
Comparative Analysis on Social Media and Its Positive and Negative Impact on Sri Lankan Culture

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Abstract

Social media are computer-mediated technologies that allow the creating and sharing of information, ideas, career interests and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks. Now a day's social media has been the important part of one's life from shopping to electronic mails, education and business tool. There are many forms of social media, including blogs, micro-blogs, wikis, social networking sites, photo-sharing sites, instant messaging, video-sharing sites, podcasts, widgets, virtual worlds, and more. Social media plays a vital role in transforming people's life style. Social media includes social networking sites and blogs where people can easily connect with each other. Since the emergence of these social networking sites like Twitter and Facebook as key tools for news, journalists and their organizations have performed a high-wire act.

Key words: *Social media, Computer Mediated Technologies, Communities, Networks*

Introduction

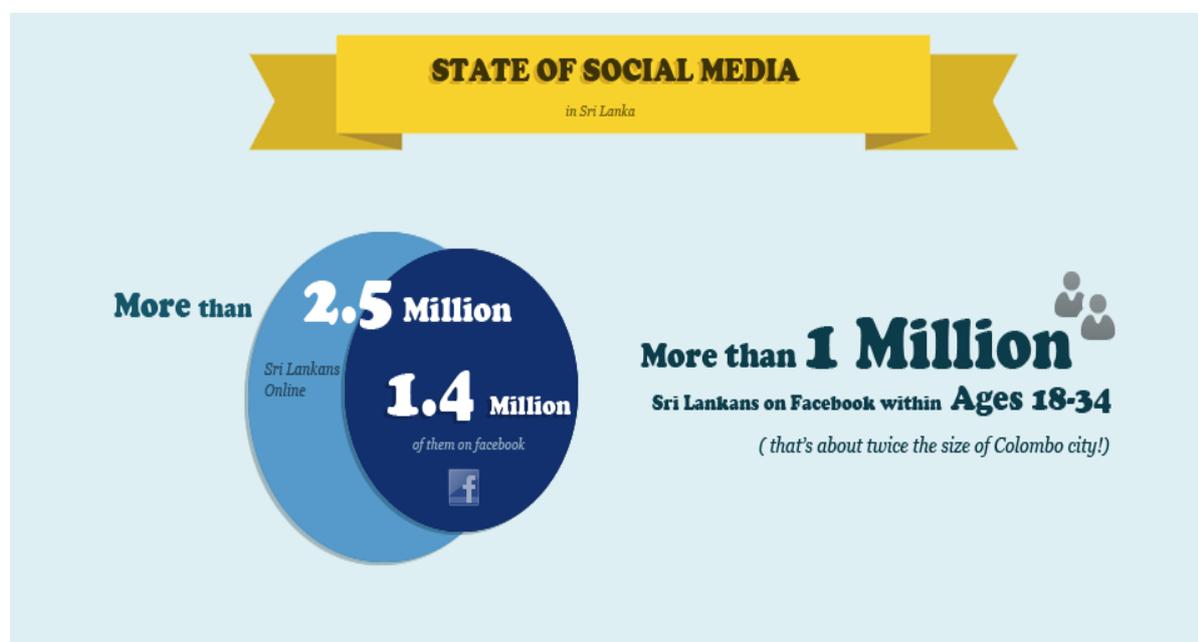
According to a Central Bank report, every 100 people in Sri Lanka own 113 mobile phones and 13 fixed lines by the end of the year 2015. This constant ability to connect with each other and having access to information at fingertip is changing the way Sri Lankans work, play and buy as a population. The latest statistics issued by the Telecommunication Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka registers nearly 4 million fixed and mobile subscribers. However the number of active internet users amounts to more than 5 million.

Among active internet users in Sri Lanka more than 3.5 million people use Facebook and Instagram accounts have almost surpassed 60,000 range. (4)Almost 11.5% of Sri Lanka's entire population is on Facebook today, with 1,400,000 being male and 720,000 being female, and the age group of 25-34 makes up 33% of the entire base. Also apps such as Viber, Whatsapp and Facebook Messenger has changed Sri Lankans' life by providing easier communication facilities. Localizing these apps with local languages and the apps like Viber have standardized and adapted among Sri Lankans' by offering the chat stickers with local languages.

Internet Usage and Population Statistics of Sri Lanka

YEAR	Users	Population	% Pen.	GDP p.c.*	Usage Source
2000	121,500	19,630,230	0.5 %	N/A	ITU
2007	428,000	19,796,874	2.2 %	US\$ 1,623	ITU
2008	771,700	21,128,773	3.7 %	US\$ 1,972	ITU
2009	1,163,500	21,324,791	5.5 %	US\$ 2,041	ITU
2010	1,776,200	21,513,990	8.3 %	US\$ 1,807	ITU
2016	6,087,164	22,235,000	27.4 %	US\$ 3,800	ITU

Source : Per Capita GDP in US dollars, source: International Monetary Fund



Source: <http://www.pyxle.net/social-media-management/>

According to daily, in Sri Lanka has over 5.3 million Viber users and Sri Lanka has become a one of top 5 markets for Viber sticker usage. Androidian.lk says Viber is the most famous messaging app among Sri Lanka and offering seasonal stickers might be the reason behind the growth of Viber usage in Sri Lanka. (<https://www.extreme-seo.net/internet-penetration-in-sri-lanka-2016/research/>).

Positive impact of Social Media

Business

Social networks help the businesses in a variety of ways. Traditional marketing mediums such as the radio, TV commercials and print ads are completely obsolete now and demand for thousands of dollars. However, with social media the businesses can connect with their targeted customers

for free, the only cost is energy and time. Through Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or any other social site you can lower marketing cost to a significant level. Furthermore Social media is the new buzz area in marketing that includes business, organizations and brands which helps to create news, make friends, make connections and make followers. Business use social media to enhance an organization's performance in various ways such as to accomplish business objectives, increasing annual sales of the organization. Social media provides the benefit as a communication platform that facilitates two way communications between a company and their stock holders.

Education

Social media can play a significant role in research data sharing. Creating a public profile to showcase personal research interests and to connect with a broad audience can be achieved through effective social media utilization. Furthermore, Using Twitter in class to keep students engaged and to get a sense of what students are thinking about during lectures. By implementing such a strategy teachers can improve their skills or add changes to learning process.

Also social media can be used to form student study groups with the use of Google+ Hangouts or Facebook which enables them to create and share knowledge more sufficiently in the real time. Rather than compete with, or deny access to social media sites, some schools have totally embraced them, and are using them to further students' educations.

Politics:

In Sri Lanka, Facebook and other social media impacted a lot in changing 2015 election results by carrying the youth s message rapidly across social media users. Therefore social media can be used as a potential hub to share or spread politicalopinions in order to maintain the political environment in favor of the society.

These statistics shows the involvement of social media in the US elections. During the elections of 2010 in US, users who visited Facebook more than once a day were 2.5 times more likely to attend a political rally or meeting and 43% more likely to say they will vote. Social media facilitates political change: Online networks give social movements a quick, cheap method of disseminating information and mobilizing people.

Awareness/Being Informed:

Information spreads faster online than any other media. More than 50% learn about breaking news on social media (Darshana S.,2016). Social networking provides academic research to everyone with online access, allowing people access to previously unavailable resources. Social media sites inform and empower individuals to change themselves and their communities.

Social Benefits:

Social media allow people to communicate with friends and this increased online communication strengthens those relationships. 52% of online teens say social media have helped their friendships. 88% say being online helps them stay in touch with friends they don't see regularly. People make new friends. 57% online teens report making new friends online (Darshana S.,2016).

Job Opportunities:

Social Media plays a great role helping professionals for marketing, connecting, and finding business opportunities. Employers find employees and unemployed find work. 59% of job recruiters have hired via LinkedIn, 26% via Facebook, and 15% via Twitter (Darshana S.,2016). Social media sites have created thousands of jobs and new avenues of income

Negative Impact of Social Media

One of the negative effect of social media or network is it leads to addiction. Spending countless hours on the social sites can divert the focus and attention from a particular task. It lowers the motivational level of the people, especially of the teenagers and students. They mainly rely on technology and the internet instead of learning the practical knowledge and expertise of the everyday life.

Kids can be greatly affected by these social networking sites if they are allowed to use them. The reason is that sometimes people share photos on social media that contains violence and sex, which can damage the behavior of kids and teenagers. It put the negative impact on overall society as these kids and teenagers involve themselves in crime related activities. Another downside of the social media is that the user shares too much information which may pose threats to them. Even with the tight security settings your personal information may leak on the social sites. Downloading your videos or pictures and copying your status is an easy task and can be done within few clicks.

Not only this but, when there's a problem, children no longer go to their parents for comfort or support, they'd much rather vent on a social media site. Since social media has managed to change the comfort ability individuals used to have when it came to sharing their emotions. As a result of this more people are tending to be isolated from each in the real world .

Recommendations

Text messages passed through social media on each day. Then users of social media are also responsible for personal neglect, isolation, avoidance from people, depression, mental problems, gambling, academic failure, internet addiction disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, cyber brainwashing, cyber bullying, unhealthy chat, blackmailing' etc., When used well, its potential is unbeatable.

Social media could be a tool to connect people, create social awareness, educate people on environment, protect local cultures, reduce the urban rural divide, fight for justice and empower them, using a video based case study on positive use. Policy makers can focus on developing a learning platform using these upcoming trends in the field of technology, and then the young generation will absorb the positive aspects of these technologies before they use it in negative aspects. Currently, majority of young people spend their time on social media platforms to hang around with friends. Policy developers should develop a foundation to use this addiction productively, which can link to national economic development with positive aspects and also benefit the social development of this country.

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E- Resources

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