



## ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA

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**ABSTRACT**

In the era of globalization social media plays a significant role in communicating people of one corner with the other within a fraction of seconds. People's choice matters a lot in any democratic set up. At the time of election, now the members of political parties prefer to send messages to the people using social media handles, also the common man raises its voices through social media regarding certain issues. Social media becomes the medium of communication between the government and the common man. Like several recent instances in India show how the government responding to the appeals of the people in distress in foreign countries through social media, extended its hand to rescue them. By efflux of time social media becomes a necessity for both the government as well as the common man in India.

**KEYWORDS :** India, Role, Social media

The present era of science and technology is witnessing social media to be the most important role in creating all kinds of awareness amongst the people. In fact it imparts the best mode of communication to every sector in the present time. Social media includes all sorts of social networks such as Televisions, face book, twitters, websites and all other broadcasting techniques. It has created an environment for interaction where people can share their ideas even without meeting. Communication through social media becomes quite common and popular amongst the people as it covers a wide range of information accessible to large number of people within a very short span of time, for example, in recent times more number of people gain access to information posted to a Facebook or twitter page quickly than through any other mode of communication. Information posted through social media spreads like wildfire to huge number of people within a short span of time. It is all due to the scientific development of technology that played a significant role in improving the communication through social media. It brought people living in distant parts of the world closer to each other. Most of the organizations utilize social media to communicate their legal agenda to the common people. In the recently concluded general election in India, we have found most of the leaders depended upon the social media to connect with the common man regarding their election manifesto. Hardly any leader went for press conference in communicating his ideas and promises for the common man instead they wanted to communicate everything through social media. Interestingly now a time has come when even a daily laborer, who works for day and night to collect basic needs for his family, uses a smart phone and is active in social media.

The role of Media in country like India having a democratic set up is the most powerful tool. The very essence of democracy is maintained through the constructive role played by the mass media. Due to the transformation of the country from a Police State to Welfare State, the responsibility of the state has increased a lot. To meet the enhanced responsibility, it is required to be done through enactment of lots of legislations either directly by the parliament or by delegation through the administrative authority. However, only enactment of laws is not important, rather it is more important to disseminate these laws to the general public for whose benefit it has been made. Description of rights and duties within the four corners of the statute book without being properly communicated to the public at large kills the very essence of the legislation. Under such circumstances, law becomes a plaything in the hands of some unscrupulous elements who try to manipulate it as per their own whims and caprices which turns the situation to be more dangerous. This can only be avoided by the help of

media which can bring the law in its true perspective to the people to make them aware of their rights and liabilities. The progress of a country or the new areas on which a country should focus can be well ventilated with the help of media only. It is the media only that help the people to demand justice. In the contemporary era of globalization, it is quite visible that those social and legal issues stirred up in the society having the support of the media has got more legal assistance and prominence in arriving at the conclusion quickly than those devoid of getting the attention of the media. In recent past we have come across several instances where the government of India responding to the appeals of the people in distress in foreign countries through social media, has extended its hand to rescue them. The law enforcement agencies of the country too taking suo motto cognizance of certain crimes circulated through social media started extending justice to the victims. Now most of the people in India, specifically the young mass spend much time in using different social media handles like Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, You Tube etc. Even people prefer to send personal messages using social media than by sending through emails. The very reason for such use of social media is mostly because of the multi faceted role played by it instead of being confined to mere medium of communication.

In the current era of globalization the media functions as the backbone of the society. The society now a day is becoming more and more dependent upon the media thereby increasing the responsibility of the media. This makes the media more particular. There is a change in the pattern of news circulated through the media due to the change in mindset of the people. Media works as an eye- opener for the common men to make them aware of their rights and liabilities. Unlike the democratic countries of the world, where the media is considered as the fourth pillar of democracy enjoying freedom of speech and expression, it doesn't enjoy the freedom to propagate the news in most of the other countries. The role of media seems to be more important in democratic countries as it acts as a medium to convey the plans and promises of the government and its servants to the common man. In the same manner it becomes the voice of the common man in communicating their hopes and aspirations to the government in power. Social media plays a very important role now days at the time of conduct of elections as the political leaders try to communicate to people regarding their election manifesto using social media handles, whereas common man uses it when finds any deviation from the declared promises. In current scenario hardly any political leader prefers for press conference to justify his stand on any particular issue rather than by justifying his stand through social media that reaches the common man within no time.

As far as enhancement of legal awareness through social media is concerned, it can be considered as the best mode to connect the common man of the country. In every Parliamentary session, lots of legislations are passed keeping the societal need in eye, but if these laws will not be communicated to the people for whom those are enacted, then the very essence of such legislations lost. Another malady is that even though so many laws are enacted in India, but till now no such provision is expressly made to make any particular department either of the central or the state government to be responsible for the dissemination of such laws to the public. Lack of legal awareness is the major drawback in India now, especially for the marginalized class of people living mostly in the bordering areas. As per an Article published in the Times of India on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2018, more than eighty percent of population in India doesn't have knowledge on the Samaritan Law that protects the bystanders present at the time of any road accident & extended help to the victim in getting medical assistance. The latest amendment to the law provides for non inclusion of such person's name in the police report as well as in the subsequent court cases unless one gives his consent to be so included.

Several amendments were made by the legislature to the supreme law of the land, the Indian Constitution, to accommodate societal changes. The judiciary too played a significant role in expanding the purview of Fundamental Rights present in Part III of the Indian Constitution to include several unenumerated rights like Right to Food, Right to Shelter, Right to Livelihood, Right to free legal aid etc. to enable the marginalized sections of the society to live with dignity. But these developments unless come to the knowledge of the people for whom it is made, the entire system would be at fault. Social media has a much important role in spreading awareness of such developments.

Law by the support of the media reaches the public more quickly than any other mode and makes them aware of their rights and duties. Media not only makes the government cautious to act within the purview of the legal provisions, but also tries to maintain a check on the arbitrary action of its servants. Sometimes taking advantage of the ignorance of the common men regarding their rights on the prevailing laws, some third parties mislead them to get their work done through government offices by taking some undue benefit. Now day social media plays a very strong role in exposing such unethical persons. Media has the ability to rectify not only administrative actions of the government and its employees but also the unlawful action of the private persons. At the same time it can also not be denied that sometimes some fake news in the social media spreads a kind of fear in the general public which is misused by the miscreants for their own benefits. Last year after getting several complaints on fake Whatsapp messages, Whatsapp has appointed a Chief Grievance Officer for India in the US to deal with the issues.

The role of media including the social media cannot be denied as the savior of democracy, but the recent trend of growing fake news through the social media is also dangerous for the society as it serves like a double-bladed sword offering benefit to the society at one point of time whereas damaging it terrifically at other times. It's the need of the time to regulate the news spreads through the social media so as to protect the interest of the society at large. There is a need to develop a system that would uphold the sanctity of the news spreads through the social media before it would destruct itself by the frequent publishing of fake news. The media stands on the faith of the public and if the faith will be lost the very sanctity of the media will be automatically destroyed.