Social Media's Moral Reckoning and Positive Engagement: Analyzing Its Effectiveness for Peace and Prevention of War

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Abstract   *Today, technological advancement has largely altered human existence and has turned this globe more interdependent. In this development, means of communication play a substantial role in promoting peace, harmony, and interaction among multi-cultural societies and discouraging notions of conflict and animosity. Communication is the carrier of culture; it is the key of any relationship, be it interpersonal or intrapersonal. Without communication, no dialogue is possible. Social media, being the cheapest source of communication, is considered only a reliable and effective way of universal interaction, which is tremendous for a peaceful global relation. Social media, along with its approaches, has helped prevent conflict and has helped link people with the world. It breaks the communication barriers and opens opportunities for a peaceful international connection. Its proliferation has served as a bridge between the states and cross-cultures. Moreover, it promotes education, awareness, and a sense of belonging among people and sensitizes them about adverse repercussions of war, terrorism, climate degradation, and cultivates positivity to reserve the amity sphere. This research attempts to analyze social media as an effective tool to bring peace and harmony in the world and can help prevent an environment of animosity and conflict.*

Key Words:

Social Media,
Communication,
Harmony,
Global Peace,
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Prevention

Introduction

All affairs in this world require a medium of communication to commence a conversation, which aids in establishing a relationship. The new world order of

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technological evolution is accelerating and constantly altering the relations, the security of its state, and most importantly, transforming people's lives globally. Communication determines peace; the foremost objective of communication is to develop a relationship of peace; the concerns of international harmony and conflict are not new in the current phase. However, such apprehensions of global conflict and peace maintenance have transformed. They are under solid analysis, and international relations are always strongly influenced directly and indirectly by the shift in technology and disruptive inventions, which may hinder or promote global relations, foreign policy, and states well-being. Social Media intends to assist the researchers in the field of communication and conflict preclusions to explore better ways in this regard, which is helpful in many ways for sustaining the national and international interests, be it the economy of the state, diplomacy, or trade. Peace has great importance that performs a significant role in the recognition of an individual state. These state essentials depend on the aptitude for peace. A particular state needs to be recognized internationally by the powerful states for its affluence, security, business, economy, and relationship, preserving and maintaining all these social configurations. Communication and peace are required; these two components act as a weighbridge which helps to initiate stronger and better international relations. Webster (2016) explains that social media is a group that provides an individual with multiple social networking sites for initiating verbal and visual communication. Social media is an electronic communication by which people generate online communication to share their daily life activities, ideas, new data, find new places, and share their personal information with others.

For the preservation of peace, communication is accompanied, without which, no exchange of dialogues is possible. Hendrick (2013) states that today's world is of social media; everybody is dependent on it. He depicts the human instinct as a social animal that relies on communication to strengthen their relations within their social circle and the states. While talking about the social media progression, he explains that by 1997 the first-ever known social media site was Six Degrees, which allowed users to upload a profile picture and making friends for maintaining social relationships. Following the success of blogging, social media gained popularity in sites like Myspace, LinkedIn,

Flicker, and Photo bucket. In 2005 YouTube was introduced, which validated people to communicate and share their videos across the world. By 2006 Face book and Twitter were introduced and were made available internationally.

According to Dahlberg (2011), social media acquires a great passion in the arena of the academic world today. He explains that digital media is a new form of democracy that has implemented policy-making with its explanation and research. It's the extending version of democracy for peace and security. International Affairs (2017) states that social media is a social networking site that transmits and initiates virtual interaction. Information communication technology is a major and inevitable instrument of international relations. Social media and its variants are the central and integral constituent of diplomacy in maintaining peace. The social media tools are associated with the new digital diplomacy to cyberspace as the new edge of warfare. The tools are used in the moments of transformative peacekeeping. The best use of social media is achieved when the traditional diplomacy of an individual or state's face-to-face interaction is difficult and confined. It's very influential in the exchange of interpersonal dialogues of diplomacy. Social media medium effectively communicates in real-time for international relations when the preservation of peace is difficult by conventional mediums of peacekeeping policies.

This paper depicts that media in any form has been given importance in recognizing any state with the other states via conflict prevention. This paper also suggests how social media and its policies are helpful in the prevention of violent conflict at the international level, contributing to and promoting peace and justice. The literature of this research article highlights how social media is used to maintain international peace, a gateway to multiple opportunities for a state. The dynamic use of Social media affects the strength of communication in terms of world peace and order. Challenged with this problem develops the need to analyze and observe the use of social media in the international arena. Next, how social media assists as an instrument of international peace. It is significant to know that appropriate social media networks can initiate and produce positive outcomes in a constructive revolution regarding global peace. Therefore, this research explores the correlation between social media and international peace. This research is based on the qualitative analysis method,

and secondary methods like journals, online books, and research articles are used.

Social Media, Communication and its Role in Relation Development

In the past decades, internet usage has attained momentum in terms of access to services and content. Social media plays a vital role in the development of interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships. People tend to use social media to voice their opinions, suggestions, and experiences on any particular topic that would contribute to the world and connect with the international sphere. According to the Social Media Report (2016), social media is widely used by business communities, entertainment industries, government, and political parties due to its influence and widespread adoption. Similarly, social media is not just a medium of communication, but it depicts a symbol of the online availability of multiple corporations and actors. It has become a mandatory instrument of daily life for every institute, media, business, and the general public. Governments create and operate social media sites and applications, which is the new trend in the administration domain worldwide for their interaction with the masses and the public. It includes the state and federal governments and the military organizations, several regulatory authorities, and political parties, which use Facebook and Twitter to communicate their message, announcements, and response. So, the internet has gained popularity in terms of social media trends by platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Skype, etc. Because of its easy access, affordability, and reachable to every individual internationally, making the new trends building, connecting, and preserving the cultural, religious, and social patterns (Yusufzai, 2016)

Social media is predominantly used for communication that the masses consume to circulate news and interact with peers. Maslow's (1954) defines the hierarchy of needs. It's a human capacity and nature that has the instinct of natural craving to form relations with others after the fulfilment of their basic needs of safety and achievement; they need a sense of belonging, which they can get from social media as it provides an individual with a chance of conversation with other via multiple virtual channels on the internet. Social media is for socializing, interaction, gaining knowledge; it's a form of media

that permits an individual to participate in a discussion online without real face-to-face communication (Stefanone et al., 2010) explain that cultural differences motivate an individual to instigate a communication propagated through a relation-building by the person's attempts to know the other individual from a different ethnic group, religion, and race. So, social media networking sites have made it possible for the masses to establish relations with the help of an online medium. The relationship between the cultural attitude and mass media is under examination; the individuals are constantly involved in social technologies and their development, the social networking sites signify that it's the leading communication technology since the web was developed in the early 1990s.

The world today is becoming a small place where sharing and exchanging views, ideas, and valuable cultural knowledge to the next generation is possible via the help of media and social networking sites for the positive progress of the state in terms of development. According to Raj and Pushpa (2014), development tends to happen at two different stages of growth: a development at a macro level and the other at the micro-level. To achieve progress in effect, a tool or a medium is required for instant transmission and the communication of knowledge. The development sector of any state includes good governance, promoting and enhancing cultural development, socio-economic development, reduction of poverty, and environmental protection. For these domains, an effective media medium is needed to maintain balance and peace development in the state and the rest of the world.

Fritsch (2011) argued that social media is known as an interactive and shared treaty of the states with the foreign community as the states are frequently employing social media in this regard. Still, in the literature of international relations, the subject of social media and diplomacy is debatable. When it comes to peace and relation-building, it is a complex apprehension to the description of a state, so the commitments of one country with another nation in terms of diplomacy via social media are still under a credible analysis. In this era of technological modernization, social media is considered an essential tool of technology, which has a significant influence due to how social media activists utilize it, which is no less than any other technology. All the concerns and relations of a state at the international level with the other states

work via making foreign policies, rules, laws, and organizations. It deals with the work and the institutions, i.e., the organizations, as in international and national organizations, like NGOs (non-government organizations) and multinational companies or corporations. As a subject, it is a dynamic and versatile branch of social science in international relations. It implicates multiple characteristics and subjects which are political and interest-based, and relation oriented, for maintaining relations with the other states, thus incorporates subjects like international trade relation, state economic development, international law, diplomacy, international security as in religion, international peace, and conflict, nuclear proliferation, organizations like United nations for the Human rights, globalization, and international financial relations.

Social media and Global Communication

McPhail (2010) states that global communication or international communication evolved after World War II when the strain of the Cold war arose due to the conflict of the United States and its allies with the old Soviet Union. International communication refers to the technical, socio-economic, cultural, and political evaluation of media and communication results and its configurations within the nations and across the state. International communication concentrates on global traits, negotiations, and societal developments. The evolution in technology which introduced telephones, fax machines, personal computers, and international journals, made it obvious that professional or international relationships can sustain regardless of the place and time. Every individual depends upon global communication for world information and affairs. It has controlled the interaction of people with the nations for the communication, governmental, states, and trade affiliation. In history, multiple contracts of business and trades were made between the states for local and international settlements, including Sugar economies, Arab World, Caribbean slave, West African zones, Medieval Europe, Japan, and China. Today we all are allies of international communities. With the advent in the arena of technology, it gave rise to new world associations like non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as powerful global actors with its variants

by flexing their muscles at multiple world forums, including the United Nations, which is the most dominant world organization for the preservation of peace and human rights with its supremacy and aptitude of communication for the universal peacetime. Social media has a huge impact on intercultural relations as it delivers a novel and diverse way of communication with an amplified capacity of developing societies (Sawyer and Chen, 2012).

Social media plays a significant part in the incorporation of the world. It permits the integration of different cultures globally, which are then adopted and practiced for a wider perspective of international amalgamation. It allows the cultural proliferation of one country to another; states use such mediums for the sake of their national interest development. Social media offers the professionals and the state actors an opportunity to stay connected via digital means. Twitter, for example, has a massive global audience. It incorporates distinctive elements of the web, from texting to blogging and disseminating messages. It allows the social media users to condense their ideas in the post termed as tweets. The ordinary man uses Twitter, and its audience ranges from health experts, social figures, international organizations, media persons, and state representatives who are the lawmakers, politicians, state policymakers, and armed forces for communicating within the national sphere and global masses on any specific official matter. Social media is not an option, but it's a matter of survival. It is not restricted to any particular domain or organization, but it's a multitasking technology that opens numerous opportunities for its users. It offers global commerce, which helps refine the global market.

The youth used social media power in the form of Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube for communicating with the world for highlighting their state turmoil. They teamed up and organized to stay on the same page to achieve common interests, which led the international arena to help them support their mission of democracy in a non-violent approach. Communication transpires between two or more individuals, between a group of people, states, societies, and nations, and internationally. Ozuru and Ekeanyanwu (2013) explain that communication is the most dynamic and fundamental part of human existence that helps understand human relations. Communication at an international scale is only concerned with how one state relates to the other nation. The world is inter-reliant; different states of the world require cooperation for a unified aim

that is an interest of its nation for the sake of a peaceful, developed state. This wider aspect could acquire by countering the global concerns of poverty, terrorism, economy, and trade, which is possible utilizing global communication, which the help of social media can achieve. The evolution in social media sites enlivened the liberation of information and created an open interactive environment that empowers the states to serve and express their views on global concerns and augment relations.

Social Media as an Agent of Peacekeeping in Global Insurgency

Social media can harness the conflict and promote peace. Facebook and Twitter were used as revolutionary sites which inspired young activists to mobilize in the streets with the smartphone in their hands in political opposition, attained global responsiveness to the savage and sectarian turmoil faced by the people of Syria, this revolution by many leaders of Arab countries civil society, considered and highlighted the usage of "mobile phones, internet, and social media" used by the activists, that it played a vital role in bringing a positive outcome (Brown et al., 2012). Youth used the skill of technology to defeat the tormentor. According to Gire (2012), the revolution of Arab spring was a massive peaceful protest which resulted in the ejection of several authoritarian governments. The youth used social media power in the form of Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube for communicating with the world for highlighting their state turmoil. They teamed up and organized to stay on the same page to achieve common interests, which led the international arena to help them support their mission of democracy in a non-violent approach.

Himelfarb (2012) explains that Arab spring is one of the most debated revolutionary social media campaigns globally that promoted a culture of peace via social media. He further explains that social media assist in the constitution building used in Egypt to establish constitutions with public participation via social media networks, which was partially successful. In contrast, the social media peace campaigns are becoming effective in Iceland, and Morocco with a massive audience that practice the information input on constitution writing and promote it with the help of social media. Social media networks are used to prevent resource disputes in Sub-Saharan Africa. The social media network

named "Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism" (CEWARN) was established in 2002 with a sign of early warning. It informs and reports the state government with the help of traditional media and satellites for preventing the land, water, and other available resources from conflict. It aims to collect the data analyses of information, develop reports accordingly and then communicate and disseminate that information analyses related to any potential risk of conflict to stop the conflict escalation and reach their population timely. It practices an early warning system and includes Uganda, Somalia, South Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Djibouti. It has been implemented and operated by the regional institutes, which helps them in the crisis vigilance. This was established by the intergovernmental authority on development (IGAD). It's an interlinked network of non-governmental and governmental organizations to prevent their people from becoming targets of a violent conflict and spread peace in their region and state.

Oscar Morales was a young civil engineer, a patriot; when he observed political unrest in his country, he commenced a Facebook campaign in 2008. Fast Company (2012) explains that Facebook is the most dominant medium of social media. He used it as a power to spread awareness against the violent strategy of a radical revolutionary group or guerrilla group known as FARC responsible for kidnapping and disastrous bombings for a very long time. He demonstrated a massive population across Colombia and the world against the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia that terrorized Colombia by spreading fear among the society that was like never-ending violence. Due to the rapid progression of Facebook in Latin America and Colombia, Morales was one of the early adopters of social media networks who focused on and explored the influence of social media. He used a social media network that was Facebook; in January 2008, he developed a Facebook group named "One Million Voices Against FARC." This group aimed to demand the release of those numerous hundred hostages and bring down this militant group. This online group, within a jest of time, experienced an elevation of massive members. He later took the online group into real-life action by inviting a massive audience with almost millions of campaigners and activists to march in the streets to achieve their goals from all around the world. Due to this international pressure, FARC agreed to their demands and released the victims

along with Ingrid. He stated that technology with an amplified version has more power of altering the international cybersphere, which has more power and dynamism for social movements.

According to Muggah (2015), social media is a new frontier between the forces and the militants; to seek peace and prevent conflict in society. The state forces are using social media to track down criminals. Brazil challenged the real-life world with the virtual world. Brazil has almost 70.5 million Facebook users, and it is one of the world states with the largest number of users and manufacturers of online social networking sites. Brazil is experiencing a reduction in the digital domain, like WhatsApp, Instagram, and Twitter are acquiring fame. The militant groups, along with the armed forces, are jumping into the digital trend. Intelligence officials use social media to detect and arrest criminals and organize justice. This depicts an effect of a new dimension of the world concerning the virtual sphere.

Social media is a mediator of dialogue between different ethnic groups. Miller (2013) explains that it's a bridge stimulated by the youth between the divided oppositions for a better future of their nation, the youth from Middle Eastern countries with a joint venture between YaLa Palestine headed by Uri Savir and Peres Center for peace, they started an online social media campaign in 2011 named as "YaLa- Young Leaders" by using Facebook to promote peaceful dialogue and engage its youth in this positive campaign for a peaceful, dynamic and secure the Middle East. It included members from international society with up to 4 million members, including Palestinians, Egyptians, Israelis, Lebanese, Iraqis, Emiratis, Algerians, Tunisians, Moroccans, Kuwaitis, Saudis, Turks, Yemenis, Syrians, Jordanians, and Libyans. YaLa Young Leaders allowed thousands of global interactions in a day on the cause of societal apprehensions and communicated such crisis to a wider dynamic of the international community by using Facebook where the young Arabs and Israelis who cannot engage physically but can become a part of that campaign for virtual support. Presently, this campaign is one of its kind with a developed partnership with private sector organizations like Microsoft and Facebook and with the international governments including Switzerland, Norway, and the United States.

The internet provides a counter-narrative to the propaganda of radicalism; such interactions are disseminated by state actors or non-state actors, the most notable movement held by a London based poet Munir Zamir who self-financed a web-based novel of animated graphics named "The Adventures of Abdul X: Mind of a Scholar, Heart of a Warrior," with a tag line stated as, "Has this Façade of extremism and ideology not done enough damage?". This novel was intended to explore the coming of age of a young Muslim in a time of ignorance and mass hysteria. Another campaign supported by the government of Saudi Arabia, "Sakinah," means peace and harmony. This campaign was launched to connect the Islamic scholars and the volunteers with those individuals who visited websites based on Islamic extremism intended to engage such radical extremists in a discussion about the doctrines of their faith as in peace. The state government participated in this regard. In 2011 the senior advisor Dr. Abdulrahman Al Hadlaq of the Saudi interior ministry declared that this online movement achieved almost 50 percent of its success in attaining popularity with an engagement of more than 3000 militants for the prospect of peace declaring Islam as a radical free religion. Social media is best known for its adaptability in reforms which depicts it as a supernatural tool of change; it introduced the concept of the hashtag to grab attention, organize people to inspire, and associate them globally under one virtual roof.

Conclusion

The role and capacity of Social media cannot be disregarded that has altered the nations in conflicts with positive outcomes. The powerful states need to invest in the societies and organizations affected due to conflict, enabling and empowering those states and regions in crisis via social media for an optimistic modification and engaging the mass in educating them on the influence of social media in curbing the violence for the transformation of the communities and taking all the social media factors as a catalyst of international peace. It is commanding and essential that we realize the concealed dominance of social media over international relations and its role via global communication for promoting peace. Media in any form with all its means helps and produces an influential role in enhancing the environment by driving the state towards

peaceful affairs and influences the area in conflict by the termination of war very confidently. Social media has been immensely used for the diffusion of peace in the various states both, national and internationally, and among the different nationalities as in ethnic backdrop. Social media communication acts as a bridge between cultural groups and states. It imitates the perception of the states based on ethnicity, that it uses its new technologies for educating the masses in terms of race, changes the attitudes of the generation, and promotes peace and tolerance with a mutual understanding. No communication would be possible without social integration and interaction.

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