

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE FUNCTIONING OF INDIAN GOVERNMENT: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Prof. (Dr) Priya Sepaha

Abstract

Social media has emerged as a powerful tool in the recent past which has made tremendous impact on the various government institutions in the past. They are computer-mediated technologies that facilitate the creation and sharing of information, ideas, career interests and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks. It has radically changed the way how individuals and organizations communicate with the governments today.

Social media has loomed as the most effective tool, in the recent times to flag the causes, contents, opinions and direction of any social movement and has demonstrated that it will have a far-reaching effect on government, in future also. Early indicators point out that it will be instrumental in radically changing its structure, functioning and policies. Social movement activists, in particular, have effectively demonstrated that social media as a tool has tremendous potential to bring about the desired change. They have extensively utilised the corporate power of digital social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp and so on) to streamline the effectiveness of social protest on a particular issue through extensive successful mass mobilizations.

Unquestionably, it has been established that it has the potential to affect the working and decision-making process of the Government, be it the legislative, executive and judicial system in a striking manner. Indian public among others has emerged as the fastest growing community on social media.

This research analyses the role and impact of social media as a power to catalyse the social movements in India. In the past, India has witnessed the assertion of numerous social issues perturbing the public which eventually paved the way for remarkable judicial decisions particularly - Me too, Anti-corruption movement, Save Girl Child, Educate Girl Child, Clean India, Jessica Lal case, Nirbhaya case, etc. These decisions were evidently passed after the launching of some of the noteworthy social movements, in India. One can affirmatively say that these were conceived, executed and brought to their logical conclusion by social media.

Social media led social movements are fast becoming synonymous with social change. This paper further seeks to describe how certain social movements are resisted, subverted, co-opted and/or deployed by social media. The paper concludes with the observations that despite its pros and cons the impacts of social media on the functioning of Indian Government have demonstrated that it has already become an indispensable tool in the hands of the social media savvy Indians who are committed to bring about the desired change.

Keywords- social media, social movements, impact, law, government