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# Role of Media in Society: Some Issues and Challenges with Special Reference to Social Media, in Indian Perspective

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## ABSTRACT

*The media is a fundamental Institution of the society. It plays a very vital role in democracy. It is the voice of democracy against illegal activities. Freedom of media in India is one of the important aspect for the nourishment of Fundamental Rights enshrined in the constitution of India. The media's role in society includes acting as a Watchdog and enhancing the free flow of information to public, therefore media is called the fourth pillar of the state. The Social Media has also become the integral part of human being at present. In today's society, the use of social media has become a necessary daily activity. Social media is typically used for social interaction and access to news and information, and decision-making. It is a valuable communication tool with others locally and worldwide, as well as to share, create and spread information. More than 86% of all business have a dedicated social media platform as part of their marketing strategy. Social Media is a big platform not only for promotion or marketing but one can also reach out millions of people and share their views, through social media, every person is aware of what is happening around them. But like any other theory social media platform have certain disadvantages. On the social site you will get easy to read false and baseless news. Some people creates religious hysteria and hatred, through their thoughts and expression, on social site. Prank videography has become a fashion among teenagers, they have been totally forgotten decency and morality and serving vulgar and obnoxious scene before the viewers, consequently sexual sensuality are taking birth in young children and pushing them into criminal activities. Facebook, YouTube and many other sites are openly disseminating the horrible and offensive scenes on their screen, besides this you can find the advertisement regarding, treatment of incurable diseases, occultism, Magic remedies and many misleading things. Many people get cheated by coming under pretense. Due to prevalence of social media, online fraud and Cyber crimes are increasing day by day in society. Hence a strong legislation is required, by which a reasonable restriction could be imposed on social media. Besides this social awareness*

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*programs related to social media and its positive as well as negative impact on society, should be organized by NGO's, Govt. and academic institution from time to time.*

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

In the era fast globalization the rapidly changing field of information, communication and technology, which is the dominant them in the intellectuals and political discussion and of last several decades, is one of the most outstanding development of the past century. It has rapidly altered the politics economic scenario. The Modern Communication System now a days like new technologies and cultural resources ranging from books, journals, films and televisions, internet and other social media like Whatsapp, Facebook, Youtube, Google, twitter etc. were originally developed not mere as a vehicle mass communication but also in relation of specific national market and processes of capitalist accumulation and centralization.

Freedom of Media in India is one of the most important aspects for nourishment of fundamental rights which enshrined under the constitution of India. The exponential growth in the Media, Industry and particularly in the electronic and satellite communication, witnessed during the recent year in India has changed the media scenario in the country as never before. Freedom of Media is given paramount consideration in the democratic India. Freedom of Media or Press is a very important fundamental right in a democratic society. In an open society people have to form their own opinions and take their own decisions. Media performs a very important function to providing information and thought to the people, the media therefore is rightly referred as the fourth estate of the state.

The Media is a fundamental institution of society. It plays a very vital role in creating, shaping and reflecting the public opinion in a democracy. Its contribution to socio-economic and political development is quite significant. It influences every aspect of human life, discharging five basic responsibilities i.e. to survive, to provide information, to offer guidance or interpretation of news, to entertain, and to serve the public, the press is rightly described as the fourth pillar of the state. But the media can play an effective role only when it is free to express its views and to articulate its opinions. As air is to life so also freedom to the media, without freedom no media can exist to play a significant role in all democratic countries of the world, the right to freedom of media is regarded as the very foundation and the indispensable condition for the existence of every other right. A free press in the unsleeping guardian of every other right that free men prize. Thus the concept of freedom of media has a dimension and range vastly different freedom, it embodies the democratic principle of accountability and is an

instrument of democratic control.

Article 19(1) (a) of Indian constitution secures to all its citizen the “right to freedom of speech and expression”. Unlike the U.S. constitutional provisions, there is no separate provision guaranteeing freedom of the media in India. It may be pointed out that the word expression in Article 19(1)(a) is used in addition to the word speech and thus is comprehensive enough to cover freedom of media. *Expression means communication, dissemination, propagation and carries the right to express one’s convictions and opinions freely by word of mouth, writing, printing, painting or in any other manner.* Expression, naturally, presupposes a second party to whom the ideas are expressed or communicated, it therefore includes the right to publish, distribute and circulate as far land wide as one wishes to as also the right of the other persons to receive the matter expressed or distributed. Freedom of the media therefore is a species of which the freedom of expressions is a genus, which is indispensable for democracy.

## II. FREEDOM OF MEDIA AND CONSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Article 19(1)(a) of the constitution, guarantees to all citizen “**the right to freedom of speech and expression**”. The right is recognised internationally as a Human Right, under the universal declaration of Human Rights 1948, as also, under the international covenant on civil and political rights.<sup>3</sup> Clause (2) of Article 19 at the same time provides. ‘nothing in sub-clause (a) of clause (1) shall affect the operation of any existing law, or prevent the state from making any law, in so far as such as law impose reasonable restrictions on the exercise of the right conferred by the said sub-clause in the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India, the securing of the state, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency or morality or relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence. It may, thus, be stated that the exercise of the right conferred by Article 19(1)(a) carries ‘special duties and responsibilities’.

Freedom of speech and expression has been held to basic and indivisible for a democratic polity,<sup>4</sup> the citizen’s most cherished and sacred right, the prized privilege. It is used to be a cornerstone of functioning of the democracy.<sup>5</sup> It is the foundation of democratic society.<sup>6</sup> It is essential to the Rule of Law and Liberty of citizens<sup>7</sup>. In **Romesh Thaper V. State of Madras**,<sup>8</sup> Patanjali Sastri C. J. (as he then was) observed. Freedom of speech and of the press lay at the

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<sup>3</sup> See Article 19, ICC PR. The Right is identical with 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment of U.S. Constitution 1791.

<sup>4</sup> Govt. of A.P. V. P.L. Devi AIR 2008 SC 1640.

<sup>5</sup> Union of India V. Naveen Jindal AIR 2004 SC 1959 (National Flag Case)

<sup>6</sup> Union of India V. Motion Picture Association AIR (1999) 2234 SC

<sup>7</sup> In Re: DC Saxena AIR 1996 SC 2481

<sup>8</sup> AIR 1950 SC 124

foundation of all democratic organisations, without free political discussion no public education, so essential for the proper functioning of the process of popular govt. is possible. Unlike the American constitution, Article 19(1)(a) does not specifically or separately provide for liberty of the press. The omission was explained by **Dr. B. R. Ambedkar** when he observed.<sup>9</sup>

The press has no special rights which are not to be given or which are not to be exercised by the citizen in his individual capacity. The editor for a press or the manager are merely exercising the right of expression and therefore, no special mention is necessary of the freedom of the press.

Liberty of the press as defined by Lord Mansfield consist in – **printing without previous licence**, subject to the consequences of law.<sup>10</sup> The Freedom of Media, thus means the right to print and publish what one pleases, without any previous permission. Imposition of any pre-censorship on publication is therefore, violative of the freedom to the press/media, unless justified under clause (2) of Article 19. Likewise in **R. Raj Gopal V. State of Tamil Nadu**<sup>11</sup> the supreme court held that neither the Govt. nor the officials had only authority to imposed a prior restraint upon publication of a material on the ground that such material was likely to be defamatory of them. No prior restraint upon such publications can be imposed. The **Kerala High Court**,<sup>12</sup> held prohibition on press and media, from publishing any **call for bandh and hartal**, would be violative of right of the people to know and receive information secured under Art. 19(1)(a). However, pre-publication can be justified in the interest of justice when there is a clear and imminent danger to the administration of fair justice and not otherwise. Therefore publication or telecast of matrimonial proceedings conducted in court, which are meant to be ‘in camera’ has been held to be an invasion of right of privacy and can be prevent by injunction granted by court.<sup>13</sup>

Infact, in a number of cases, the supreme court has held that the term freedom of speech and expression includes the freedom of media, absence of a specific mention of freedom of press in the constitution created no difficulty when the court was called upon to protect the freedom in the celebrated case of **Romesh Thappar V. State of Madras**<sup>14</sup>. The Supreme Court had no doubt in propounding that freedom of speech and expression included ‘freedom of propagation

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<sup>9</sup> CAD VII 980 see also Brij Bhushan V. State of Delhi AIR 1950 SC 129.

<sup>10</sup> King V. Dean of State Asaph (1784) 3TR 428 See also Bennett Coleman Comp V. Union of India AIR 1973 SC 106.

<sup>11</sup> AIR 1995 SC 264 See also Khuswant Singh V. Maneka Gandhi AIR 2002 New Delhi 58.

<sup>12</sup> S. Sudhir V. Union of India, AIR 2015 Ker.49(FB)

<sup>13</sup> See also, Sahara India V. S.E.B.I. AIR 2012 SC 3829

<sup>14</sup> AIR 1950 SC 124

of ideas and that the freedom ensured by the freedom of circulation. The court held that liberty of circulation was as essential to the freedom as the 'liberty of publication'. In this way, the learned judge clarified that freedom of expression included that freedom of propagation of ideas, their publication and circulation. In **Brij Bhushan V State of Delhi**<sup>15</sup> Patanjali Sastri, J. of supreme court (as he then was) had lost no time in declaring that the freedom of press was an 'essential part' of the right to freedom of speech and expression as declared under Article 19(1)(a) of the constitution.

In **Indian Express Newspaper V. Union of India**<sup>16</sup>, Mr. Justice Bhagwati of supreme court, (as he then was) had observed that freedom of speech and expression included within its scope, the 'freedom of press'. In **Bennet Coleman and Co. V. Union of India**<sup>17</sup>, Mr. Justice A. N. Ray of the Supreme Court has (as he then was) had observed that it was the 'settled view' of the supreme court the freedom of speech and expression included that freedom of press/media. In the case of **Express Newspaper Pvt. Ltd. V. Union of India**<sup>18</sup> Mr. Justice A. P. Sen of the supreme court had observed that the freedom was firmly established by a series of decisions of the supreme court. He very aptly described that it was 'a rule written into the constitution' that freedom of the press is comprehended within the right of freedom of speech and expression guaranteed under Art. 19(1)(a) of the constitution. In another case<sup>19</sup>, the supreme court declared that though the Indian constitution does not use the expression freedom of press in Article 19 yet it was included 'as one of the guarantees' in Art. 19(1)(a) of the constitution. In **R. Rajgopal V. State of Tamil Nadu**<sup>20</sup> Mr. Justice B. P. Jeevan Reddy of the supreme court (as he then was) observed that the freedom of press flows from the freedom of speech and expression guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) of the constitution. Later on in **Re Harijai Singh**<sup>21</sup>, Honourable Mr. Justice Faizan Uddin of the supreme court observed that the freedom of media was a part of the speech and expression declared under Article 19(1)(a) of the constitution and thus, the freedom of Media was included in the freedom of 'expression'.

The right to information has been recognised as a fundamental human right, intimately linked to respect for the inherent dignity of all human beings. The right to information is also a crucial underpinning of participatory democracy. Article 19 has described information as the oxygen of democracy for without information citizen cannot possibly make informed electoral choices

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<sup>15</sup> AIR 1950 SC 129

<sup>16</sup> AIR 1985 SC 614

<sup>17</sup> AIR 1973 SC 106

<sup>18</sup> AIR 1986 SC 872

<sup>19</sup> Reliance petrochemicals Ltd. V. Proprietors, Indian Express Newspaper Bombay Pvt. Ltd. AIR 1989 SC 190

<sup>20</sup> AIR 1995 SC 264

<sup>21</sup> AIR 1997 SC 73

or participate in decision making process. Hence due process of information leads to transparency. Transparency in administration is a sure technique to minimize the abuse and misuse of administrative discretion. A democratic society requires an informed, intelligent electorate, and the intelligence of the electorate varies as the quantity and quality of its information varies. Right to know has been given status of fundamental right by the highest court of land in **S.P. Gupta V. Union of India**<sup>22</sup>. (Judge Transfer Case) the Apex Court held that the right to know is implicit in the right of the free speech and expression guaranteed under our constitution in Article 19(1)(a). Right to know is also implicit in Art. 19(1)(a) as natural concomitant to free press/media which right is deducible from fundamental right of freedom of speech and expression. The Supreme Court has reaffirmed this legal position in its subsequent decisions in **Reliance petrochemical Ltd. V. Indian Express**<sup>23</sup> and **Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Vs. Cricket Association, Bengal**.<sup>24</sup> In Reliance Petro's case, the supreme court has observed that the right to know has reached new dimensions and urgency and is basic right which citizens of a free country aspire in the broaden horizons of the right to live in this age on our land under Art. 21 of the constitution. The people at large have a right to know in order to be able to take part in a participating development in the industrial life. In Secretary, MIB's case, the Apex Court has given a very broad definition to the right to receive and disseminate information through any media including air waves and electronic media. Right to information is inherent in right to live as enshrined in Art. 21 and freedom of speech and expression as guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) of our constitution. Right to information thus emants from the fundamental right to life and fundamental freedom of speech and expression, the supreme court further observed in para 82 as follows:-

“True democracy cannot exist unless all citizen have to participate in the affairs of the polity of the country. The right to participate in the affairs of the country is meaningless the citizens are well informed on all sides of the issues, in respect of which they are called upon to express their views. One sided information, disinformation, misinformation and no information all equally created in uniformed citizenry which makes democracy a fare when medium of information is monopolized either by partisan central authority or by private individuals or oligarchic organisation.

In **Prabhu Dutt V. Union of India**<sup>25</sup>, the supreme court held that the right to know news and information regarding administration of the govt. is included in the freedom of press but this

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<sup>22</sup> AIR 1982 SC 149

<sup>23</sup> AIR 1989 SC 190

<sup>24</sup> AIR 1995 SC 1236

<sup>25</sup> AIR 1982 SC 6, See also Sheela Barse V. State of Maharashtra (1997) 4 SCC 373.

right is not absolute and restriction can be imposed on it in the interest of society and the individuals from which the press obtains the information. They can obtain information from an individual when he voluntarily agrees to give such information. In the instant case the court directed the superintendent of the Tihar Jail to permit the chief reporter of Hindustan Times Newspaper interview, Ranga and Billa, the two death sentence convicts, under Article 19(1)(a) as they were willing to be interviewed. The jail authorities had refused the permission to the newspaper representative to interview the convicts.

### **III. FREEDOM OF MEDIA AND RIGHT TO PRIVACY**

The Right to privacy and freedom of Media are in some way different to each other, whereas right to privacy under Article 21 of the constitution, declares it to be known subject to expose domestic broils their personal relationship between husband and wife privilege communication between husband and wife a not subject to exposure without the permission of both. On the other hand freedom of media declares that no restriction can be imposed on it. Here is the limitation regarding the freedom of the press, but it does not mean that in the name of the freedom of media, the right to privacy should be violated. Further in a series of case it has been held by supreme court that the right of privacy is not subject to the disclosure, further this right is protected under Article 21 of the constitution.

Popularly known as **Auto Shanker case**<sup>26</sup> the supreme court has expressly held that the 'Right to privacy' or the right to be let alone is guaranteed by Article 21 of the constitution. A citizen has a right to safeguard the privacy of his own, his family, marriage, procreation, motherhood, child bearing and education among other matters. None can publish anything concerning the above matters without his consent whether truthful or otherwise and whether laudatory or critical. If he does so, he would be violating the right of the person concerned and would be liable in an action for damage. However, position may be differed if he voluntarily puts in the controversy or voluntarily invites or raises a controversy. This rule is subject to an exception that if any publication of such matters are based on public record including court record it will be unobjectionable. If a matter becomes a matter of public record the right to privacy no longer exists and it becomes a legitimate subject for comment by press and media among other, again, an exception must be carved out of this rules in the interests of decency under Article 19(2) in the following cases, viz. a female who is the victim of a sexual assault, kidnapping abduction or a like offence should not further be subjected to the indignity of her name and the incident published in press or media.

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<sup>26</sup> R. Rajgopal V. State of Tamil Nadu, AIR 1995 SC 264.



The second exception is that the right to privacy or the remedy of action for damage, is simply not available to public officials as long as the criticism concerns the discharge of their public duties, not even when the publication is based on untrue facts and statements unless the official can establish that the statement had been made with reckless disregard of truth. All that the alleged contemnor needs to do is to prove that he has written after reasonable verification of facts.

The Right of the freedom of media factually not complementary to the right to privacy. The series of cases so far as decided by the supreme court exhibits that in certain circumstances in case of public interest the right to privacy may be subject to the exposure of public at large. Hence, it cannot be illustrated that the right to privacy cannot exist without freedom of media, therefore the separate Article has been created under which the freedom of media has been maintained whereas right to privacy is a subject to Article 21 of the constitution constructively Article 19 cannot complete Art. 21 of constitution because it is itself a complete Article covering the distinct type of liberty which is not covered under Article 19 of the constitution.

#### **IV. ROLE OF MEDIA IN SOCIETY**

The media is a fundamental institution of a society. It plays a very vital role in creating, shaping and reflecting the public opinion in a democracy. It is one of the most important aspects for nourishment of fundamental rights of an individual's. Media is called fourth pillar of democracy. In the democratic governance system media works like a bridge between public and govt. Media is bringing dynamic changes in society through its communications. The contribution of the media cannot be forgotten in the field of people's living standard i.e. eating habits, education, employment, working pattern, business management and style of living. Media make community aware through its information and communications, it acts like a watchfull dog in the society in this respect.

Media has a reach in all parts of society weather it is print media, news papers, magazines or broadcasting media, radio, doordarshan, computer, social media i.e. facebook, whatsapp, twitter, Email, Youtube, and many other apps, are directly connected with society, it has become an integral part of community. Its venerability in the society and acceptance and requirement by the society is infact an important aspect. The country in which the media communications would be as much strong, free and fare in that country the transparency between public and govt. will also be stronger. The media is an important accountability mechanism. It raises important issues, corruption for example, might otherwise never be publicly debated or addressed. The Media also has an important role in stimulating

governments to take action on social policy although stories about migrants or refugees might reinforce prejudice in some quarters, they also expose problems that need to be addressed, for example poor living conditions or lack of access to service, the citizenship status of migrants the response of local communities to their settlement and so on. 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 common man miserable, taxpayer's money is siphoned out for the personal gain of the influential and ordinary people are a most spectator media has a greater responsibility.<sup>27</sup>

Media has disclosed the scams of politician and bureaucrats through media's, investigative journalism i.e. 'sting operation'. Police Gundagardi, corruption and forgery, horse trading of M.Ps, Bribe for asking the question in parliament, tandoor case, boforce commissioning, identifying the person indulged in terrorist, scams oil for grains, 2G spectrum scams, J.K. Jain scams of 65 crores rupees, shares scam of 500 crores in the duration of PM Sh. P.V. Narsimha Rao, the main accused was the Harshad Mehta, sugar scam 1994-95, Kalpnath, Doorsanchar tender scam 1995 main accused minister of state for communication Sukhram, animal rearing fodder scam 1988-1995, Lalu Prasad Yadav and 129 bureaucrats 600 crore rupees, muster roll scam of M.P. 15 Crore rupees, Urea scam 133 crore rupees. JMM (Jharkhand Mukti Morcha) PM's bribe scam 3 crore rupees, Lakhu Bhari Pathak forgery case, drug scam of Bihar 1000 crores, residence scam 1995 by Sheela Kaul, Forest scam of 400 crores rupees related state of Bihar, Damar Koltar Scam of Bihar, Saint Kits case is related to former PM Vishwanath Pratap Singh, Ajay Singh, Tantrik Chandra Swamy and then foreign minister P.V. Narmisha Rao, Boforce gun deal case, Fare Tax Case, purchase of jeep and rifle case, well oil case, Maruti Car Case, Churhat lottery case, Nagar wala, Dharam Teja case, German submarine deal case, Moondra case and recently Rafale deal controversy are such cases which have been highlighted by media from time to time.

Media and society have close relations with each other no society can be dreamed without media and neither media can exist without society, the existence of media and society depends on their relations. Media's existence in the society depends upon media's consider ability and acceptance by the society. Media has brought dynamic changes in the area of people's living

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style, eating's dressings, education-employment, business management etc. Present media network keeps direct relations with social interest and the activities taking place in the society. Media has brought social change in the society. Media has played a vital role in eradication of malt-practices from the society being adopted from the centuries. The best example of social change through referendum (public opinion) is a great social workers Raja Ram Mohan Roy and his newspapers Miratool Akber is a clear evidence of it. In our country the mall-practices like sati tradition, bigamies and a child marriage were going on since centuries, which were ended by referendum and media has played a vital role on it.

In the present era of advertising media has brought revolutionary change in society. In today's time the ways of living of the public has been changed into advertising world, whether it is T.V. or newspapers, or magazines whenever the advertisement of certain product is shown immediately it is included in the life of people. Media has actively contributed in all the fields in clouding cosmetics, eatables and all other daily consuming goods. As the fourth pillar of democracy along with judiciary, executive and legislature, media of today has an all embracing role to act against the injustice, oppression, misdeeds and partiality of our society.

From, media has remained an integral part of human civilization. From the days of Vedas and Upanishads to edicts of kings and emperors like Chandragupta, Ashoka 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 news papers like Tilak's Maratha, young India of Mahatma Gandhi, acted a platform to place the demands of common Indian and to express solitude with freedom fighters. Indian Media in post independence era has grown up phenomenally and today comprises of more than 60 thousand newspapers, thousands of television and radio channels.

Media helps in fighting against corruption among bureaucrats and politician, nepotism, cronyism of institutional machinery and carrying out relentless campaign against them, there are few examples of corruption which exposed by media through various expedition such as **Kobra.com**, operation **Chakravyuh** and **Duryodhan**, **Tehalka Dot Com**, **Walker Commission Web**, and many more which brought the Evil deeds of politician and bureaucrats in front to the public. Media goes deep into the root of main crimes in the society and present it in front of the people. For example, Haqiqat, Dastane Jurm, Vardat, Aankhondekhi, Teesari Aankh, Jurm, Perdafash, Tehqiqat, Crime Petrol etc. being telecasted on T.V. are its well known. Besides this, in present time lot of change has been noticed in people's way of living whether it is about eating habits or living style fashion, education or employment, the rapid changes occurred due to media only. From the traditional food, today's human being is

attracted towards junk food like pizza, burger, chowmin, sandwich etc. like spicy and tasty food, which has been introduced by media. People have included dieting and yoga to their life style for maintaining their physical beauty which is also presented by media. Due to development of mediums of communication entire human society is aware of the activities of any specific place.

Media tells us about spirituality and the things related to spirituality. Different TV Channels like, Sanskar, Jagran, Aasthaa, Satsang, Janjagran and some regional channels are getting people introduced to spirituality. Besides this, in different newspapers the articles of different religious Gurus, Mahants and Scholars are introducing about religion to the readers, Ayurveda and Yoga has become the part of our culture and lifeline due to media. What are our values and ideologies? Perhaps everybody would show his inability to answer of this question, but media is time to time making society aware of Indian traditional values. Although Media does not take direct interest in it, but some time media shows its interest in Indian Values. Educational T.V. (E.T.V.) Channels, UGC Channels, Gyan darshan and IGNOU channels through EDUSAT and other channels of regional languages are its live examples.<sup>28</sup>

In revolutionary era at present time of information and media networking, the Muslims families are leaving their tradition costumes like Nikah nama, Madarsa conflicts and making their separate identity by adopting modern life style. Family planning measures also have proved their utility in muslim community. The techniques related to family planning were prohibited in muslim religion, but today in the era of media communication resources and advertisement, people are taking interest in it.

In communicating and extending of media the education also has become an easy source for common people, in this regard media plays a vital role. There are so many programmes being telecasted on T.V. are related to distance education. UGC and IGNOU channels programmes and other regional languages channels, are telecasting online education, materials, lesson plans courses. Since the introduction of television in our country in late 70's visual media becomes a very potential tool in informing the current status news to the society, entertaining the people and shaping up to public opinion. 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 adversified media industry in India.

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<sup>28</sup> Out look April 2017 (Nai Pehchan Banata Samaj)

## V. SOCIAL MEDIA AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN SOCIETY

In today's society the use of social media has become a necessary daily activity. Social Media is typically used for social interaction and access to news and information and decision making. It is a valuable communication tool with others locally and worldwide, as well as to share, create and spread information.

Social media is the collective of online communications channels dedicated to community based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaborations, websites and applications dedicated to forums, micro blogging, social networking, social book marking, social curation, and wikis are among the different types of social media.

The recent developments in wireless technologies have introduced new means and directions of communication, million of people all over the world are now engaged in political, economic, cultural and education discourses due to the vast expansion of the world wide web. Indeed, social media has transformed people's lifestyles and has introduced a new pattern of social interaction.<sup>29</sup> Social media means websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.<sup>30</sup> The following are some examples of social media:

**Google+:** (pronounced google plus) was google's social networking project, designed to replicate the way people interact offline more closely than in the case in other social networking services. This website is no longer offered to new users, the network was launched on June 28, 2011, in an attempt to challenge other social networks, linking other Google products like Google drive, Blogger and Youtube.

**Facebook:** The Facebook is a popular free social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send message and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues. Nowadays, facebook has become one of the largest networks in the world by means of which people can share and exchange views, images and photos. According an estimate, more than 65% of internet users are engaged on Facebook.

**Twitter:** Twitter is a free micro blogging service that allows registered members to broadcast short posts called tweets. Twitter members can be broadcast tweets and follow other user's tweets by using multiple platforms and devices. Unregistered users can only read the post, the twitter is an American micro blogging social networking service. As of the first quarter of 2019,

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<sup>29</sup> ivypanda.com: The role of social media in modern society essay.

<sup>30</sup> Jyoti Suraj Harchekar: Impact of social media on society IJERT Vol. 6 Issue 07 July 2017

twitter averaged 331 million monthly users.

**Instagram:** Commonly abbreviated to IG or Insta is an American Photo and Video sharing social networking service owned by Facebook, created by **Kevin Systorm** and **Mike Krieger** and originally launched on IOS in October 2010. The android version was released in April 2012, followed by a feature – limited desktop interface in November 2012, a fire OS app in June 2014 and an app for Window 10 in October 2016. The app allows users to upload media that can be edited with filters and organized by ‘hash tag’ and geographical tagging, posts can be shared publicly or with pre-approved followers. Users can browse other users content by tags and locations and view trending content, users can like photos and follow other users to add their content to a feed, a function that seems to be discontinued as of Sept. 2020. As of January 2021, the most followed person is footballer **Cristiano Ronaldo** with over 253 million followers as of January 14, 2019, the most-liked photo on Instagram is a ‘picture of an egg, posted by the account **@world\_record\_egg**, created with the sole purpose of surpassing the previous record of 18 million likes on a Kilie Jenner post. The picture currently has over 54 million likes.<sup>31</sup> Instagram became the 4<sup>th</sup> most downloaded mobile app of the 2010’s.<sup>32</sup>

**Whatsapp:** Whatsapp messenger or simply Whatsapp is an American freeware, cross platform centralized messaging and Voice-Over-IP (VOIP) service owned by face book Inc. This allows users to send text messages and voice messages, make voice and video calls, and other content.<sup>33</sup> Whatsapp’s client application runs on mobile devices but it also accessible from desktop computers, as long as user’s mobile device remains connected to the internet while they use the desktop app. The client application was created by Whatsapp Inc. of mountain view, California, which was acquired by Facebook in February 2014 for approximately US\$ 19.3 billion. It become the World’s most popular messaging application by 2015<sup>34</sup> and has over 2.5 billion users worldwide as of February 2020. It has become the primary means of electronic communication in multiple countries and locations, including latin American, the Indian subcontinent and large parts of Europe and Africa.<sup>35</sup>

**Wikipedia:** Wikipedia is a free internet based encyclopedia, started in 2001, that operates under an open source management style. Wikipedia uses a colloborative software known as wiki that facilitates the creation and development of articles. Wikipedia is a free open content

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<sup>31</sup> An Egg, Just a Regular Egg, is instagram’s most liked post ever (The New York Times Retrived Jan 14, 2019)

<sup>32</sup> Miller, Chance (Dec. 17, 2019) These were the most downloaded and app and games of the Decade.

<sup>33</sup> Whatsapp voice calling (Apirl, 4, 2015 Archieved) from the original on October 19, 2017. Retrieved Sept. 18, 2017.

<sup>34</sup> Leo Sun (Sept. 11, 2015) Facebook Inc’s Whatsapp Hits 905 Million users.

<sup>35</sup> Whatsapp – wikipedia en.m.wikipedia.org

online encyclopedia created through the collaborative effort of a community of users known as wikipedians.<sup>36</sup> Anyone registered on the site can create an article for publication, registration is not required to edit articles. As a result, wikipedia can function as a great starting point for research, providing users with general information that can be followed up with more legitimate and reliable sources outside of the site. For instance, a wikipedia article may introduce a reader to particular concept or idea, leading to further exploration of the finer details and the veracity of the claims made.

**LinkedIn:** is an American business and employment oriented online service that operates via websites and mobile apps. launched on May 5, 2003. This platform is mainly used for professional networking and allows job seekers to post their CVs and employers to post jobs. As of 2015, most of the company's revenue came from selling access to information about its members to recruiters and sales professionals.<sup>37</sup> Since December 2016, it has been a wholly owned subsidiary of microsoft. As of December 2020, LinkedIn had 761 million registered members from 150 countries. According to an estimate base on worldwide figures, 122 million users got job interviews via LinkedIn and 35 million were hired by a LinkedIn online connection. LinkedIn can help small business connect with customers.

**Youtube:** Youtube is an American online video sharing platform headquartered in San Bruno, California. The service, created in Feb. 2005 by three former paypal employee **Chad Hurley**, **Steve chen** and **Jawed Karim** was bought by Google in November 2006 for US\$ 1.65 billion and now operates as one of the company's subsidiaries. Youtube is the second most-visited website after Google search, according to Alexa Internet Rankings.<sup>38</sup> There are four products of Youtube namely Youtube premium, Youtube Music, Youtube TV and Youtube kids. Youtube allows users to upload, view, rate, share and to playlists, report, comment on videos, and subscribe to other users. Most content is generated and uploaded by individuals, but media corporations including CBS, the BCC, Vevo and Hulu offer some of their material via Youtube as part of the Youtube partnership program. Unregistered users can watch but not upload videos on the site while registered users can upload an unlimited number of videos and add comments. Age-restricted videos are available only to registered users affirming themselves to be at least 18 years old.

**Pinterest:** This is an American Image sharing and social media service designed to enable

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<sup>36</sup> Jimmy wales and Larry Sanger co-founded wikipedia as an offshoot of an earlier encyclopedia project, Nupedia, in January 2001.

<sup>37</sup> Lemann, Nicholas (October 12, 2015) Reid Hoffman's Big Dreams for linkdin. The New Yorker.

<sup>38</sup> The top 500 sites on the web Alexa Internet

saving and discovery of information (specifically ideas) on the internet using images and on a smaller scale animated GIFs and videos, in the form of Pinboards.<sup>39</sup> The site was created by **Ben Silbermann, Paul Sciarra and Evan Sharp** and had over million monthly active users as of August 2020. It is operated by Pinterest, Inc. based in San Francisco. The platform has drawn business, especially retailers, to create pages aimed at promoting their companies online as a virtual storefront.

In 2013, Pinterest introduced a new tool called '**rich pins**', to enhance the customer experience when browsing through pins made by companies. Business page can include various data, topics and information such prices of products, ratings of movies or ingredients for recipes.<sup>40</sup>

The creators behind pinterest summarized the service as a 'catalogue of ideas' that inspire users to 'go out and do that thing' although that it is not an image based social network. It also has a very large fashion profile. In later years Pinterest has also been described as a visual search engine. In March 2019, Pinterest added product catalogues and personalized shopping recommendation with the more from (brand) option, showcasing a range of product pins from the same business. In February 2013 Reuters and comscore stated that Pinterest had 48.7 million users globally. In 2020 there were over 335 million monthly active users with 8 million with in the Us.

**Reddit:** Reddit is a social news website and forum where stories are socially curated and promoted by site members. The site is composed of hundreds of sub-communities, known as 'subreddits'. Each subreddit has a specific topic such as technology, politics or music. Reddits site members also known as, redditors. Submit content which is then voted upon by other members. The goal is to send well-regarded stories to the top of the site's main thread page.

Social media plays a very important role in today's life society, it is web-based online that enable people discover and learn new information, share ideas, interact with new people and organisations. A studies have shown that quite a good number of people spent 30% of their time on social networking platforms, this goes further to show how relevant and popular social media platform have become in recent times. Nowadays more than 86% of all business have a dedicated social media platform as part of their marketing strategy. Nearly 58% of business that have used social media marketing for over 3 years and have reported an increase in sales during this period. Almost 60% of marketers are devoting the equivalent of a full work day to

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<sup>39</sup> New Pinterest features encourage brands and creators to upload more videos. Tech. Crunch, Retrieved 3 August 2019.

<sup>40</sup> Pinterest adds more data to your boards with rich pins Engadget.com



social media marketing for development and maintenance.<sup>41</sup> Facebook and Twitter have become essential tools for initiating environmental activities and spreading news and services that can reach thousands of potential activists. As statistics shows, Facebook dominates in Google in terms of weekly traffic in the United States, which proves the fast-growing tendencies in using the social network for other purpose than communication and social interaction. Social media has quickly entered the educational field, it has also introduced online learning, which is becoming more popular among international students all over the world. Indeed, facebook has managed to reach more than 200 million users in less than a year. Therefore, more and more students share their opinions and create online communities to advance their learning and improve performance. The possibility to discuss educational challenges is a beneficial perspective for students. In addition, the research studies conducted by the U.S. Department of Education have discovered that online students outperformed than those who are engaged in a traditional learning scheme. Social Media has become an integral part of business and marketing activities. Because every credible business premises on ethical and moral values dictated by society, adoption of social networking sites is essential for promoting products and services. Infact social media allows business to gain immediate feedback about their products. Moreover, it also creates opportunities for predicting the needs and demands of consumers, virtual space, therefore, has become one more source by means of which people can introduce their educational and business activities. Finally, online networks become powerful tools for advertising produce and services as well as for attracting new marketing targets. Overall social media can be considered as a foundational shift in daily activities and lifestyles. It is also a step up toward a new communication environment.

## **VI. A CRITICAL EVALUATION AND SUGGESTIONS**

Social media has reached every facet of human activities and become integral part of society. Social Media is playing its important role in the society. Social media has positive impacts as well as some negative consequences in society. The first and foremost drawback of social media is disseminated to fake news. The cry of ‘fakenews’ has become common place and consumer confidence in even traditional media outlets has been significantly eroded. Unfortunately, false, misleading or confusing online content are being harmful to the society. Cyber bullying is becoming a great concern among our teenagers, cyber bullying is a significant stressor in a young person’s life. In fact, research shows that more than 36% of kids, who are target of cyber bullying report experiencing at least one symptom of stress.<sup>42</sup> Research has

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<sup>41</sup> Steemint.com, Social Media in todays world @king3071 57 in #life.

<sup>42</sup> Nixon, C. L., Current perspectives: the impact of cyber bullying on adolescent health

consistently supported the notion that increasing levels of cyber bullying lead to higher levels of depression, isolation, anger, powerlessness, anxiety, feeling hopeless, low self-esteem, self-harm, suicidal thoughts, physical effects such as gastro intestinal issues, disordered eating, sleep disturbances, academic issues etc. In addition to feeling distressed, they also may feel embarrassed, hurt and even fear for their safety. They may be even blame themselves for the cyber bullying. Social Media websites including E-mail, skype calls, whatsapp, facebook and so much more are saving and selling personal data of public (users). You can receive unknown e-mail or message, while anybody can access on your e-system without knowing you. There is no world wide strong legislation to protect personal data on cyber space. It is very clear that privacy is being naked and invaded or intrusion by social media. Due to the publicity and dissemination of social media the cyber crimes has become a great concern of the society. The major cyber crimes like tempering with computer source documents, hacking, publishing on information, which is obscene in electronic form, child pornography, accessing protected system, breach of confidentiality and privacy, cyber stalking, cyber squatting, data diddling, cyber defamation, Trojan attack, forgery, financial crimes, virus/worm attack, e-mail spoofing, e-mail bombing, web jacking etc. has become serious issues in society, which is the products of social media.

Prank videography has become a prime fashion among youth and some teenagers in present scenario of social media, this videography is a fixed or pre-planned videography among its characters which is confusing to the people. Besides this prank videography is promoting obscenity, nudity and vulgarity in society which is unbearable for a civilized society. The distorted look of fashion and food is a result of social media. To some extent social media can be blamed for family fragmentation, degradation of moral values and religious intolerance or insanity which is works to break the unity and integrity of India. Comment on particular religion has become a habit of some people which is increasing day by day in social media. showing the vulgarity more than imagination, making sensation of fake and baseless news, giving unwanted importance to the models, showing the story of rape or molestation of women, of sexual assault on children, personal character and privacy of women, the names, photographs of the victims or other particulars related to their identity, has become a daily habit of media, hence some following suggestions may be helpful to prevent the misuse of social media.

- (1) Children should be prevented from accessing obscene sites by the parents to protect them spoiling their mind and career.
- (2) While chatting on the net one should avoid sending photographs to strangers along with personal data as it can be misused.

- (3) Nobody should disclose his/her own personal information to any other and especially to strangers.
- (4) A credit card number should never be sent to an unsecured site to prevent fraud or cheating.
- (5) Circulation of inaccurate, baseless, graceless, misleading or distorted material on social sites should be a punishable offence.
- (6) Comment on caste, religion or community, disclosure on social sites should be generally avoided.
- (7) Paramount interests of state, society and rights of individuals should not to be jeopardized.
- (8) Media or Social Media should not show or write anything that would provoke or incite personal violence or injuring on the right to privacy.
- (9) Violation of right o privacy should be made an offence punishable under the Indian Penal Code.
- (10) Horrible Scenes and killing should not be a Tamasha.

Besides this a strong legislation is required, by which a reasonable restriction could be imposed on social media. Apart from this social awareness programmes related to social media and its positive as well as negative impact on society, should be organized by NGO's, Govt. and academic institutions from time to time. The govt. should constitute an empowered committee to monitor or watch on social media, which will give it report to the govt. from time to time.

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