

A CASE STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON GLOBALIZATION & NATIONALISM IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA

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Abstract

Philosophers of globalization tend to presume the declining centrality of nationalism as an explanatory focus for understanding global power relations. The processes of globalization, including the formation of intra-national and international diasporas, simultaneously works to situate political power centrally and, through various counter hegemonic uprisings that also lay claim to discourses of nationalism, locally. This research paper argues that far from declining in significance, nationalism encompasses both hegemonic and counter hegemonic, mediatized processes of power struggle, processes that draw increasingly from resources that are both internal and external to geographic domains of conflict, and in a manner that re-patterns power relations at the local, national, regional and global levels. Social media has spread like bush fire in the world today as it has millions of users. The impact that social media has on people's lives has made it impossible to ignore by other higher institutions such as the corporate world, governments and other industries. It is for this reason that governments have had to join social media sites to stay a loop in activities happening with its citizens and globally. Globalization which involves interchanging of ideas and cultures has been the greatest beneficiary to increase in social media activities. This paper examines the relationship between social media, nationalism and globalization.

Keywords: Social Media, Nationalism, Globalisation

1. Introduction

Nationalism has become one of the most debated 'isms' of today. In this era of 2.0 technology, when everyone has their own public space to express views, this particular 'ism' is being extensively deliberated. It raises the issue of responsibility which goes with the freedom to air uncensored views over social media. For instance, trolls in social media on the cricket match in question covered issues from Kashmir to beef. Sensationalism and exaggeration are no more restricted to electronic news media. Emerging social media platforms have also become very adept at politicising sensitivities.

The post-modern idea of subjective truth defines nationalism as the product of interaction among social, historical and political elements. So, the perception of this 'ism' may differ from person to person and from context to context. Why then is there such a stress on

affirming our emotional bond with the motherland especially when watching a movie in a cinema hall?

Portrayal of cricket as a symbol of nationalism, especially a cricket game between India and Pakistan, is very common in Indian cinema. For example, in the movie *BajrangiBhaijaan*, cricket was depicted as a way of establishing the nationality of the little girl, Munni, from Pakistan who got lost in India. The scene where she kissed Pakistan's flag traumatised the entire family of the protagonist, played by Bollywood star Salman Khan.

The nationalistic overtones the game has taken has even made people question Indian tennis ace Sania Mirza's loyalties. The media has an important role to play in such situations, as it can balance the negative effects of such insensitive statements. Controversial statements which may hurt someone's dignity can well be filtered out in higher interests.

Nationalism, the sentiment that has for long been one of the motivational forces in shaping human societies and defining state boundaries, is undergoing a perceptible change. In the west it has lost some of its traction. Even in India, in the aftermath of the recent events at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, a debate has started on its meaning and implications.

The sense of belonging, first to small social groupings, and later nation states, generated strong feelings of loyalty and inspired men to make the ultimate sacrifice. "My country, right or wrong" was the mantra, and patriotism, or its offensive form jingoism, was its corollary. Any hostility to, or criticism of, the 'nation' was deemed to be treason and territorial integrity of states was not open to question, unless under duress. Even Abraham Lincoln's memorial in Washington remembers him not for having abolished slavery, but because he "Saved the Union".

2. The Impact of Social Media on Globalization

The American economy for instance has been a great beneficiary of social media in terms of industrial growth. The industries that are located in America have had a chance to do market research through social media on the areas they can introduce their products. In the past it was expensive to conduct surveys in different countries as physical manpower was required (Jagdish, 2014, 8). It has however become possible for companies to conduct this research on social networks. It is through this process that industries have been able to spread to new markets without a problem.

The firms have also had a chance to benefit by gaining knowledge on the cheapest sources of raw materials and labor. The production cost in a company is usually the biggest budget in a company. The discovery of efficient ways of production has been spread through social media (Mary, 2007, 40). It is for this reason that companies in the land are opting to have industries located in certain areas with distribution being the only job. It is through this process that consumer goods have lowered in price over the years. Social media can hence be attributed to be the fastest source of information.

The upsurge of social media sites has however come with its own disadvantages to the masses. The rate at which people are losing jobs has been on the rise since the social media effect hit the world. It has become impossible over the years not to discover new ways of completing tasks. The industrial sector is one of the best examples where a company has to employ a lot of staff in big industries. Information about companies that sell products that reduce a work force is always welcome by companies. The adoption of these machines then means that people are left jobless.

The American market is one of the biggest markets for consumer goods around the globe. Consumers however are always seeking the most efficient products in a market. A company that produces phones as an example faces a lot of challenges as a result of social media (Jeremy, 2013, 22). The case may be so if another company starts producing phones that have better features than the available ones. The company that was producing phones in the first place will hence be obsolete as its sales will reduce drastically. It is for this reason that we can say as much as social media has improved lives, it has also stalled some.

3. Influence and Impact: Social Media Driving Change in India

Advancements and globalization of digital platforms and social media technologies is empowering people across the globe to participate, and share content online. India has experienced technology as a vehicle in aiding social change through social media. The growth of social media outlets is changing behaviors, perceptions, and attitudes as the ease and growth of online social technologies induce audiences to become digital activists; changing user behavior from passive to active, non-participatory to avid participation, and enabling users with a voice that was otherwise unknown or untapped. The power of social media and its impacts on individuals, businesses, and society in India has provided an equal opportunity to voice thoughts, opinions, and share information. The increase of usage and

ease of entry provides an attractive interface for anyone to become a creator or advocate of information and ideas by using blogs, micro-blogs, social sharing, and networking sites.

4. Social Media Networks

Social Media for Peer to Peer: The popularity of social networks has created a new trend of social sharing where individuals can recommend to groups of people products, services, information and ideas. The online peer-influence factor virally spreads as visible feedback channels engage, encourage and promote peers to be more participative and interact. It's no surprise that micro-blogging sites like Twitter share the breaking news faster than the traditional media channels, as more and more people are using it not only for live streaming of their personal events but most importantly as an information sharing medium and a collective knowledge sharing channel with other people across the world.

Social Media for Business to Consumer: For brands and marketers, social media introduces both opportunities and challenges. Brands are now able to listen to and address both compliments and complaints made by fellow or future consumers enabling the brand or marketer to respond to and interact with the public. In India, eight out of 10 people from urban areas who buy cars use the internet to search for information on brands and products before making a purchase. A major driver for businesses to use the social media marketing is the low-cost model compared to traditional marketing channels. Predictions for Business to Consumer marketing via social media in India indicates that more marketers will be adopting social media strategies as a new marketing medium and engagement channel to interact with current and prospective consumers. For businesses in India, monitoring social interaction behaviors, brand reputation, and current and prospective consumer expectations will help the company to build long-term relationships, create loyal communities of brand advocates, and engage in a dialogue with people interested in the product, brand, or service.

Social Media for Social Change: Social media has empowered people in Indian society to spread perspectives on social causes and change, participation in digital activities, and support and information sharing in crisis situations. Cultural adoption and

availability/understanding of technology prove to be an obstacle for many in underdeveloped areas of India.

Social Media and Behavior: The increase in the use of social media sites will allow for researchers to observe the behaviors of the population engaging in social media. Understanding behaviors will allow for researchers and businesses to track behavioral change patterns, market trends, content consumption patterns, and social changes through technology. Through better placement of advertisements to targeted audiences, monitoring behaviors via social media will help companies reduce the total number of ads served for the same or better result, thus reducing costs. In addition, through web analytics and modelling derived from website user behavior companies will be able to translate the data into actionable business intelligence that can be implemented to deliver better results.

5. Social Media: How It Impacts?

Mass media have made a profound impact on societies and their culture. It ceases the boundaries of different societies among the individuals and creates ‘Globalization’. Globalization is a decent case to delineate the friendship of the media, since people can witness what is happening in different nations or how they dress up and what their way of life is. Subsequently, they typically mirror what others do.

Furthermore, the media are a storehouse of information. It educates individuals about day to day occasions or new revelations. This data sometimes is utilized to change individuals’ sentiment. For instance, in the race for President, the devotee of candidates publicize in media such as TV or the web for them, and ingest consideration regarding choosing any individual that they need.

Thus, it can be concluded that mass media have a powerful influence in shaping a persons’ lives. However, mass media can have both positive and negative impact on the lives and on the minds of the people. It depends on the mind-set of the people, as to which side they look for.

6. Media: The Good & Bad Aspects

Media can help to create awareness among the people faster than any other thing. In fact, mass media can have a great impact on peoples’ lifestyles and culture. For example, girls living in a conservative country or girls who are growing up in a conservative culture can be prompted and motivated to wear short dresses by watching TV shows or by following another

country's culture. They might consider by wearing short dresses they can become cool just like the TV personalities they admire.

While the above point stresses on the negative impact of TV, it also has made some positive impact for society. Through television, one can create social awareness about many social and economic issues like AIDS, Child Abuse, Female Foeticide, and so on which are For example, television channels organizes TV shows like "Satyamev Jayate" which focuses on making people aware of the harsh realities of life. It mainly discusses and provides possible solutions relating to the various social issues of India. It aims to empower citizens with information. Hence, through this type of show, many NGOs come up with social causes and hold campaigns, demonstrations, and protests in order to demand justice.

Even, National TV channels like Doordarshan, DD National used to air shows like "Bharat EkKhoj" which was an Indian historical drama based on the book 'The Discovery Of India' written by Jawaharlal Nehru that covers a 5000-year history of India from its beginnings to the coming of independence in 1947. Hence, the media also played an educational role by hosting programs like "Bharat EkKhoj" in order to enlighten people about their country's struggle for freedom.

7. Localization and Social Media

Localization is also an aspect of social media globalization. This is particularly evident with the growing popularity of localized search tools for consumers looking for nearby goods and services. Mobile apps can help one find the nearest Italian restaurant and retrieve customer ratings. Location-based services pinpoint one's mobile phone's location to direct him/her to the nearest bank machine, gas station or best route around a traffic jam.

A recent analysis by social media analytics company Socialbakers looked at the local and national Facebook pages of major brands such as Nike, Starbucks and BMW. It found that more localized pages enjoyed more audience engagement. Digital media and technology enables localization in a variety of other ways as well, such as affirming and preserving cultural identity.

8. Fierce War on Social Media

The recent arrests of students and beating up of journalists inside a court complex in a related incident has virtually divided India into two groups on social media – right-leaning nationalists and leftist or moderate liberals. The ruling BJP and its rivals Indian National

Congress and AamAadmi Party are known to have an active army of social media agents. These tweeters and Facebookers are believed to create hundreds of fake accounts each day. India's Twitter map keeps trending with pro- or anti-BJP topics, indicating the power of these two opposing social media camps.

True nationalism is a link between different countries of the world. It should not be seen as a threat to globalization but rather as a force promoting it considering the fact those nationalist tendencies in humans tend to make them positively internationally aware and proactive.

Sri Jawaharlal Nehru was a nationalist. But he was also an internationalist because as a result of his influence, the year 1965 was declared the year of international cooperation.

Mahatma Gandhi of India was a nationalist to the core. However, one can deduce from his speeches and actions that he was not opposed to globalization. In fact, he sought to free India from the imperial control of Great Britain and position her as a globally competitive entity. He fought imperialism not globalization. The same can be said of the likes of Martin Luther Junior who led a movement against racism, Nelson Mandela of South Africa and Pa Obafemi Awolowo of Nigeria. It is when insecure personalities with unbalanced philosophy hijack nationalism and turn it to a superiority complex which they sell to their followers that we can begin to look at nationalism as not just a hindrance but a threat to globalization.

9. Predictions for Social Media in India

Text-Based Social Media: Mobile text and application capabilities, such as SMS and Twitter, are becoming more affordable and available, thus adoption of mobile social networking across India increasing. Subscriber growth in India will continue, driven by rural expansion, entry of newer operators, 3G and cheaper handsets. Flat-rate data plans will also accelerate the use of mobile media. InformationWeek has projected a significant transformation in Media, Technology & Telecommunications over the next 10 years because of the Wireless Social Networking Revolution. Technology, Media & Telecom represents approximately 5% of global GDP, and with the growing population in India, Indians are expected to have a better chance of capitalizing on developing social media mobile trends.

“Citizen Journalism”: The power of citizen journalism became ever so present during the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks. Indian media has been increasingly willing to integrate citizen

journalism in its news coverage and India is expected to see a continuation of these trends throughout 2009.

Indian General Elections: Social media, online and mobile, will serve as an inflection point in the general elections in India. Interaction with the younger generations in India has launched a popularity and engagement to “get out the vote”. Specifically, Twitter and other mobile based applications will play an important role in future general elections, both in the campaigning and in the coverage of the elections.

10. The Future of Social Media on Globalization

The future however seems bright to people and industries that are ready to adopt social media in their lives and industries. On an individual level a person is bound to gain on valuable information about emerging opportunities such as employment on social media sites. Companies have resulted in shunning the normal ways of advertising job opportunities on print papers (Karen, 2013, 27). The large populations of people that are on social media means vacancies on professional fields are easy to get applicants. A person wishing to gain advantage on activities around them will have to adopt it.

The information era also means that news agencies that wish to gain information on breaking news will have to have a digital section. When the American elections were taking place for instance, people checked on the ratings of their candidates on social media sites. The news agencies that were located in America had to rely on people’s views on social media to know the current situation (Joseph, 2014, 42). It is for this reason that news agencies are compelled to join the social media networks if progress is to be made.

The industrial field is one of the most complicated fields due to the huge number of people it has to deal with. Consumers around the globe need to find cheap and efficient ways to make enquiries about a product. Social media is hence the best way that companies can hope to deal with their consumers (Kelli, 2009, 14). The information about various opportunities, sources of raw materials and cheap labor is now found on social media sites. A company that hopes to spread its wings in various directions is hence found on social media sites.

In the end it is true to say that the future of technology has already dawned on us. The inventions that are ongoing are aimed at making lives easier. The invention aspect is hence dependent on how people network globally. Social media in this case is the best chance that any economy that wishes to grow has. The networking aspect has been sorted by the

availability of social media. The fresh ideas that are shared on these sites are bound to be revolutionary in the way we view things.

11. Conclusion

Overall, social media is an inevitable force that is being used for activism presently and no doubt will be used in bigger and better ways in the future. The advancement of technology has made it possible for social media to be spread worldwide. As social media spreads to most countries vast connections are made. With these great connections come great opportunities. The main one is the use of social media as activism to run a social movement. Social media activism is successful in exposing the world to current events. However, with this exposure comes the falsification of facts. But this does not prevent the use of social media for activism. As can be seen currently with the social movement, in India social media is the forefront of the movement. The tool of social media for activism is successful at gaining participants, but becomes high-risk once someone becomes an active protestor. Social media activism is completely successful at starting a movement and getting it spread worldwide, but because it does not consist of an organized hierarchy it fails at completing the movement in a way that satisfies most. As the use of social media is used for activism it will become possible for social media activism to be completely successful. It is only a matter of time before the global resources will develop ideas and solutions for the completion of social movements.

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