Socio-economic Transformation through Social Networking: A look at ground reality

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ABSTRACT

It is assumed that globalization, privatization and liberalization have shrank the world into one global village where everything is at one's reach and everybody can operate within and without any conventional paradigm. The core question that raises here is that, what has proliferated LPG concept? It's nothing but the social networking, the information and communication technology, the day to day advancement in the science and technology and communication has glorified the LPG concept. As a result the whole equation in the world has changed, the traditional patterned had undergone a massive change and new social and economic order is seen to be evolving. There is not a single sphere that has remained aloof from its influence.

KEYWORDS: Socio-economic Transformation through Social Networking

I. INTRODUCTION:

Today we live in virtual reality where the explosion of information and its overflow made the life fast and mechanical. The life of a human being has become digitized as social networking is brought different modes and means in the life of its users as the online social networking has grown exponentially over the last few years with the emergence of site such as Facebook, YouTube, MySpace, Twitter and others.[i] Now we are netizens more and citizens less. The present paper examines the social change and also influence of social networking decision making, democratic participation of people by breaking virtuality. The paper further peeps into the social transformation and advantages and disadvantages of social networking.

The definition of the social transformation is "The process by which an individual alters the socially ascribed social status of their parents to a socially achieved status for themselves." Another definition refers to large scale social change in the cultural sphere. The first definition refers to individual and second definition refers to society at large. Thus a social transformation is a shift in collective consciousness of a society at the local, state, national and global. The religio-cultural tenets have triggered social transformation; the social reformers and the advent of new western ideas and education have influenced the major social transformations. Ideologies and likewise many other things have triggered the social transformation. The scientific discoveries have brought social transformation. Likewise networking and virtual media has been exerting tremendous influence in one's own ideas, behaviours and norms, belief, society, politics, ethics and innumerous such ideas and issues which are sounding loud at infinite decimal. The new media have almost completely replaced other media such as letters and fixed telephone.[ii] The new study on effect of internet on inequality suggests that it will depend on social organization of its use.[iii]

It is argued by some scholars that no country in the recorded history has experienced so many social changes and such a radical one's as in 21st century. The social transformation is increasingly criticizing the older notions and such a radical one. Some are pro groups and some are radical groups and ultimately objectively is taking its stand giving way to the outdated ideas and beliefs. Thus the social transformation affects all types of society. The study of social transformation refers to different ways in which the social networking and the globalised forces are impacting the society at the local as well as at the national levels with diverse historical experience.

The new seismic shift in the world and international politics has been experienced recently by some countries national government. The Middle East countries right from Yemen to Iran got their anguish and agony unleashed against the established government. The social revolution rocked the Tunitia, the social media fueled the protest in Egypt and toppled their presidents. The social networking media is being spread in the other areas of North Africa and Middle East. The social networking has been responsible for igniting popular uprising and fomenting anti government sentiments and anger which piled sky high because of authoritarian repression, economic stagnation and loss of hope.

Here just one video of Neda Soltan, a young woman in Iran who was shot and killed by police sniper as she watched pro-democracy demonstration on the street of Tehran in 2009 went on twitter and youtube where

she was shown as grasping her last breath of air became worldwide, rallying cry for social media users throughout the world and they expressed solidarity with her in struggle.

It can be said that the protests which were previously expressed by throwing or pelting the stone are replaced or being replaced by the war of words on face book, twitter and YouTube. The social networking media has been becoming more powerful in mobilizing the masses, building the world wide support and forcing the old men to step down. The Tunisia and Egypt uprising spread to another ten countries in which the face book posts and tweets are organizing protesters across the North Africa and Middle East. The countries where the spread were Yemen, Libya, Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Jordan, Tunisia, Morocco, Behrain and Iran.

U.S. Secretary Hillary Clinton called for free access to 'social web a fundamental human right.' It can be observed that in recent social movements social networks have become mass communication tools and vehicle for mobilization, social appropriation of internet is becoming a significant part of democratization processes. The social media such as face book, twitter are being widely used by activists and citizens to relay information that is not always accessible through traditional media.

Even UNESCO triggered debates on social networks for democracy at 6th IGF (Internet Governance Forum) at Nairobi, in 2011 wherein it examines the role of social networking in promoting democracy and social participation and explored how to strengthen this role by fostering free flow of information on internet. UNESCO also assumes its responsibility of promoting freedom of expression on internet to contribute to development, democracy and dialogue.

In India, the politics of social transformation is happening through social networking. It has been observed recently that social networking making citizens aware of their rights to elect their leaders. Though there are voices against its reliability but nevertheless it showcases public opinion that cannot be easily doctored. Eg. Arab Spring, The other example is the February, 2015 victory of Aadmi Party (AAP) in Delhi where there were 13 million registered voters out of which 12.15 million were online. This makes clear that social networking was the largest canvassing tool for parties and effective engagement tool for party workers to win the election.

Even the election of parliament PM candidate that time Mr. Narendra Modi made effective use of social networking media and the slogans that widely became viral were ' Acche Din Aayenge' and in recent times Ghar vapasi'.

The social networking created awareness about the Kargil area and brought the social opinion. The face book and twitter communities related to Kargil raised the slogans like ' Jago Kargil Jago.'The slogans, ' Bharat Swaccha Abhiyan' , 'Jana Dhana Yojana', 'Sukanya Samruddhi Yojana' got large scale public attention through social networking . The face book, YouTube have engaged citizens in civic and political activities. BJP's technical taskforce devised a digital ecosystem that sought to counter possible minority hostility through consolidating the majority vote. New media methods became the means of invigorating old social identity.

The virtual communities have emerged as an important tool for information, negotiation and transmission of ideas and collective decision making. Social transformation concerns all aspect of society and social existence then be it political, economic, cultural, ecological, environmental, health, education, art etc. and social network provide all these aspects virtually. It is the fast and quick messenger to form and disseminate information, inquisition and inquiry. It makes and bakes public opinion. It revolutionizes the society, reinvent, reform, reinvigorate, resuscitate, and review the opinion etc. Different ideas, different feedback, confrontation, verbal spat, attention, argument. This freedom of expression ekes out the dissatisfaction, or satisfaction, dissonance or resonance, agony or anguish or anger giving big foray to form new social networking literature.

Recently the Supreme Court gave its judgment on article 66A of restricting the expression of opinion and freedom. It discarded the article 66A of social networking act and declared unconstitutional and against article 19A of the Indian constitution i.e. freedom of expression. It is highly impractical to ban or gag or put censorship on digital or virtual media in the era of social networking. Ban it no more practical word. Instead of ban it should be bear.

The central government recently put a ban on documentary on Nirbhaya by Ms. Udvveen. But it could not bear fruit as this documentary was easily available on another site. It is said that the journalism is the fourth pillar of democracy one can say that social networking media is the fifth pillar of democracy. If democracy is to become more mature, it should be given freedom to ventilate its grievances and greetings. As we all know that the Nirbhaya case was made strong through social media and the slogans that were hurled throughout the country and abroad were worth remembering. Everybody was chanting with 'We want justice'.

Some scholars argue that that the social revolutions are linked so online that the traditional method s of gathering and pelting stones are getting outdated because the power of words are more sharp and poignant than action. But here one must remember that simply sitting on PC and swirling your finger on keyboard is not enough, one should physically come out and express and have face to face interaction is necessary . Along with social networking media one's own presence at the site i.e. physical presence would make social transformation more effective. The Arab Spring lasted for sometimes but the internet turmoil was left unattended because the

social networking media didn't provide concrete leadership to the agitation and movement and therefore election of the future leader became difficult. The importance of social movement with physical existence cannot be undermined as face to face interaction is necessary for making movement live and ideologically ridden. If the movement is issue based its effervescence lasts only for some period of times. The foundation of any movement or agitation is based on ideology and therefore the ideology is required to be understood.

The virtual thing cannot be touched, taste and sensed holistically and therefore the real picture gets smeared with unreal. Therefore both methods are necessary i.e. social networking and physical real existence.

Advantages and disadvantages of social networking
1. Worldwide connectivity
2. Commonality of interest
3. Real time information sharing
4. Free advertising

The disadvantages of the same are as follows
1. Face to face communication endangered
2. Cyber bullying and crime against children are on rise
3. Risk of fraud and identity theft
4. Waste of time
5. Invasion of privacy

II. CONCLUSION:

Change is inevitable and one has to embrace the change that is final reality. We have to give to seismic shift and as Albert Einstein says, 'in any conflict between humanity and technology humanity will win and therefore we have to be intelligent enough to accept the change.'

[i] Evans-Cowley, s. Jenifer (2010): Planning in the age of Face book: the role of social networking in planning processes, *GeoJounal,* p.407.

[ii] Giovanna Mascheroni (2007) Global Nomads' Network and Mobile Sociality: Exploring new Media Uses on the Move, Information, Communication and Society, *Routledge*, 2015, p.536.

[iii] DiMaggio, Pal; Hargittai, Eszter; Newman and John P. Robinson (2001), Social Implications of the Internet, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 2001, p.310.