Social Media for Good Governance and Inclusive Development

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Abstract

The Government of India has a focus on using digital and web based techniques for development programmes and thereby ensuring more transparency, efficiency, and accountability. Social Media is helping the government in ensuring the reach of its schemes to the needy, when they failed to reach them in the regular process. The government has been deploying IEC (Information-Education-Communication) methods for ensuring the reach of these programmes. Being a large and nation full of demographic differences it is not easy for the government to reach out these programmes to the people *at large*.

Social media refers to the web-based tools and media that allow users to personally and informally interact, create, share, retrieve, and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. Social media includes social networking sites, blogs and micro - blogs, online forums, discussion boards and groups, wikis, socially integrated text messaging services, videos and podcasts and many more. These are being put to use by the ministries of the government to roll out the messages, ensure their participation in their implementation for instance the PM Portal, Rajasthan Sampark Portal, E-Mitra etc. The focus of this paper is to illustrate the various ways by which the social media platform may ensure Good Governance and Inclusive Development.

Keywords: Social Media, Good Governance, Inclusive Development, IEC, Web Based Tools

Introduction

First of all people must have to know what is social media? 'Social media' refers to "web-based tools and services that allow users to create, share, rate and search for content and information without having to log in to any specific portal site or portal destination. These tools become 'social' in the sense that they are created in ways that enable users to share and communicate with one another." (Bohler-Muller & Van der Merwe, 2011). This includes social networking sites, blogs, microblogs, video blogs, discussion forums and others.

Now a day's social media has been the important part of one's life from shopping to electronic mails, education and business tool. Social media plays a vital role in transforming people's life style. The statistic shows, at present 196.02 million social network users in India. In 2019, it is estimated that there will be around 258.27 million social network users in India, up from close to 168 million in 2016. Therefore, the Government of India has a focus on using digital and web based techniques for development programmes and thereby ensuring more transparency, efficiency, and accountability. Several national programmes have been launched for poverty alleviation, employment generation, food security, abolition of child labour, safeguard of human rights, empowerment of women, ensuring education for all, rural electrification, safe drinking water, road connectivity, etc. Prominent among them are Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), Indira Awas Yojana (IAY), National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), National Land Records Modernisation Programme (NLRMP), Integrated watershed

Management Programme (IWMP), Right To Information (RTI), Right To Education (RTE), Rashtriya Madhyamik Sikshya Abhiyan (RMSA), formation of Self Help Groups (SHGs). Now the social media is helping the government in ensuring the reach of its schemes to the needy, when they failed to reach them in the regular process.

Social Media for Good Governance

The term governance has gained great usage in contemporary public administration. The use of the terms governance and public administration gained unprecedented momentum in both their quest and usage in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But what we are most concerned about is the terminology of Good Governance. According to the World Bank, good governance entails sound public sector management, accountability, exchange and free flow of information and a legal framework for Good Governance has been an issue throughout the world. In a democratic form of Government, citizen participation in policy level decisions is very much sought after. Now, we talk about Social Media in Government. Social Media is emerging as the fastest mode of dissemination of information and providing a platform to various thoughts of masses. It is now acquiring a place to further the ideas of democracy and popular participation. Given its reach to various section of masses, it can be effectively used a tool for better government and governance.

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Some excellent examples of Government agencies engaging social media tools to great benefit have emerged. MyGov, an Indian Government initiative, is world's one of the biggest crowd sourcing and citizen engagement platform. Andhra Pradesh Government used social media for disaster management during cyclone HudHud has become a classic case study.

The 'Clean India' campaign launched by Indian government involves construction of latrines, promoting sanitation programs in the rural areas, maintaining cleanliness on the streets and roads. *Swachh Bharat,* as it is otherwise known, is an attempt to create clean and better India. From government officials to school students, the campaign had seen more than 3 million active participants. It aims to eliminate open defecation, eradication of manual scavenging.

Rural Development Ministry has decided to go the whole hog on community websites like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and Instagram to highlight its initiatives for rural India, and hire an agency for it. Under the plan, two content developers will be deployed for each of three ministries--Rural development, Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water and Sanitation. They are expected to give all social media platforms related to the ministry a new look every week by putting up new creatives, cover images on various theme lines and putting up daily informative and promotional updates in the form of relevant text, photos, audio, video, interactive content, interviews, news, quiz etc. It will also engage more fruitfully with stakeholders using the various social media platforms.

Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DeitY), Ministry of Communications & Information Technology, Government of India has adopted the categorization of Social media by Kaplan and Haenlein in its Framework & Guidelines for the use of Social Media for Indian Government Organizations. This classification has six categories:

1. Collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia)

2. Blogs and microblogs (e.g., Twitter)

3. Content communities (e.g., YouTube)

4. Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook)

5. Virtual game worlds (e.g., World of Warcraft)

6. Virtual social worlds (e.g. Second Life)

Some other successful examples of use of Social media by the government bodies in India in terms of the response, participation and engagement of citizens are:

- **Police**

The Delhi (The capital of India) Traffic Police has joined Facebook and Twitter to ease handling of traffic related issues. If we look at the updates along with the responses of the citizens, we can clearly see the usefulness of the initiative. In fact, this has brought police closer to the citizens.

§**Indian Government Flagship Projects**

National e-Governance Plan (NeGP), the flagship of Government of India for promoting e-Governance in India has launched its Facebook page in the month of March, 2012. This has been a long time ask from NeGP project team to start using Social media as this team is supposed to draft policies for using Social media in India.

- **Central Ministry**

The Public Diplomacy (PD) division of the Ministry of External Affairs saw merit in leveraging social media to connect with the masses with around 31,000 followers. It made its debut on Twitter with the user id "Indian diplomacy". It was used very successfully in the recent crisis in Libya and Middle East as mentioned in Social Media framework and guidelines of Govt. of India.

- **Prime Minister's office**

This is one of the most famous twitter accounts among Indians. All the notifications and order from Prime Minister's office are made available by the account. Most of the times, the updates from PMO India start 'trending' in India regional trending page.

- **Central Tihar Jail**

Tihar Prison, popularly known as Tihar Jail, located near New Delhi is the largest complex of prisons in South Asia. As a host of the notorious corruption scam 'stars' of India, Tihar jail Facebook account has couple of thousands of 'friends' and the Jail authority updates the Facebook wall quite frequently.

It has been noticed that many Government decision and updates are available in Twitter or Facebook page far before those are published in Newspaper or waved via television. In fact, many updates are printed in the newspaper referring to the quote in Social Media.

Impact of Social Media on Governance

There is no doubt that social media has a lot of potential to be used for governance purposes. Many governments are using e-government strategies and disseminating information through online channels. There is promising evidence on social media improving transparency of organisations and government ministries. In general, there is a strong assumption that internet access and social media will improve transparency, accountability, and good governance. Social media has impacted on governance in the following ways:

Political participation: governments have provided formal online channels for citizens to report crime, comment on policy, or petition for change. Largely this is restricted to a small elite of internet users, and government websites are not popular. Citizens often use social media to organise between themselves for activism and protest.

Transparency and accountability: citizens have used social media to communicate, report and map issues in society, which has increased pressure on governments to respond.

Peace building: social media have been used to monitor violence, which can support peace building, although media can also be used to incite violence.

Private sector: social media used by businesses can increase transparency and customer communication, as well as create new forms of leadership.

Internal governance: new legislation and regulation of social media is controversial. Some online hate speech constitutes a crime, and some governments have shut down internet services in an attempt to control social media.

Social Media and Inclusive Development

Social media plays a vital role in transforming people's life style. Technology has shown a rapid development by introducing small communication devices and we can use these small communication devices for accessing social networks any time anywhere, as these gadgets include pocket computers, laptops, iPads and even simple mobile phones (which support internet) etc. It is not only useful for better governance but also beneficial for every sector like education, business, marketing society, youth, etc. For the purpose of education social media has been used as an innovative way. As per the survey of previous research, morethan 90% of college students use social networks. Social media has increased the quality and rate of collaboration for students. Teachers as well as for themselves to enhance their knowledge skills. Social networking sites also conduct online examination which play an important role to enhance the students' knowledge.

Social media is the new buzz area in marketing that includes business, organizations and brands which helps to create news, make friends, make connections and make followers. Business use social media to enhance an organization's performance in various ways such as to accomplish business objectives, increasing annual sales of the organization. Social media provides the benefit as a communication platform that facilitates two way communication between a company and their stock holders. Business can be promoted through various social networking sites.

As we all are aware of social media that has an enormous impact on our society. Many of the social media sites are most popular on the web. Some social media sites have transformed the way where people communicate and socialize on the web. Social networking sites render the opportunity for people to reconnect with their old friends, colleagues and mates. It also helps people to make new friends, share content, pictures, audios, videos amongst them. Social media also changes the life style of a society.

Nowadays social media has become a new set of cool tools for involving young peoples. Many young people's day to day life are woven by the social media Youngsters are in conversation and communication with their friends and groups by using different media and devices every day. In past years it was seen that youngsters are in touch with only friends and their groups in schools and colleges. But nowadays youngsters are in contact not only with known friends but also with unknown people through social networking sites, instant messaging etc.

There are many another ways that social media is helping in overall development. Here are few examples.

Social Media as an Equalizer

Social media helps bring access to information to anyone who can see it. In developing countries, this means that people in rural areas, or with little access to services can now obtain educational, mobile health and financial services in ways that were impossible before mobile technology and the spread of social media. As one World Health Organization article recently stated, "one fact sheet or an emergency message about an outbreak can be spread through Twitter faster than any influenza virus."

Social Media Saves Lives

Social media provides real-time insight into the lives of people around the world. As a result, when major illnesses occur social media is often the first to know. Clever monitoring of social media can predict disease outbreaks and enable intervention to begin often weeks before the traditional methods would pick up similar results. The Chronicle of Education recently concluded that "Twitter Tracks Cholera Outbreaks Faster than Health Authorities." Likewise Science Daily reports that Twitter has been used to predict flu outbreaks. Likewise, social channels helped predict ebola outbreaks.

Social Media for Economic Empowerment

Be it providing micro-lending or crop prices, social media is helping to empower those at the bottom of the economic ladder. Farmers in developing countries often do not know what the going price is for the crops they are growing. The World Bank's International Finance Corporation (IFC) details a project they have funded to help rural farmers via SMS messages, "by providing farmers current market information, even rural farmers can make educated, cost effective decisions when buying and selling their crops. As a result, they are more likely to see greater returns."

Social Media to Mobilize Public Opinion

Many of the examples cited here include using social media to mobilize public opinion – whether it be to protest, to learn, or to strive for fairness.

Social Media for Organizing Protests

Social media is well known for the ability to coordinate protests. Twitter, especially, played a critical role in enabling protesters to organize, meet and resist government security. The Wired article, "Facebook, Twitter Help the Arab Spring Blossom" provides a good glimpse into this phenomenon.

YouTube to Share Atrocities & Rights Violations

Prior to smart phones, it took special gear to capture everyday life on video. Before YouTube it was difficult to share your video – even if you had important, unique footage. Now many people have a video camera in their pocket or handbag at all times and can share the footage with the world in an instant. This has had a dramatic effect in many realms – not least of which is the ability for those in developing countries to share atrocities in nearly real-time. This footage from Cairo to Syria has helped to focus world attention even when traditional media has not been present.

Social Media for Fair and Just Elections

Social media can help document and disseminate vote rigging and voting rights violations. TechPresident. com documented One Bulgarian nonprofit that created a mobile app called "I vote." The platform informs users of their voting rights and obligations and will let them monitor the fairness of the election.

Social Media to Monitor and Report on Corruption

Social media is being used to expose corruption and help root it out. One important player is the websites "iReport" where individuals can provide the details of bribes they gave and the officials who took them.

It is clearly found that social media is boon to development of economy in building professional networks, increasing knowledge by utilizing the information related to innovative things in social networks.

Challenges

Social media is a mega network of people on a global scale using internet as a platform of communication and assertion of ideas. It transcends the traditional idea of state and its institutions. Thus it poses newer challenges of a different kind for the government to cope with:

1) No effective Legislation: Currently we do not have any effective regulation policies to curb online threats and abuse.

2) Tool of Political Gains: Recently it has worked as an influencing tool for the youths of the country. Various political parties target this group of people and spread communal messages.

3) Fake ID's: Due to multiple fake accounts and Ids, sometimes it becomes a challenge to figure out the opinion of the masses and it becomes a misleading tool.

4) International Threat: There is always an international threat remains of Data forging and Hacking from various International Groups.

5) Anonymity on the social media makes it difficult to attribute responsibility and trace persons. Recently rumors on social media led to riots and social unrest.

6) Government's response needs to be proactive. But not at the stake of snatching away the privacy or freedom of speech of the individuals.

7) A periodic revision of the concerned IT laws and statues must take place following consultations from the stakeholders.

8) Reasonable restrictions and a balancing act are challenging to achieve.

9) Investment on technology, expertise and manpower is still not sufficient to tackle the changing dynamics of this field.

Conclusion

As the technology is growing the social media has become the routine for each and every person, peoples are seen addicted with these technology every day. With different fields its impact is different on people. It had influenced the every age group whether teenager or adult and also shows the effects on government, governance and institutions. It is working as a bridge between government and common man.

Social media has various merits but it also has some demerits which affect people negatively. False information can lead the education system to failure, in an organization wrong advertisement will affect the productivity. Social media can abuse the society by invading on people's privacy, some useless blogs can influence youth that can become violent and can take some inappropriate actions.

In short, social media is a tool which is being subjected to multiple uses by all pillars of modern states comprising of citizenry, institutions, government, each according to their needs. Overall affect is an improved quality of democracy by establishing a new medium of interaction between state and citizens.

No doubt, it has great potential to reach public but Social media are being abused. With a will, society can harness them and revive that early dream of enlightenment.

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