Responsibility of Media in Changing Social Scenario

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ABSTRACT:

The word 'media' is derived from the word medium, signifying mode or carrier. Media is intended to reach and address a large target group or audience. The word was first used in respect of books and newspapers i.e. print media and with the advent of technology, media now encompasses television, movies, radio and internet. In today's world, media becomes as essential as our daily needs. Media of today is playing an outstanding role in creating and shaping of public opinion and strengthening of society. Media is the sword arm of democracy. Media acts as watchdog to protect public interest against malpractice and create public awareness.In this paper we analyse the possible effects of social media on both, individuals and the society as a whole. First we illustrate the current situation of social media in terms of facts and figures before we deepen selected aspects of new forms of virtual interaction. With a specific focus on recent neuroscience research findings the following main research question is to be answered: How does our brain deal with these new forms of information technologies and what are the possible consequences for our social behaviour? There is a broad range of diverse interpretations related to the usefulness of social media as a powerful source of communication and learning. Through examining several advantages and disadvantages we will highlight the circumstances for responsible handling of social media. The examination takes place on two levels:

1. The global form of information and expressing opinions via social media and its impact on social systems.

2. The individual form of participating and the specific influence of social media on the own social behaviour. Subsequently the effects of social media on the two levels above will be integrated into an overall picture.

Keywords: social media, communication, human brain, learning, quality of life

1. Role Of Media In Our Society

The word 'media' is derived from the word medium, signifying mode or carrier. Media is intended to reach and address a large target group or audience. The word was first used in respect of books and newspapers i.e. print media and with the advent of technology, media now encompasses television, movies, radio and internet. In today's world, media becomes as essential as our daily needs. Media of today is playing an outstanding role in creating and shaping of public opinion and strengthening of society. Media is the sword arm of

democracy. Media acts as watchdog to protect public interest against malpractice and create public awareness. Today when politicians are taking full advantage of their positions, an evil nexus of mafia and crime syndicate is making the life of the common man miserable, taxpayer's money is siphoned out for the personal gain of the influential and ordinary people are a mere spectator-media has a grater responsibility As the fourth pillar of democracy along with judiciary, executive and legislature, media of today has an all embracing role .From the days abode, media has remained an integral part of human civilization. From the days of Vedas and Upanishads to edicts of kings and emperors like Chandragupta, Asoka to the medieval Indian mass gatherings to the modern day's audio video and print media, media has always taken a pivotal role in shaping our society. During the days of freedom struggle newspapers like Tilak's Maratha, Mahatmaji's young India acted as a platform to place the demands of common Indian and to express solitude with freedom fighters. The World Wide Web and web 2.0 technologies have given rise to electronic media where even a common man can express views through blogs, website posts, facebook and twitter like social media. Coupled with traditional print media all these audio video and social media caters to a richly diversified media industry in India. Media helps in fighting against corruption, nepotism, cronyism of institutional machinery and carrying out relentless campaign against them. Way back in independent India from the Mundra case to the jeep scandal to the hawala case to the

kickbacks received in different defense deals- Indian media performs commendably in exposing the corrupted highly placed statesman. In recent scams from commonwealth to 2G, exposed thanks to television and print media, media acted as a catalyst to government action compelling government to swing into action including suspending ministers and putting ministers into jail. Who can forget the crusade taken by Indian media in the Nirbhaya rape case and shaping the public opinion in one of the most heinous crimes the world has ever witnessed. Without media, the news of government schemes and benefits would have never reached the target audience. Based on the invention of Tim Berners-Lee communication in the world changed dramatically: Only 25 years ago, in 1989, the British scientist at CERN (ConseilEuropéen pour la RechercheNucléair) in Geneva (Switzerland) invented `Mesh´, the precedent of the World Wide Web (WWW). The web was originally conceived and developed to meet the demand for automatic information-sharing between scientists in universities and institutes around the world. On April 30th 1993 an open licence maximised the dissemination process. "Through these actions, making the software required to run a web server freely available, along with a basic browser and a library of code, the web was allowed to flourish" (CERN, 2014). Only ten years ago, in 2004, another communication revolution took place: the birth of Facebook with today a total number of monthly active Facebook users of 1.3 billion worldwide. Almost half

of them are already *mobile* Facebook users (statisticbrain, 2014). The idea that people enjoy to be connected and to exchange their feelings and wishes has been THE success story for the 29 old, Ex-Harvard student Marc Zuckerberg (Facebook, 2014). Since then the way of communication has changed away from the classical one way or `one to many´ communication to a dialogue, interactive oriented `many to many´ model. These developments are still quite young in communication history and the consequences are not yet known. There are proclaimers stressing the chances and huge opportunities thanks to the new technology (e.g. democratic participation, elearning, e-shopping). Others are pointing out possible dangers of these new forms of networks and communication exchange not only on a global (e.g. data protection, less freedom of personality) but also on the interpersonal and personal level (e.g. loss of life quality, emotional damages). Within a few years social media has become an integral part of the world. Especially young people cannot think of communication without thinking of online-networks like Facebook, Google+, Twitter. Why are people so enthusiastic about using these new technologies of virtual interaction? Since the time of Aristotle humans have been described as social beings, and one might state these technologies allow them to act out their crucial feeling of social belonging accordingly. This paper aims to give an overview on a complex topic by analysing the possible effects of social media on both, individuals and the society as a whole. First we illustrate the current situation of social

media in terms of facts and figures before we are deepening selected aspects of new forms of virtual interaction and global communication. With a specific focus on recent neuroscience research findings the following main research question is to be answered: How does our brain deal with these new forms of information technologies and what are the possible consequences for our social behaviour? There is only a one-way street. The development of new technology is not returnable. Nevertheless, we can ask the user to handle these new developments in a conscious and responsible way.

2. Facts And Figures

Only 25 years ago, the WWW was invented, only ten years ago, Facebook went online. Taking into consideration this short time frame, it is impressive to see how this development affected our daily life and behaviour. How important is to have access to the Internet with the right technology? What is the worldwide penetration rate and who owns a mobile telephone with 3G technology? The following numbers give an idea about important facts and figures around the global Internet environment. In 2013, over 2.7 billion people were Internet users, which correspond to 39% of the world's population. In the developing world, one third (31%) of the population is online, compared with three quarters (77 %) in the developed world. Europe is the region with the highest Internet penetration rate in the world (75%), followed by the Americas (61%). In Africa, 16% of people are using

the Internet – only half the penetration rate of Asia and the Pacific (International Telecommunication Union, 2013). In the developing countries almost three quarter (70%) of the under 25-year-olds (a total of 1.9 billion) are *not* online. This signifies "a huge potential if developing countries can connect schools and increase school enrolment rates" (International Telecommunication Union, 2013). There is an increasing shift from the use of the `classical´ computer as a communication tool to the mobile phone. Even if nowadays, almost all people on Earth live somewhere within reach of a mobilecellular signals (global penetration of 96% in 2013), there is still a huge gap of having access to those networks which have been upgraded to 3G technology, necessary to qualify as mobile broadband and provide high-speed access to the Internet: 74.8% in the developed world, only 19.8% in the developing countries (International Telecommunication Union, 2014). But as networks are being upgraded and services accordingly offered in the market, mobile-broadband subscriptions will continue to grow strongly. These facts and figures are underlying the importance of the Internet for the social communication system in general but above all the importance of exchanging news, information and learning tools on the individual level. Taking the example of Facebook as the largest online social network this webbased services allow individuals to "(1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of

connections and those made by others within the system" (Boyd & Ellison 2008, p.211). The frequency of communication via Social Media is continuously increasing. Taking the example of the continent with the highest Internet penetration rate worldwide in 2012 69% of the Europeans are indicating that they use social networks at least once a week; more than half of them (54%) every day. The percentage in the group of 15-24 is even much higher: Almost everybody (95%) use it at least once a week and 85% everyday (European Commission, 2012, p. 9). Facebook statistics offer an inside view about the behaviour of the youth in the Internet on a worldwide basis. Almost half of the 18-34 year old check Facebook as soon as they wake up or before they get out of bed (28%). The average number of friends per Facebook user is 130 and an average number of pages, groups, and events a user is connected to is 80. 205 photos are uploaded per day (Statisticbrain, 2014). These numbers are underlying the intensity, importance and time consumption by using the Internet.

3. Virtual Interaction And Global Communication

There is no single definition of `What is Social Media´. There is more of a kind of description what is the process of social media by underlying the interaction among people in which they are creating, sharing, exchanging, modifying their ideas in virtual communities or networks. "Traditionally, consumers used the Internet to simply expend content: they read it, they watched it, and they used it to buy products and

services. Increasingly, however, consumers are utilizing platforms – such as content sharing sites, blogs, social networking, and wikis" (Kietzmann, 2011, p. 241). With this description there is a clear distinction to the classical media like print or broadcasting where the user is more a passive consumer. With the term Web 2.0, developed by Tim O´Reilly during a brainstorming session at a conference in October 2004 (O´Reilly, 2005), the static Web 1.0 was left behind and the user was transformed into a producer of opinions by using specific tools and technologies like Cloud Computing. The user has moved from the consumer to the prosumer - a professional consumer. Another important change in information search is the shift from the push (getting the information on a passive way without being proactive) to the pull principle (being active in searching the relevant information) (Boundless, 2014). New information technologies, changing behaviour in the use of technology and increasing demands of the information seekers bring new ways of exchanges not only on a two-way, symmetric communication process, but on a many to many exchange process (Shirky, 2008, p. 87). You have to react on what `the many´, the internet crowd, is demanding, no matter if you are a profit or a non-profit organisation, a politician or a CEO. These exchanges are often dominated by opinion leaders, testimonials, which are creating superhubs .

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