
ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN LEGAL AWARENESS

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ABSTRACT

In a democratic country like India, the media is a tremendously powerful instrument. The most potent instrument for maintaining democracy is the good role and usage of the media. Our country had gone from being a police state to a welfare state. The state's responsibility has multiplied as a result of this transformation. In order to work in such a responsible manner, various legislations must be enacted, either by the parliament or the administrative bodies. It is critical to make these laws known to the broader population for whose benefit they are enacted. The main object of such a law is lost if people are unaware of their rights and responsibilities granted through such legislation. In such circumstances, the law becomes a toy in the hands of some individuals, which is a dangerous situation. Any success made by the government, or the new areas on which our country should concentrate, can be projected alone through the media. The print and electronic media, along with social media, assist the society in its quest for justice. In the modern era, it is clear that social and legal issues that have sparked public outrage and for which the media has taken action have had greater legal support and have been resolved more quickly than those that have received lesser media attention.

Keywords: Democratic, Free Media, Public, Social Media, Legal Literacy Government, Justice.

INTRODUCTION

Social media has emerged as the most powerful influence on the general public, with far-reaching ramifications across all social strata. It has gotten to the point where random people in far-flung corners of the globe decide our feelings, responses, and reactions to various situations; the ability of inciting or suffocating public outrage directed at specific acts or individuals. The surge has not spared the legal system, as social media plays a significant role in moulding and reforming India's legal system. On the plus side, it has increased legal knowledge by disseminating news, judgements, and laws on various social media platforms, allowing more people to become acquainted with the concepts and laws/legislations that they would not otherwise be aware of. There is no need to go into scholarly books to answer a basic question or doubt; all you need to do is visit law-related social media accounts; this saves a lot of time and effort. However, on the other hand, it has also led to the circulation of incorrect information, which misleads the public by spreading hoax news and causing unnecessary alarm.

This is precisely where you should look to check out the source of such information, double-check and confirm the source's authenticity, and only then proceed to act on it. The information you find online may not present a complete and accurate picture of the law; therefore, you should rely on a reputable website to guarantee that your source is reliable. To an extent that goes beyond speculation, social media controls popular attitudes and knowledge, and any false information has the dangerous potential of being propagated to millions. The vast public fury that pours out on crimes that are applauded on social media sites like Facebook, the never-ending trolls on Twitter, the chains of reactions, and the spurs of criticism poured out on the government, the police, and the administration demonstrate the impact of social media. Social media has become a significant source for disseminating awareness of existing laws and directing legislation change.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND LEGAL LITERACY

As the world's largest democracy, India must be conscious that people are informed about their freedoms and rights to live in accordance with the true democratic standards and the rule of law. Individuals, particularly from the oppressed and disadvantaged communities, can accept and challenge injustices far more actively if they are aware of what the law can deliver. Legal literacy is the first step in gaining an understanding of the law that has the potential to change

people's lives. As social media is the most effective means to reach out to people, it is also the quickest way to get people to comprehend the law. Social media has shown to be the most potent influence for all, with far-reaching effects on many strata of society. It has all come to a point where random people from different parts of the world decide on our feelings, responses, and reactions to certain incidents: the potential to incite or restrain collective wrath directed at specific occurrences or individuals. The transformation has not gone unnoticed by the rule of law, as social media platforms play an important part in defining and revising India's legal system. Most notably, through disseminating news, judgements, and laws through various social networks, it has disseminated a great deal of legal consciousness, allowing most people to become acquainted with values and laws they would not have known otherwise.

People who require knowledge on their rights do not need to read scholarly studies; instead, they may go to any law-specific social media page, which saves them time and is also easily understandable. Social media is a powerful tool for raising awareness of existing legislation and encouraging legislative change. Indirectly, social media has raised public awareness of people's rights. However, there have been no proper legal awareness initiatives in India. However, it is certain that the legal awareness campaign begun by social media will be a success, as there have been other social awareness campaigns that were a big success, where people were not only interested in learning about their rights but also in fighting for them. Some of them are Rape in Uber cab, Nirbhaya Case in Delhi, Indian Campaign on Oxfam etc.

MEDIA, PUBLIC AND THE GOVERNMENT

Over 300 TV channels reach over 112 households in India, 50,000 newspapers and magazines reach over 250 million people, around 300 radio stations, over a thousand feature films in 18 languages are produced each year, and a plethora of electronic, print, digital, and telecommunications media are available. Cell phones have become as essential to our lives as food and clothing in the twenty-first century. Cell phones are also becoming widely used in rural regions. Globally, social media platforms are the most efficient and successful means to run a campaign. Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp are some of the most popular platforms for all users since they are quick, simple, and conceivably enable communication. On social media, webinars and documentary films are held frequently. Viral marketing is a type of marketing in which messages are quickly passed from one person to the next. Any type of content, such as an audio-video, a presentation, or any other type of content, can be developed and easily uploaded to the internet. Debates, informational shows, news, documentaries, and television

commercials add to our education and knowledge.

The media has also contributed significantly to societal peace. When natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, and rain strike, the media becomes the voice of the victims. It assists the government in determining the priority of areas that require immediate attention. It is clear that the media arrives considerably earlier than the government staff and support. This media action is quite commendable. The country needs such diligent media to improve the lives of the general populace. People can use the media not only to obtain information but also to learn about government actions. Authorities in the middle of the supply chain may sometimes hide the government's actions. Only the media can inform the public about the benefits provided by the government in such a situation. Those caught in the middle of the supply chain will be booked if they try to hide. It indicates that the media serves as a link between the general population and the government. In our country, the media has repeatedly demonstrated this. It is visible after various natural disasters in our country.

MEDIA, SOCIETY AND THE JUDICIARY

The media has paved the way for public access to Indian court and tribunal decisions. The Supreme Court's and the High Court's decisions have a direct impact on the decisions of Lower Courts, and Tribunals, such as the Customs, Excise, and Service Tax Appellate Tribunal. As a result, not only the parties but also the tribunals must be aware of the recent developments in the law. The public, as well as the tribunals, are provided with regular updates on various cases and their progress for this reason. Although certain updates are available on the internet, the tribunals purchase publications and compact CDs from vendors to keep up with this field's newest developments.

The media has the power to rectify not just the actions of the government and its servants but also the actions of the general population. The news in the media can sometimes spread the symptoms of fear or favour to someone, and it can be exploited by criminals for their own gain. The media has also developed a paid news system. The media's paid news system operates in both directions. It's a sword with two blades. It may benefit society at times, but it may also cause significant harm at other times. To regulate the media, a system of check and balance must be used. It is vital to note that the media should not be treated as a toy in someone's hands, and that check and balance mechanisms must be in place for media individuals and the media sector to be held accountable for what they publish or present to the public. A method must be

devised to sustain the media's piety; otherwise, the media will devolve into a self-destructing body, destroying its holiness and value in the name of fake news. The media relies on public trust, and if that trust is shattered, the media's worth is shattered as well.

CONCLUSION

The media has a significant impact on how a country's future is shaped. Various forms of mass media are used to communicate between people, including print, social, mass, electronic, etc. With the advancement of the mass media, a new era of transparency has emerged in society and government. The officials are required by law to take appropriate action when a party approaches before, they are notified as well. The media has also played an essential role in eradicating corruption. All those who suspected public officials of plotting or accepting bribes now fear they will be caught. The judiciary and tribunals have benefited from the growth of the media. Any illegal action can be broadcasted on social media within seconds, and such an event can easily capture the attention of thousands of participants in a free-media environment. The offender can be punished by using photos, video clips, audio clips, or any combination thereof in cases where no evidence is available or where a witness has changed their mind due to their own interests or fear of force. There are more sting operations nowadays, which makes it easier to gather evidence of crime. Progress in a country correlates with freedom of expression and the press. In this profession, the journalist's safety and freedom of the press are the most pressing issues. Due to the fear of losing his or her life or liberty, a journalist cannot work in risky situations. It is essential to avoid such circumstances at all costs. It is crucial for media people to be protected and secure when covering news in troubled areas. If this is the case, the welfare of society will be improved by free and open media use.

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