

ROLES OF SOCIAL MEDIA TO EMPOWER RURAL INDIA

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Abstract: According to this study, India's rural development has a direct link to the country's use of social media. Almost every component of rural development in India has been influenced by the media, which is as diverse as the nation itself. The article expands the notion of social media networks to include other media networks, such as AIR, news channels, and non-profit organisations, in addition to social networking sites and microblogs. There has been a great deal of discussion on the differences between contemporary media and older forms of media. An interview-based approach is used to gather data from a variety of experts in various domains. Analysis was done on a variety of success stories that had been gathered. The purpose of this study is to examine the ways in which rural people's lives have been impacted by social media, as well as the ways in which the media has fallen short. According to the findings of this study, social media networks in rural regions of the nation must ramp up their efforts if India is to realise its Vision 2020 goals, since India cannot shine without the help of its villages.

Keywords: Rural development, Modern media, Social media networks, India vision 2020, Traditional media.

Introduction:

The Indian society is a multi-cultural, multi-tribe and multi-caste, multi-lingual, and multi-diverse society. From infrastructures to public health care, from communications to IT, and much more, India has made great strides since it became an independent nation in 1947 [1]. This article focuses on social media networks and rural India's growth, which also investigates why rural India has remained mostly untapped by social media even 65 years after India's independence.

Folk media has an important function and position in people's lives at the rural level. Rural folks still don't seem to understand modern media. Folk music, folk dance, folk theatre, and other folk performing arts are the most common forms of folk media. At the International Planned Parenthood Federation and UNESCO's London meetings on integrated use of the folk and mass media in family planning communication programmes in 1972, the first significant international recognition of traditional media was in developing countries' communication and development strategies [2]. Every town has its own own style of music, theatre, or dance. People's needs and society's changing traditions are addressed through the folk arts, which are rooted in local culture. The traditional folk forms of India may be used to communicate effectively for social development. When it comes to conveying a message, Indian traditional performing art has shown itself time and time again. In every state of India, there are instances of how traditional dances, music, and theatre are used to raise awareness. According to the findings of several scholars, rural media play an important role in the communication of development. Folk media has traditionally been used for entertainment, social communication, and persuasion. There has been an international commission created by UNESCO to explore among other things, the rising relevance of communications as a social phenomena as well as the interest that has been exhibited in its growth. Traditional media, on the other hand, are more in touch with people's hearts and brains, therefore they have a more personal and intimate appeal than mass media, which is why rural people find mainstream media glitzy, impersonal, and unreal. Folk media may bridge cultural divides and appeal to the hearts and minds of rural dwellers regardless of their native tongue. Traditional and modern media work well together in today's world. Because of this, we will be able to preserve the customs and cultures of many tribes and keep a very strong communication channel open with rural people by preserving traditional media.

The path to progress is not a straight one, but a multifaceted one. Even rural India is a nebulous concept. The Indian government has taken a number of steps to improve the lives of its citizens, as well as several United Nations projects. There are also private social networks such as NGOs and news channels and numerous online sites that are taking the lead. In comparison to Europe's economic growth, Asia and Africa's has been less orderly, as shown in several situations. That's why social media is crucial when rural communities in India still confront difficulties like sanitation and public health care. To secure a nation's future growth and prosperity, a wide range of social and infrastructure issues must be addressed concurrently. To paraphrase what is written in the report, rural people's lives have been impacted in every way possible by the rise of social media.

Various social media networks have been defined by various persons over the years. Most people think of social media networks as a generic term for social networking sites, micro-blogging platforms, and other online forums. According to this report, social media networks have a far broader scope than previously thought. Every media outlet that engages with the public, whether it's a radio station, a news channel, an NGO, or any other type of organisation, has a social obligation. This is a huge duty in nature since it has a huge impact on the evolution of society. As a result, the media can no longer escape its social role, leading to the designation of all major media outlets as "social media networks."

Methodology:

Several case studies have been used to show how rural people's lives are affected by the media in a variety of ways. There were several sources of data, including journals, research papers, and talks with experts in media, social work, and more. The author's critical examination of the social media networks' performance in rural India has been based on a thorough examination of the numerous case studies. As stated in the introduction, the study relied on a variety of case studies and success stories to back up the assertions made.

Findings and Results:

Following the gathering of data, the following case studies are related to this paper's theme. Case studies show how social media has had a significant impact on rural development in a number of different ways.

- **Outstanding contribution to rural agriculture by All India Radio:**

Since the country's independence, All India Radio has been involved in rural development. The requirements of rural residents are well-served by a wide variety of programming. For farmers, "Kisan Vani" has shown to be the most effective, providing them with information on market prices and other agricultural approaches. Other than that, AIR conducts programmes for rural women's empowerment that teach them about family planning, dowry, sexual assault, and other topics. AIR (also called as Aakashvani) collaborates with government agencies responsible for agricultural and rural development [3]. Several additional topics are tackled on the AIR programmes, including gender issues, the necessity of adequate education, and the abuse of children. All India Radio has acted as an ocean of information for rural Indians, and this is not exaggeration.

- **It's a benefit to rural farmers: Facebook**

Many Indian villages lack access to reliable power, and internet access is still a pipe dream for most, yet there have been instances when Facebook has made a positive impact on rural people's daily life [9]. Several farmers in Maharashtra's Sangli area were spared from starvation because of it, according to an Economic Times storey of February 10, 2012. Turmeric prices in the local market fell dramatically due to an abundance of the spice. On Facebook, a local farmer connected with other turmeric producers around the country to discuss the issue and talk prices. When the local auction came around they decided to skip it. More than 250,000 turmeric growers in Sangli were informed of the boycott through social media. Prices more than doubled as a result of the boycott. It was customary for village leaders to meet beneath a tree to discuss important problems before making a final decision. As a result, Facebook and Twitter are a continuation of this idea." Farmers frequently cite the benefits of social media.

- **Shivnagar is a fantastic illustration of how social media can have a profound impact:**

Village Shivnagar is located in the north of the country. Snapdeal.com Nagar has just changed its name. There was a compelling rationale for this. By donating money to a worthy organisation, the discount website exhibited a nice act of social good. Villagers had to trek as far as two kilometres to get clean and fresh water in the little community, which had no water supply. More than 15 hand pumps were installed, and thousands of lives were saved thanks to a \$5,000 donation from the CEO's pocket. Just like a basic deal and discount site helped bring water to the doorsteps of North Indian peasants, Social Media has more potential for the broader society; all that is necessary is someone who can behave like God.

- **NDTV-Toyota Greenathon**

It was launched in April 2008 by NDTV-Toyota Greenathon, a national campaign to raise environmental awareness. With the help of the GREENATHON, the TERI Foundation can raise money to help provide clean, renewable energy to underserved communities across the world. In the first year, they gathered enough money to light up 56 villages, and in the second year, they raised enough money to light up 115 communities. Celebs including Priyanka Chopra, Shahrukh Khan, and Katrina Kaif have lent their support to the effort in a number of ways.

Discussion:

The imbalance in the distribution of resources between rural and urban India is a major cause of poverty in rural India. The use of social media networks may pioneer rural development. It's nearly impossible to look at it as a whole. We'll look at how social media may help rural communities grow throughout the next sections.

- **Agriculture:**

There are roughly 750 million people living in 637,000 villages in rural India, which might represent a huge market for any product or service. Agriculture is the primary source of income for the vast majority of rural residents. So it's not incorrect to claim that India is still mostly a farming nation. Farmers plant a broad variety of crops in villages because of the variety of topographical circumstances. Farmers who are illiterate confront a wide range of difficulties, including a lack of knowledge about herbicides, insecticides, and new techniques of farming. Mass media has a major role in the success of agricultural development projects in underdeveloped nations. Many Indian social media platforms, including All India Radio (AIR), which has been dedicated to rural audiences for more than 50 years, are providing farmers with information about farming and animal husbandry. Newspapers and agricultural magazines are two of the most frequent forms of mass media. Among farmers who are literate, they play an important role in the exchange of agricultural information. There are new opportunities and possibilities for using print media as a mass communication tool as the country's literacy rate rises. A new discipline in India, agriculture journalism, is gaining traction as the country's primary source of food is becoming more educated.

For example, Indian media has been mostly indifferent to the challenges and reality faced by Indian farmers. 24-hour national news channels have mostly overlooked farmers' anguish; yet, coverage of rural indebtedness and Government policy has been largely disregarded by national newspapers, according to a media lab research by the Center for Media Studies. Despite the fact that agriculture accounts for 14.2 percent of India's GDP at constant 2004-2005 prices during 2010-2011, farmers and agriculture-related news make up less than one percent of the total news items on all news channels. Because of this, there are still many ways in which social media may help boost Indian agriculture.

- **Public Health Care:**

People in rural regions should be able to enjoy a better quality of life as a result of the total development of rural areas, including economic, political, and cultural aspects [7]. The use of social media networks has greatly improved rural people's health and awareness. Many campaigns have been undertaken by the Rural Health Mission of the National Rural Health Mission. Ads from the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) stress the significance of breastfeeding, anganwadi programmes, contraception use, HIV AIDS, and the proper age at which to marry. In addition to being in Hindi and English, these advertising are interactive and in local dialects, making them more appealing to the rural population. When it comes to the quality of school lunches, the media has played a role as a whistle-blower.

One of the most significant outcomes of social media in this field is the eradication of polio. The India National Polio Plus Society (INPPS) of Rotary International has successfully executed a number of measures.

"Do boond zindagi ki" and "bollywood celebs urging to everyone to donate polio drops to their children" are some of the key warriors of this campaign's TV and radio advertising. On the All India Radio, a polio message from Muslim clerics and academics was broadcast and pieces in national media, particularly in the state of Uttar Pradesh (Uttar Pradesh). It was INPPS's goal to get prominent Islamic religious leaders and experts in their communities to speak out against the polio epidemic, and they did so by requesting that the Ulemas (clerics) of their respective regions help the campaign by providing education about polio and setting up booths at Madarsa camps during NID/SNID. U.P. has celebrated its first polio-free year in 2012 thanks to the publications based on these interviews.

In rural areas, social media may play a crucial role in raising awareness about topics such as cleanliness, the advantages of using LPG over cow dung cakes, and drug eradication. Rural India's health is improving, but there is still a long way to go.

- **Politics:**

The term "development" encompasses more than just economic growth and technological advances. Liberties of expression and knowledge of social realities are essential for a society's progress if individuals are to flourish. Civil society tightly guards media rights, and social media networks have a duty to function as catalysts for the social, political, and economic growth of the society they are embedded in. The media has significantly impacted village politics, namely on Panchayats, which are local elected bodies. Panchayats are sometimes referred to as the "backbone" of Indian politics. Often, prominent political parties back candidates running for Panchayat elections, resulting in a political commotion among the less aware rural populace. Therefore, a third party is required to prevent the political parties and their leaders from strangling a democratic process. The media may play a role as a mediator in the Panchayat process, fending off the bad intents of political parties while also actively mobilising the grassroots. However, the media has failed to play the necessary role in significantly influencing rural politics. In the mainstream media, the workings of Panchayats or Panchayat elections don't get much attention. When a national leader visits the village, it's the only time we hear about village politics. In 1963, Wilbur Schramm and Fred Siebert and Theodore Peterson published in the book, *Four Concepts of the Press*. The media, according to the social responsibility idea, is supposed to serve the public good. As a result, Indian social media platforms must prioritise this duty. A case study of villages in Gujarat provides a glimpse into the influence of the media in rural politics, which isn't all that reassuring. In the results section, it's already been discussed.

There has been a lot of criticism of the Khap Panchayats in Rohtak, Jhajjar, Bhiwani and Sonapat districts of Haryana on social media. Recently, these have been accused of treating individuals inhumanely, particularly in the instance of "gotra" marriages. Because the Khap Panchayats are not recognised by law, the accounts of children in Haryana who the Khap Panchayats have tortured have surfaced on social media. Many young boys and girls' lives have been spared as a result of this.

- **Internet and Telecommunication:**

In foreign policy debates, the concept that the internet and associated technologies may play a significant role in supporting development efforts has taken centre stage. When it comes to rural India, though, there is a digital barrier between the two. But despite these obstacles, there are countless examples of how the internet has transformed the lives of rural Indians [6]. A public grievances system for Indian peasants has been developed by the Ministry of Rural Development. Rural folks have benefited greatly from this programme. To think that rural communities will have better access to power, telephones, and other forms of connection if demand for these services doesn't increase is naive. It is also possible for information networks to serve as conduits for the influx of funds into rural areas through new, non-discriminatory companies [8]. In addition to infrastructural restrictions, data and telecommunications technologies can be used to compensate. A village community's poor-quality roads become less of an impediment to income and employment if online labour, commerce, or payment is made available to its residents [4]. A village community's basic infrastructure, such as roads, dispensaries, and water and sanitation systems, might be better funded if capital were more freely available in the community through networked financial systems. While half of rural India now has a cell phone, according to the latest Census statistics (Housing and House Listing Report, Census 2011), barely over a third have access to a basic toilet.

Rural ICT initiatives, on the other hand, have yet to establish themselves as a means of online commerce and a source of employment for village people. Thanks to digital social networks, India has a chance to break out of the developing-nation mould and enter the ranks of industrialised nations [5].

Conclusions:

There is little question that social media networks have had an impact on the lives of rural people, as well. Agriculturally, these have offered farmers with a wide range of options and simplified the process of selling their crops via online systems that have eliminated the need for intermediaries. Success stories in health care are numerous, too. When it comes to rural politics, social media networks haven't been able to do what they need to do. Information centres can help decrease the disparity between urban and rural areas by providing resources like uncontrolled energy supplies, subsidies in the purchase of computers, etc. available in villages. We must discover new ways of integrating human and social infrastructure building into the installation of basic data and communication infrastructure if we are to boost rural growth. If we wish to spread a message of development in rural areas, we must use folk traditions of this nation in a more organised manner. This is also true, though. Those who live in rural areas of India are the backbone of Indian society and a symbol of India as it truly is. As a result, social media networks must recognise their influence and duty in rural development for these communities. In the past, social media has been used to build nations. With its 637,000 villages, India now has the opportunity to flourish! To achieve India Vision 2020, rural development must take place first.

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