what is known as the digital army to manage the social media campaigns for elections.

8.4.2 By Social Reformers and Activists

Social media has its inception in the history of activism and social reforms. The Indymedia movement against globalisation reached a momentum in 1999 with the Seattle World Trade Centre uprising as it realised the necessity of an alternative media due to growing disillusionment with mainstream media in upholding larger causes. Within a year alternative media centres were set in various cities, and within a few years with increasing support, Indymedia movement was shaped like a large scale global activism. The rise of social media, thus, was caused by the Indymedia movement along with many other economic, technical and social reasons.

Since then, there have been numerous instances where social media have proved to be an integral tool to put forward social causes, to strengthen movements, reforms and activism. Manuel Castells in his book *Information Age Trilogy: The Power of Identity* showed how Zapatistas of Mexico used the power of network communication to build worldwide public support and thus becoming the first informational guerilla movement of the world. Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani in their book titled *Social Movements: An Introduction*, published in 1999, outlined *four* main characteristics of social movements as an information interaction network, shared beliefs and solidarity, collective action and the use of protest. Social media have enhanced all these features of social movements to a large extent.

As R. Kelly Garrett discussed in an article titled *Protest in an Information Society: A Review of Literature on Social Movements and New ICTs* published in 2006, three mechanisms connect information communication technology and social movements – reduction of costs, promotion of collective identity and creation of community. Summer Harlow in 2011's article titled, *Social Media and Social Movements: Facebook and An Online Guatemalan Justice Movement That Moved Offline,* summarised the relationship between social

media and movements as – "the Internet facilitates the traditional offline activity giving more resources for activists' repertoire and the Internet creates new forms of activism improving social impact."

There have been multiple instances in the recent past where large scale movements to different social reform activities have been initiated, organised, manifested, motivated and developed through social media. From Arab uprising in 2011 onward which witnessed toppling down of governments in first two months of the movement, Indignados of Madrid, Movimento Cinque Stelle of Italy, Occupy Wall Street of USA, Anti-corruption movement for Lokpal bill of India, Shahbag Protest of Bangladesh – all witnessed important use of social media in the formulation of the movements. Also, social media usage has been seen for environmental protection cause, for animal rights, for indigenous human rights and multiple issues, have been integral.

[*Refer to Unit 11 in this course for a detailed discussion on Online Activism]*

8.4.3 For Development Initiatives

Application of ICT for development was initiated back in the 1970s with the pioneering application of Satellite Instructional Television Experiment in India. Even before that, radio forums were used worldwide to spread development messages and to help in the process of development. The United Nations and all governments have also recognised the importance of communication for development before that. With the rise of the network society, the strength of the networked community in development initiatives became evident through the use of social media for development. The features of Web 2.0, as it gradually evolved, have been an integral part of social media. This participatory, collaborative nature of social media has left a profound impact in realising the true spirit of development initiatives which emphasised participatory development, at grassroots levels.

Social media have been utilised for poverty eradication, employment, income inequality, civic engagement, activism, political participation, increasing social capital, social security, tracking and reducing criminal activities, crowd-funding, crisis management, creating social awareness, development campaigns and mobilisation. Social media has given the power of networking beyond the geographical boundaries, shaping public opinion and mobilising to action.

A path-breaking initiative of participatory development through crowd-sourcing and networking is the project Ushahidi which helps the users to map any crisis and thus draw attention for immediate aid. The project has been used during civil unrest, flood, earthquake, wildfire, storms and even elections. Apart from such specific networking applications, popular social media platforms have also been used for various development initiatives.

One of the most prominent agricultural groups on Facebook is Digital Farmers, Kenya. More than 336000 members of the group share advice, acceptable practices, tips, information, success stories and encouragement. MarketingtoFarmers group reported in 2017 that YouTube had been the most popular social networking site among farmers in the United States where they use it to know about products, services, processes and advice on farming. Similarly, in India WhatsApp group, Baliraja has been a popular networking platform to seek and share farming advice.

Apart from the agricultural sector, the WhatsApp group is being used in the health sector as well. For example, in India #SaveHeart initiative has been performing almost as a virtual hospital where the WhatsApp group with more than 1000 doctors functions to treat cardiac patients in remote areas with continuous monitoring, advice and support. Twitter has been used many times for various campaigns for social causes. For example, #ALSIceBucketChallenge that went viral on social media helped to develop a fund of 220 million US dollar in 2014 for research and treatment of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.

8.5 SOCIAL MEDIA, ARTS, CULTURE AND EDUCATION

We saw in the previous section that social media could be used for effective communication and marketing to reach different types of audiences through various online marketing tools. Just as social media marketing has become an integral part of business communication; it has also become an essential platform for various social and cultural development activities. Social media standing against the dominant media platforms have provided a space for alternative voices and activities mainly for social development. Below are a few case studies where social media have been used for such purposes. This will give us an understanding of the potential of the new media for solving various problems of society and the world.

8.5.1 Social Media and New Forms of Arts

The National Endowment for the Arts of the United States of America defines media arts as – "all genres and forms that use electronic media, film and technology (analogue and digital; old and new) as an artistic medium or a medium to broaden arts appreciation and awareness of any discipline. For example, this includes projects presented via film, radio, audio, video, the Internet, interactive and mobile technologies, video games, immersive and multi-platform storytelling, and satellite streaming." Since early 1960s media art has been a popular form of art, even if we consider the beginning to be 1834 with the photographic invention of the zoetrope, however, with the advent of social media, the new media art form has expanded itself by including artistic computer games, sound art, digital poetry, cyber performance, information art, virtual art, hypertext, cyborg, interactive art and many more.

Social media in this aspect has not only given birth to new forms of arts but also provided a new platform for existing forms of art. Apart from using Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube for showcasing one's artworks, dedicated social media platforms like 500PX for photographers' community, Dribbble for graphic designers, Behance for graphic designers and creative directors and Deviantart for fine arts and digital arts' community have been very popular. One of the milestones in establishing the relation between arts and social media has been the Infinity Mirror Rooms immersive art experience created by Japan's Yayoi Kusama which incorporates art aficionados and social media by offering its visitors to click selfies in a unique, surreal and immersive environment. The social media posts with #infiniteKUSAMA within months of opening the exhibition

reached over 91 million Twitter and Instagram users garnering over 330 million impressions. This has been followed by multiple similar initiatives worldwide in amalgamations of arts and social media.

In addition to using social media as part of artistic expression, social media have also provided a platform to many artists. In August 2017, a well-known photographer Cindy Sherman chose Instagram to release her new series of digital art. As Larissa Hjorth and Sam Hinton pointed out in their book Understanding Social Media, that "Sherman's use of Instagram as a gallery highlighted social media as a key context and platform for art production and exhibition…The recent work by Sherman demonstrates mobile media's role as integral to contemporary art, both as a way of viewing art and as a subject of the art itself." Using social media as a gallery for artistic expressions has changed the industry dynamic exponentially. According to Stuart Semple ``never before has an artist had the power to get into a conversation directly with their audience", as he said to Gotham Magazine. Many emerging artists like BP Laval and Genieve Figgis have secured an exhibition only based on their posts at Instagram. Thus, social media have changed the dynamic of arts as well.

8.5.2 Social Media and Cultural Evolution

Social media have left their impact on every aspect of society, as we can see. From politics to arts, social media have essential roles to play today. Thus, it becomes evident that social media is integral in shaping the culture and cultural changes of present times. Culture, according to Edward Tylor, is "That complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired…as a member of society." Thus, culture is not just literary creations or songs or dances of one community, and it encompasses its ideology, belief system, norms, religion, politics, its food culture, its attire, its architecture and many more. Social media have been used in all such spheres of life-shaping the culture and cultural expression of the millennial.

As we have already seen, social media is being used by fine arts practitioners in different ways. What is more, social media has given birth to the concept of social media celebrity. Many people with different expertise have used social media to showcase their talents, and sometimes it is just giving opinions or reviews, and reaching the position of influencers. Social media have given birth to selfie culture, which is much of the time criticised for being ego-centric and trivial. However, beyond the normative evaluation, this widespread urge to visual communication is influencing different other cultural aspects as well. At the same time, social media have created a much more conversing, participatory, collaborative society with not only information overload but also opinion overload.

Besides creating new cultural forms, social media have also been used as a platform for existing cultural expressions. YouTube channels like Mahogany sessions with their emphasis on giving space for new talent have broken the supremacy of production companies and thus challenging the established hierarchy of the music industry, which was much criticised by Theodor W. Adorno in his classic text on the culture industry. What social media is then doing is mostly breaking that hierarchy, making the practice of culture much more artists' centric where the artists are in direct communication with their audience. Social media have also provided a broad exposure of foods from different regions of the world, ushering a hybrid food culture. The Guardian

published an article in 2016, explaining how social media is changing the way people eat their food by making it more visually appealing.

8.5.3 Social Media for Education

According to Jack M. Balkin and Julia Sonnevend, there are multiple ways that social media have changed the content, scope and practice of education. First of all, it has reduced the spatial and temporal limits of education – this has offered unprecedented reach of learning materials across the globe giving many to access the quality of education that was not possible earlier. Further, the infrastructural limitation hindering, increasing the number of students in a classroom has also been nullified with social media education. Social networking also facilitates many-to-many and one-to-many models of education. Social media have made informal peer-to-peer education more and more salient. Social media offers relevant information with immediate application for those who are interested to learn.

Social media have not only expanded the reach and access to learning materials, but also developed new forms of learning altogether. The Massive Online Open Courseware platforms like Coursera, Udemy, FutureLearn have integral features of social networking. The proliferation of learning apps like Byju, Google Classroom, edX, Khan Academy and many more have ushered the education 2.0 concept. There are various social media groups and accounts which provide study materials, video lectures and even interactive guidance. YouTube channels like ScienceHow, Kurzgesagt, Ted-Ed and many more offer educational videos. Various courseware has started to include social media platforms as their extended and sometimes main learning tools.

Not only social media-based learning but also social media have started to play an integral role in the formal education system as well. More and more teachers are using social media platforms to communicate with students. WhatsApp groups are being used for planning and coordinating class learning. Facebook groups are being used as virtual study groups where learning materials are shared and discussed by students and teachers. This has increased students' interest and involvement in learning, along with efficient time and space management.

Check Your Progress: 3

Note: 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this Unit.

1. Highlight the applications of social media in the development sector?

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2. Explain the educational benefits of social media?

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8.6 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit, we discussed different aspects of social media applications. First and foremost, we saw how social media is being used by the government and public sectors. The rise of e-Governance and participatory governance has been possible with the proliferation of social media platforms. Besides government organisations, we have learnt about different ways the non-government organisations are using social media platforms. Moreover, how individuals are becoming much more aware, opinionated, informed, active and participatory in good governance through social media platforms.

Next, we discussed the use of social media by corporate sectors. We have seen many examples of how business organisations are using social media platforms for different purposes. We have learnt how different sectors are using different platforms to fulfil different purposes. In this aspect, we have emphasised, mainly how media houses are using social media platforms. Media houses differ from business organisations in their usage of social media platforms as they perform many of their core activities based on social media only. Furthermore, we have seen how individuals are using social media for entrepreneurship.

In addition to government and corporate sectors, the social media are being used to meet other social causes for politics, development and social reforms. We have seen how social media have changed electoral politics, political campaigns along with how politics is conceived and practised in recent times. Not only political situations, but development initiatives are also taking place through social media. We have seen various examples of using social media for development purposes along with analysing different strategies of using it. Along with development initiatives, social media have been mainly used for various social movements and activism, which have also been discussed.

Social media have also left a substantial impact on the development of arts and culture. It has created new forms of culture and new forms of arts. Social media have been used as a platform for established cultural practices. It has challenged the established hierarchy of cultural industry as well. Finally, the education sector has its own share of social media applications with various dedicated apps and social media groups. There are numerous video learning lessons, as well as virtual study groups based on social media. We have discussed these various types along with exploring the ways social media are being used as tools for formal education as well.

8.7 FURTHER READINGS

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8.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress: 1

1. Social media are used by governments for different purposes, such as human services, disaster management and resilience, transport, policy and planning, participation, developing citizen trust, government transformation and campaigning. Social media have been used by government heads to convey official messages and connect with people in India and other countries. There are three stages of social media adaption in the government organisation- 1] Experimentation; 2] Constructing chaos; and 3] Institutionalisation. In the first stage, social media is being tested for its potentiality for governance. In order to adopt a new method, it creates disturbances, that characterises the second stage. Once the benefits of social media are realised, it becomes part of the government, that is in the third stage.

2. The term social media indicates that communication medium belongs to a large number of people. Citizens use social media for political participation, transparency and accountability, peace-building and internal governance. In many cases, citizens use social media to develop and file a petition for change, to comment on policies and even to report the crime. Social media have been used to convey and map social issues, thus increasing pressure on governments to take actions.

Check Your Progress: 2

1. Business groups utilise the popular social media instruments for various activities that directly or indirectly benefit its business operations as well as its various stakeholders. For examples, Facebook helps in developing identity, conversations, sharing, developing presence, maintaining relationships, and reputation.

2. Entertainment media maintain their social media profiles. Before launching a cinema, the marketing team of the cinema launches a particular hashtag on their social media accounts through which they

promote the movie. For broadcast programmes, social media are used to develop a prospective audience base while maintaining the existing ones.

Check Your Progress: 3

1. Social media have been utilised for poverty eradication, employment, income inequality, civic engagement, activism, political participation, increasing social capital, social security, tracking and reducing criminal activities, crowd-funding, crisis management, creating social awareness, development campaigns and mobilisation. Social media has given the power of networking beyond the geographical boundaries, shaping public opinion and mobilising to action.

2. There are multiple ways that social media have changed the content, scope and practice of education. First of all, it has reduced the spatial and temporal limits of education – this has offered unprecedented reach of learning materials across the globe giving many to access the quality of education that was not possible earlier. Further, the infrastructural limitation hindering, increasing the number of students in a classroom has also been nullified with social media education. Social networking also facilitates many-to-many and one-to-many models of education. Social media have made informal peer-to-peer education more and more salient.