# Social Media: A Communication Instrument

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**Abstract**

The integration of social media into educational environments has witnessed a steady rise, presenting numerous advantages and opportunities for students and educators alike. These platforms offer avenues for collaboration, communication, and idea sharing beyond traditional classroom boundaries. Students and educators can participate in group projects, discussions, and knowledge exchange, promoting a sense of community and enriching learning experiences. Social media also grants students access to a vast array of information and educational materials, enhancing their learning resources. Present paper aim is to discuss the role of social media as a communication instrument.

**Keywords:** Social media; Communication; Instrument.

## INTRODUCTION

Communication is a vital part of regular daily existence. It is a standout amongst the most fundamental and indispensable piece of our reality. It is crucial for a person's growth as well as the creation and maintenance of groups as well as the relationships between them. *Leagans (1961)* defined Communication is the process by which two or more people exchange ideas, facts, feelings or impressions in ways that each gains a common understanding of the meaning, intent and use of messages. It is a two-way process comprises the following elements: sender, message, channel, receiver, feedback, and context. Beyond merely storing and decoding information, news, ideas, and emotions, it requires people coming to a mutual understanding. It is crucial that they additionally develop and share meaningful content for the messages sent *(Daniel, 2013)*. Communication is a process of sending and receiving verbal and non-verbal messages that produce a response. When the intended reaction or response is received from the recipient, communication is found to be effective. Communication is essential for building and maintaining healthy relationships. It fosters connection, trust, and mutual understanding. Good communication skills enable individuals to express empathy, active listening, and effective feedback, enhancing interpersonal relationships at personal and professional levels. Effective communication is

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crucial for successful collaboration and teamwork. It enables individuals to share information, coordinate efforts, and work towards common goals. Clear and open communication within teams enhances productivity, problem-solving, and innovation. Strong communication skills contribute to personal and professional growth. Effective communication enhances self-expression, assertiveness, and confidence. It also enables individuals to present ideas, negotiate, and influence others, leading to better career prospects and personal fulfilment. Communication skills are essential for influencing and persuading others. Effective communication enables individuals to convey their ideas convincingly, address objections, and inspire action. It plays a vital role in leadership, sales, marketing, and public speaking. Communication is fundamental for social bonding and overall well-being. Positive social interactions through communication contribute to mental and emotional well-being. Effective communication skills help in managing conflicts and maintaining positive relationship.

Good communication does not consist merely of giving orders, but of creating understanding. Better technology and improved communication skills will be the main drivers of future advancement. In daily life, communication enables us to connect with people, share our experiences and needs, and strengthen our bonds. It gives us the chance to communicate our views, share information, and express our emotions.

## TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

1. *Verbal Communication:* Verbal communication involves the use of spoken or written words to convey messages. It includes face-to-face conversations, phone calls, presentations, speeches, interviews, emails, memos, and written reports. Verbal communication relies on language and vocabulary to express thoughts and ideas.

2. *Nonverbal Communication:* Nonverbal communication refers to the transmission of information without the use of words. It includes body language, facial expressions, gestures, posture, eye contact, tone of voice, and physical touch. Nonverbal cues often convey emotions, attitudes, and intentions, and can complement or contradict verbal messages.

3. *Written Communication:* Written communication involves the use of written words to convey information. It includes emails, letters, reports, memos, text messages, social media posts, articles, and blogs. Written communication allows for careful crafting and editing of messages and provides a permanent record for reference.

4. *Visual Communication:* Visual communication utilizes visual elements to convey messages. It includes the use of charts, graphs, diagrams, infographics, photographs, videos, and presentations. Visuals are often used to simplify complex information, enhance understanding, and engage the audience.

5. *Interpersonal Communication:* Interpersonal communication occurs between two or more individuals in a personal or face-to-face setting. It involves direct interaction, conversation, and exchange of information, ideas, and emotions.

6. *Group Communication:* Group communication involves communication within a group or team. It includes discussions, meetings, brainstorming sessions, and presentations among members. Group communication allows for the exchange of ideas, collaboration, and decision-making within a collective setting.

7. *Mass Communication:* Mass communication refers to the transmission of messages to a large and diverse audience through mass media channels. It includes television, radio, newspapers, magazines, websites, social media platforms, and advertising.

8. *Formal Communication:* Formal communication follows established rules, procedures, and hierarchies within organizations or institutions. It includes official documents, policies, reports, formal meetings, and structured presentations. Formal communication ensures clarity, accountability, and adherence to organizational standards.

9. *Informal Communication:* Informal communication occurs in casual or spontaneous settings and does not follow predefined rules or structures. It includes conversations during breaks, social gatherings, water cooler chats, and informal emails or messages. Informal communication fosters social connections, camaraderie, and

sharing of personal experiences.

## Social Media: A Tool for Communication

Social media has been playing a significant part in helping people to communicate with people all over the world by facilitating communication abilities. The speed and effectiveness of social media as a communication tool cannot be denied. It's the newest type of media, and it has a lot of features and qualities. It's a terrific approach to strengthen relationships because it offers texting, image, video, and audio sharing, quick publishing, direct interaction, and the ability to connect with individuals all over the world. In the very little period of time, it grasps the whole human activities in its clutches in such an extent as each and every person in the world is compelled to get help of it at every walk of his or her life (*Pandey, 2014*).

With the increase in ICT applications and internet usage, social media or Social Networking Sites (SNSs) have become an intricate part of modern life. They are ideal examples of technological and social platforms combining to create a new communication medium. Individuals create online profiles on a variety of SNSs in order to establish and maintain social contact with others.

Social media is a network of internet facilities that is on the technological and ideological foundation of web 2.0. which provides space for the development of user-changeable content (*Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010*). Social networking sites are referred to as web-based services that allow users to establish profiles with choices based on their interests. Social media is a way to make one's voice heard all over. It offers cheapest and fast access to the world, so it is very important for all ages of people. Social media are media for social interaction that use highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques. Social media transforms communication into interactive dialogues by utilizing web-based technologies. Social media is the medium to socialize. They make use of web-based technology to rapidly disseminate knowledge and information to a large number of users. They enable the creation and sharing of user-generated content. A social network is a group of people who are linked together by a set of relationships (*Manjunatha, 2013*).

Social networking sites (SNS) are internet-based social spaces that enable communication, collaboration, and content sharing across networks of contacts. Users can use social networking sites to manage, build, and represent their social networks online. Social networking sites are typically made up of other people; however, they may also include profiles of events, businesses, and even political parties. People use Social Networking Sites for a variety of purposes. Connecting with existing networks, creating and developing contacts, finding information, creating and customizing profiles etc. are the most common uses. Social networking sites have grown in popularity quickly.

## HISTORY OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The history of social media began with the BBS (Bulletin Board System) in 1978, which allowed users to communicate directly with the central system for accessing data and sending messages. Later in the same year, Usenet was launched, allowing users to post news and articles. IRC (Internet Relay Chat), the first instant messaging tool was created in 1988. Later in 1994, the first social networking site, GeoCities was launched. Sixdegrees.com was launched by AOL (American Online) in 1997, enabling users to create their own profile. Wikipedia was founded in 2001 with the purpose of bringing almost all types of information together in one place and allowing users to edit it. LinkedIn, a professional social networking service was founded in 2002. It is intended for professional business people to communicate, find jobs, and socialize with one another. Friendster, which is still active today was launched the same year. It was the first social media site to attain over 1 million members. In 2003, Skype was launched, allowing users to make free video calls over the internet. Myspace, the largest social media site in the world from 2005 to 2009 was also launched in 2003.

**Table 1:** History of social media

| Social Networking Sites | Year | Description |
|---|---|---|
| BBS (Bulletin Board System) | 1978 | Users can communicate directly with the central system for accessing data and sending messages. |
| Usenet | 1978 | Allow users to post news and articles. |
| IRC (Internet Relay Chat) | 1988 | First instant messaging tool. |
| GeoCities | 1994 | First social networking site. |

*table contt...*

| Six.degress.com | 1997 | Enables users to create their own profile. |
|---|---|---|
| Wikipedia | 2001 | All types of information together in one place. |
| LinkedIn | 2002 | Professional social networking service. |
| Friendster | 2002 | First social media site to attain over 1 million members. |
| Skype | 2003 | Allowing users to make free video calls over the internet. |
| Myspace | 2003 | Free, advertising-supported service that allows users to create Web "profile" pages. |
| Facebook | 2004 | Allows users to create their own profiles, exchange information and follow others pages. |
| You Tube | 2005 | First large-scale popular video-sharing website. |
| Twitter | 2006 | Enables users to send and read short 140 characters messages called tweets. |
| Tumbler | 2007 | Expressively designed for short-form content such as photos, video, quotes, text. |
| WhatsApp | 2009 | Most popular free instant messaging app. |
| Instagram | 2010 | Popular photo-sharing app. |
| Pinterest | 2010 | Visual bookmarking tool that helps to discover and save creative ideas. |

Facebook was created in 2004 specifically for Harvard University students. The site became available to anyone with a registered email address in September 2006. YouTube is a popular video-sharing website which was founded in 2005. Twitter, a popular microblogging site, became available worldwide in 2006. SlideShare was also introduced in 2006. In February 2007, tumbler was launched, expressively designed for short-form content such as photos, video, quotes, text, and other types of short stories. WhatsApp, one of the most popular instant messaging apps was launched in 2009. Instagram, a popular photo-sharing app first appeared in October 2010. Pinterest, a photo-sharing website was launched in 2010. Pinterest's evolution is based on its users' shared interests and it relies on its members to create content. There are numerous social networking sites and applications available today that serve various communication and interaction needs of users.

## Importance of Social Media for youth

In today's contemporary world, social media has gained popularity among the younger generation in India. It enables the younger generation to interact, communicate, and share knowledge with one another regardless of the physical distance between them. Since the younger generation has grown up with technology, they feel more at ease using and accessing social media to communicate and form relationships. The new generation of youth who are growing along with new communication technologies are emerging as "new generation" (*Narasimhamurthy, 2014*).

The younger generation's use of social media for information and entertainment in India is leading. In higher education and research, youth typically predominate. Some of the younger generation works in the organized sector or engages in professional activity. It helps professionals to share and communicate information and knowledge at a faster rate and which is most helpful for their occupations. It is useful in getting expert guidance from the senior professionals. Higher education recipients are informed about job openings across numerous industries. Students are exploring and experiencing the world not only by books and assignments but also, by adapting social media. With a greater emphasis being placed on technology in business and education, youngsters are being assisted in gaining skills that will serve them throughout their life. Teachers can improve the basic curriculum by using SNSs. Students who use a website every day for fun and that incorporates learning activities realize that learning should be a part of everyday life (*Srivastava, 2012*).

Social media also have an economic impact on how content is created and consumed and also on the information and communication technologies industry. A considerable number of businesses are including social media in their marketing plans. Social media increasing isolation as people are preoccupied with reading and sharing messages on different social media accounts. Therefore, Face-to-face interaction between members of society has decreased (*Rawath et al. 2019*). Social media has enhanced public knowledge and democratic involvement by making information available to everybody. It offers Government and lawmakers additional channels for communicating with the public. The internet offers a variety of opportunities

for increasing community involvement and improving connections.

Social media play a big role in creating online communities that bring people together to interact and share knowledge. Overusing social media can result in addiction that inculcates negative behaviours. One of the risks related to social media is cyberbullying. Adoption of social networking sites with a casual attitude might have mental and bodily consequences (*Verma, 2018*).

## *Use of Social Media in Education:*

Social media has increasingly been integrated into educational settings, offering various benefits and opportunities for both students and educators. Social media platforms provide avenues for students and educators to collaborate, communicate, and share ideas beyond the confines of the classroom. They can engage in group projects, discussions, and knowledge sharing, fostering a sense of community and enhancing learning outcomes. Social media enables students to access a wealth of information and educational resources. They can follow educational pages, join groups related to their subjects of interest, and discover relevant articles, videos, and tutorials, enhancing their understanding and expanding their knowledge base. Social media offers interactive and engaging learning environments. Educators can incorporate multimedia elements, such as videos, images, and infographics, into their lessons, making learning more enjoyable and memorable for students. Social media breaks down geographical barriers, allowing students to connect and interact with peers from around the world. This fosters cultural exchange, promotes diversity, and enables students to gain global perspectives on various topics. Social media platforms offer opportunities for students to actively engage and participate in discussions and activities. They can ask questions, share their opinions, and contribute to online forums, promoting critical thinking, collaboration, and active learning. Social media provides a platform for students to explore real-world applications of their learning. They can follow industry experts, organizations, and professionals in their fields of interest, gaining insights and staying updated with current trends and practices. According to *Mazman and Usluel* (*2010*) facebook's structure and range of features, including sharing of information, ideas, discussion, and collaboration, makes it an effective teaching tool. Students can study in a variety of ways via social media, which can be a useful complementary pedagogical tool.

Social media allows educators to personalize learning experiences for individual students. They can provide targeted resources, feedback, and support based on students' needs and interests, fostering a more inclusive and tailored approach to education. Social media platforms offer channels for effective communication between parents and teachers. Schools can share important updates, announcements, and student progress, fostering stronger partnerships and involvement in the educational process. Social media provides avenues for educators to connect, share resources, and engage in professional development opportunities. They can participate in online communities, webinars, and discussions, enhancing their teaching practices and staying updated with the latest educational trends. The introduction of social media into the field of education has forced teachers to adapt to a new world where there are now many sources of knowledge for students who have more opportunity than ever before to learn new things and develop new abilities. According to *Abraham and Saini* (*2015*) with the changing demands of students or society at large, social media can assist teachers in designing the educational and instructional system. As a result, learning becomes more interactive and team-based.

## *Positive Impact of Social Media on Youth:*

Social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter help kids and young people feel accepted and connected to one another. During the pandemic, it was clear that it had a significant influence, connecting individuals who had before been estranged. The way that young people learn has altered as a result of social media. Before the emergence of new technology, individuals were reliant on teachers for information and education, but now they are also taking benefits of the outside world as well. They may access the best resources, coaching, and guidance online to aid them in creating their desired results. Social media platforms like applications and websites exchange knowledge. Users of social media can ask for help, share information, and talk about their interests, occupations, etc. (*Akram and Kumar, 2017*). Through networks and communities, these concepts can spread. Organizations may advertise Vacancies on social media to find and hire suitable candidates. Organizations can advertise job vacancies on social media to find and recruit competent candidates. The hunt for a job that attracts candidates may also involve using social networking sites. Various new opportunities have emerged as a result of frequent use of social media by firms. Online business

management, data uploading, information sharing, advertising, lectures, writing, and other online works have created a need for workers and career opportunities. Youngsters' critical thinking skills are strengthened by social media.

Youth encounter a lot of ideas, opinions, and thoughts online, which allows them to form a critical perspective while considering the views of others. Additionally, social media provides a platform to develop their communication skills. Youth can stay updated with global events with the help of social media. No matter where they are placed, they may access social media to acquire the most recent updates. They are able to comprehend that there is more going on in the world than just what is happening in their neighborhood thanks to news channels, periodicals, and social networking sites. For those who find it difficult to express their thoughts in public, social media gives them a voice. It helps to get the ability to speak on any subject with confidence as a result. They can make an art, write comments, post videos etc. to express themselves. (*Khurana, 2015*).

### Negative Impact of Social Media on Youth:

The fear of missing out phenomena is significantly influenced by social media platforms. Young individuals experience the FOMO phenomenon, which causes them to feel alone when they observe someone at an event to which they are not invited. Their anxiousness would rise as a result. Social media has caused a decrease in concentration level of youth. Distractions from YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter greatly diminish people's ability to focus on the work at hand. Educational patterns have been also disrupted by social media since they spend so much time on it while studying so little. (*Lad, 2017*). Social media is linked to poor sleep as youth frequently check their social media accounts first thing in the morning and late at night when they are online which causes sleeping problems. Overusing social media can result in less face-to-face interaction which can result in loneliness, depression, and other mental problems. Social media has reduced the physical activities of youngsters. Even though they enjoy playing games, they only do it online which has reduced their participation in outdoor activities, as a result they developed obesity and complain of various health problems. Youth have become addicted to social media as they spend most of their time online. They can't image their life without social media. The behaviour, actions and usage pattern is beyond of their control. Social media has the potential to perpetuate people's prejudices and misunderstandings about others. This is made worse by the sense of community that comes from connecting with like-minded people online. (*Abel and Nut, 2016*).

**Table 2:** Positive and Negative impact of social media on youth.

| S. No | Positive Impact | Negative Impact |
|-------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Sharing of ideas, information, knowledge has become easy. | Over reliance on social media diminishing face-to-face social interactions among youth. |
| 2 | Social media platforms give youth a voice and a platform to express themselves. | youth physical activities has reduced which can contribute to health issues like obesity, poor fitness etc. |
| 3 | Social media provides a wealth of information and educational resources. | The curated nature of social media content can create a distorted perception of reality. |
| 4 | Social media has opened up new career paths and opportunities for young people. | Social media often triggers a fear of missing out (FOMO) among youth. |
| 5 | Social media provides a platform for youth to find like-minded individuals and communities. | Sharing personal information on social media platforms can pose privacy and security risks. |
| 6 | It strengthens the critical thinking skills of youngsters. | The addictive nature of social media can impact their productivity, academic performance and social interactions in the real world. |
| 7 | Youth can stay updated with global events no matter where they are placed. | Social media platforms can be breeding grounds for cyberbullying, harassment and online abuse. |
| 8 | Various new opportunities have emerged as a result of frequent use of social media by firms. | Social media often promotes a culture of comparison that lead to low self-esteem, body image issues and feeling of inadequacy. |

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