

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN NATIONAL INTEGRATION: AN ANALYSIS

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Abstract : Social media is a relatively new media that has transcended physical boundaries in a short time, transforming the way we communicate and fostering unprecedented opportunities for national integration. With the rapid growth of social media platforms, their potential to facilitate communication and bridge societal divides has gained significant attention in recent times. This study therefore, explores the role of social media in fostering national integration, and how media serve as a platform for social interaction via virtual communities, online discussions, and collaborative initiatives. Through the lens of the Media Systems Dependency (MSD) Theory, the research combines qualitative analysis of relevant literatures collected through mixed methods approach, including surveys, interviews, and content analysis; to understand the mechanisms through which media influence individuals' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors in relation to national integration. The findings of this study sheds light on the various ways media can be leveraged to promote national integration. The study recommends that individuals, communities, and policymakers should maximally social media platforms to foster inclusive dialogue, bridge cultural divides, and promote a shared sense of identity and feeling of belonging. The study concludes that social media has the potential to be a powerful tool for fostering national integration. So keeping this in view, a Study has been made on The Role of Social Media in National Integration

IndexTerms - Social media, National integration, Communication

I INTRODUCTION

India is a vast country and often described as a "unity in diversity" is a nation with a rich tapestry of cultures, languages, religions and traditions. National Integration in India is a crucial process that aims to unite its diverse population under a common identity as Indians. India's diversity is its hallmark, with over 2,000 distinct ethnic groups, more than 19,500 languages and dialects spoken, and a multitude of religions and traditions, the country is a melting pot of cultures. National Integration is the bond and togetherness between people regardless of their caste, creed, religion or gender. A feeling of oneness, brotherhood and social unity under communities and society in a country. Communication plays a vital role in national integration by facilitating understanding, dialogue, and collaboration among diverse groups (Castells, 2012). Effective communication channels including social media platforms, enable individuals to connect, exchange ideas, and bridge cultural divides. Social media is a relatively new media that has transcended physical boundaries in a short time, transforming the way we communicate and fostering unprecedented opportunities for national integration. With the rapid growth of social media platforms, their potential to facilitate communication and bridge societal divides has gained significant attention in recent times. National integration is the awareness of a common identity amongst the citizens of a country. It means that though we belong to different castes, religions and regions and speak different languages we recognize the fact that we are all one. This kind of integration is very important in the building of a strong and prosperous nation. Media in India has been considered as a powerful tool in creating national integration. Role of media in Pakistan has always been commendable in this regard. Unity in our country does not mean the kind of oneness that comes from racial and cultural similarity. It is unity in spite of great differences, in other words, unity in diversity. An important historical event in which this unity was displayed was the freedom movement when all the Indians united against the British rule. Social media help in the exposure to all the cultures of different regions of India. Social media had always played a distinguished role in the society. Thus, bringing the whole country together as one nation. Social media platforms provide a space for individuals from diverse backgrounds to engage in open dialogue, share their perspectives, and exchange ideas. This enables people to gain a better understanding of different cultures, traditions, and viewpoints, fostering mutual respect and enhancing national integration (Baltar & Brunet, 2012). Through social media, individuals can share their cultural practices, traditions, and artistic expressions with a wider audience. This promotes cultural exchange, encourages appreciation for diversity, and fosters a sense of belongingness to a larger national community (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Social media platforms provide a space for marginalized groups to amplify their voices, share their experiences, and advocate for their rights. Social media platforms have been instrumental in mobilizing citizens for social and political causes. They facilitate the dissemination of information, encourage citizen participation. Social media helps bridge geographic divides by enabling individuals from different regions to connect and interact. This virtual proximity promotes understanding, empathy, and cooperation among people from diverse geographical backgrounds, contributing to national integration (QuanHaase & Young, 2010). Social media platforms provide

opportunities for individuals to express their national pride, celebrate national achievements, and engage in discussions about national issues. Social media is a good means of development for national integration through various handles and its importance can never be over emphasized, though for social media to achieved its objectives, the users should conform to the laws and ethics of media operations that consist the following: Defamation, Sedition, Contempt of court, Law of copy right, Law of privacy, Restricted report of minor, investigation before report. So keeping this in view, a Study has been made on The Role of Social Media in National Integration.

II OBJECTIVE

To find out the Role of Social Media in National Integration in India

III LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is anchored on The Media Systems Dependency (MSD) Theory. This theoretical framework explores the interplay between individuals and media systems. It emphasizes the idea that individuals are dependent on media for information, entertainment, and social interaction, and that this dependency influences their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. The theory examines how individuals' reliance on media shapes their relationship with the larger social system. The theory suggests that individuals turn to media to fulfill specific needs, known as gratifications. These gratifications can be instrumental (e.g., seeking information, acquiring knowledge) or socio-psychological (e.g., entertainment, social interaction, identity expression). Individuals select and use media channels that they perceive as best able to satisfy these need which in turn influences their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. In the context of national integration, the Media Systems Dependency Theory helps explain the role of media in shaping individuals' perceptions and interactions related to their national identity and sense of belonging. Media systems can provide information about diverse cultures, promote intergroup understanding, and foster inclusive dialogue, thereby facilitating national integration efforts. Individuals who rely on media as a source of information about their nation and its diverse communities are more likely to develop a broader understanding and appreciation of cultural differences, leading to increased social cohesion and national integration. Additionally, media can serve as a platform for social interaction and the expression of diverse voices, allowing individuals from different backgrounds to engage in conversations and collective action related to national issues. Through social media platforms, individuals can participate in virtual communities, share their experiences, and collaborate towards common goals, contributing to the process of national integration

IV SIGNIFICANCE OF NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN MODEM ERA

It plays a crucial role during modem times and challenges communalism, regionalism, linguism etc. However, global communism is a major threat. Only a few people with radical thoughts convince the population and brainwash them. In the modern era of tech and advancement and accessibility of social media, it is very easy to get deceived. National integration helps to ignore these situations. It makes people intellectually mature and tolerant.

V AIM OF NATIONAL INTEGRATION

A country like India has people from different cultures, languages and races and national integration not just aims to bind them but also aims at giving them a better environment to live and prosper.

- Help in keeping the stability of the country and helps in Its development.
- Nurtures communal harmony and fights casteism, regionalism and linguistic differences.
- Focuses on all the sections of the society, thereby making them financially independent

VI CHALLENGES TO NATIONAL INTEGRATION

Religious diversity: India is a home to several major religions. While religious diversity enriches the nation, it can also lead to religious tensions and conflicts.

Linguistic Diversity: India recognizes 22 officially recognized major languages, and further divided into more, this sometimes hinder effective communication and understanding.

Caste system: The historical caste system continues to influence Indian society, impacting social integration and equality.

VII THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN NATIONAL INTEGRATION

National Integration plays a crucial role in the political, economic, cultural and social dimensions of a country. Promotes Social Harmony, Unites the Nation; Increases economic growth, and promoter loyalty for the nation. The social media operates beyond posting about lifestyle and photos of friends as it educates, informs, enlightens and also contributes to national development and integration in the following ways: Government educate citizens about national issues, health and security for national cohesion

- Human rights activists and government use social media handles for advocacy

- and human rights activities
- Use to expose corruption and malady in governance
- Track court proceedings and charges for proper judgment
- Elevate national unity and peace among people of different tribes, region and culture
- Foster unity and acquaint the masses about activities of governance through presidential and
- Governors' handles Social media promote the growth of democracy and good Governance there by dissuading political apathy among the citizens.

VIII SOCIAL MEDIA USE FOR SOCIAL INTEGRATION AMONG YOUNGER GENERATIONS

Examples of Social Media in National Integration

Social media directly connects people from different states, religion and cultural background of India. We have seen different video conferencing among young generations. Through social media like twitter facebook YouTube Google WhatsApp, a bulk of young people can join together and get in touch with. Different educational programmes help young generations to get integrated together. Online registrations, Google forms help people to get integrated together in a partial way. We have seen different video conferencing among young generations. Through social media like facebook, twitter, instagram people use to send different links for registrations of different online seminars where young generation meet together from different parts of India. Another example of young generation integration through social media can be cited as the tutorial app like youtube, byjus where bulk of young candidates from various parts of this country come and join together for study and learning various topics and skills. Now the online registration and online survey are some sort of social media integers which is responsible for indirect integration of young generations.

Some Examples are cited below

Types of social media	Events of young generation integration programme	Number of people participated	dates
Facebook	ICT based education programme through facebook connected people	Above 10k	2007
YouTube	AutoCAD tutorial fir beginners	Above 2 Lakhs	2012
Byjus	Foundation teaching programmes where participants from different parts of the country joined together	Approximately 200-300 pupil joined	2012
Google	Different seminars registration through Google form	uncounted	2013
Instagram	Message in Independence day Republic day, Netaji Jayanti	Uncountable people got the stimuli of nationality	2013

IX CONCLUSION

The findings of this study shed light on the various ways media can be leveraged to promote national integration. The study recommends that individuals, communities, and policymakers should maximally social media platforms to foster inclusive dialogue, bridge cultural divides, and promote a shared sense of identity and feeling of belonging. The study concludes that social media has the potential to be a powerful tool for fostering national integration. However, it is important to note that social media can also be used to promote division and conflict. Therefore, it is important to use social media in a responsible and constructive way. Social media is a strong force that brings people of various economic, political and social backgrounds together. It has allowed people to build relationships, share ideas, problem and embrace best practices. It has in several ways benefited the human society however, when wrongly used, it can cause chaos and national disintegration. India is unique and her strength lies in the diversity of her people. The main goal of every government since the creation of the country is to preserve and enhance unity in diversity, fostering national integration and there is no better way, and time to use social media to direct people towards attainment of political, economic and religious cohesion to enhance national integration than now. It is important to note that while social media has the potential to foster national integration, its impact can vary based on factors such as digital divide and access to technology. Nonetheless, these positive roles of social media in fostering national integration highlight its potential as a

tool for promoting social cohesion, understanding, and unity. However, it is important to note that social media can also be used to promote division and conflict. Therefore, it is important to use social media in a responsible and constructive way

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