



Role of Social Media in Creating Environmental Awareness in Lucknow

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Role of Social Media in Creating Environmental Awareness in Lucknow *Aman Sinha (M.Phil Research Scholar) (Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University) **Dr Mahendra Kumar Padhy (Associate Professor) (Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University) 1.1.

ABSTRACT

Social media increases the reach of the people and have the power to influence the attention of the people from the dynamic of current conversations on environment related problems. Hence creating a peer pressure among public to think about them and do something effective in the matter. Now a days many organizations and environmental activists are also using social media to call for people's attention as it helps them to raise the issue on a global level and to give suitable solutions & to tackle them effectively. Awareness can be spread through different methods available on various social media platforms such as posts, stories, videos, photos etc. Therefore, the role of social media in the enhancement of environmental awareness is much greater than that of traditional media which will be the main focus of this research paper. The aim of this study is to investigate the role of new media (social media) in creating awareness towards environmental issues in Lucknow. In order to achieve the above mentioned objectives, this study will be conducted on 75 respondents between the ages of 18 to 30 years in Lucknow. Study design will be survey and the tool will be a questionnaire. Simple random sampling will be used.

KEY WORDS

Targeted Audiences, Social Media, Social Media, Awareness Campaign, Climate Change.

INTRODUCTION

Environment is a basic & significant need for all living beings as their every necessity depends on it. It is of utmost importance that we

protect our natural habitat, only then can the existence of life on the planet Earth be possible. The environment that consists of everything surrounding us is becoming a major problem progressively. Due to which we need global concern and awareness on the issue.

Most effective and important ways to cope with the situation are to educate people and make them aware about environmental issues. Primarily, environmental education starts from the childhood of an individual and continues throughout his basic and higher education. However, environmental education cannot be limited to only educational institutions, since in present times, the life of every person is greatly affected by his social life, due to which new media's importance and efficacy regarding environmental education has grown. In this context, new media is an important tool in environmental education and its awareness.

Media comprises of various modes such as print as well as non-print or virtual through which news and information are disseminated to the common people.

The different types of media can be categorized as:

- ◆ Print media (newspapers, magazines and advertisements)
- ◆ Broadcast media (television and radio)
- ◆ Social media (the new media which includes social sites on the internet)

According to Wilbur Schramm, the role of media in development and awareness can be divided into 3 parts i.e.:

- ◆ To inform
- ◆ To instruct
- ◆ To participate

However, the traditional media i.e. mass media is doing a great job towards making people realize the need of their concern for climate change and environment protection. Yet, the social media or we can say the new media has its own benefits which makes it better, easier & faster way for creating awareness among people. The contribution of both; mass media & social media has the capability to influence more audience including older as well as younger generation respectively.

We can see that different forms of mass media are not being fully utilized and hindering somewhere at some point in shifting people's attention towards different global issues. On the other side, people are constantly participating more actively and effectively on the issues which are being highlighted by the social media.

Most of the students use it to get news, information and general knowledge because it is an easier and more accessible way to get information and stay updated with the news on a local, national & international level.

The number of social media users in India stood at 518 million in 2020. Furthermore, the social network users in the country were expected to be almost 1.5 billion in 2040. Facebook remained the popular choice among the social media platforms as of 2020. (Statista, 2021)

This shows the popularity of social media among Indian users. Hence, due to social media, environmental issues have gained more attention.

In this regard, new media has a big role to play in making people aware of environmental issues and taking actions to protect it. Therefore, the researcher wants to study the role of new media towards creating awareness among people of Lucknow in the form of News, Special edition, Expert column, Journals, Advertisements, Newsletters etc. covered by print media.

Literature Review

Environmental crisis has a wide range of anthropogenic afflictions, e.g., Global Warming, Ozone depletion, Acid rain, degraded water quality, degraded air quality, Soil Erosion, etc.

Degrading air quality is mainly because of gaseous air pollutants such as NO₂, SO₂ and N₂O which contribute to the air pollution processes such as photochemical smog and formation of acid rain precursors, causes destruction of ozone in the stratosphere and are important greenhouse gases causing global warming.

Amongst the world's twenty most polluted cities with high aerosol concentrations, four of these are located in Uttar Pradesh namely Allahabad, Firozabad, Lucknow and Kanpur. Lucknow, the capital of Uttar Pradesh is currently ranked 18th globally.

Recent air quality data analysis (2013-2015) for Lucknow reveals that SO₂ and NO₂ meet National Ambient Air Quality Standards for both 24-hr average concentrations and annual average concentrations.

PM10 24-hr and annual standards are exceeded in all the sampling sites irrespective of whether the sites are residential, commercial or industrial but comparatively higher at industrial site. PM10 has significant seasonal and inter-annual variability. The results of this study of Lucknow (2013-2015) show similar findings as air quality assessment on Delhi (2004-2009). (Air quality status of Lucknow – A Case Study, 2013-15)

In a further survey over the Gomti river of Uttar Pradesh which was once the main source of drinking water to the city of Lucknow was found to be filthiest along its 13km stretch in Lucknow. The level of oxygen in river was almost '0' which makes the condition of the river so bad that the water in it is no longer be able to sustain aquatic life also. (A Study conducted by Professor Venkatesh Dutta, an environmental management specialist, and his team of environmentalists of BBA University in Lucknow, 2019)

The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has declared the Lucknow-Jaunpur stretch of the river among the most polluted river stretches in the country. And the most serious problem is that the ecological flow of the river has reduced drastically over the years. Gomti is at its worst at present.

Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath termed the role of social media important for social awareness and environmental conservation. "The media along with the public must work pro-actively in the important realm of water conservation and environment conservation." he said. (An article from NDTV, 2019)

Significance of the Study

1. One of the most compelling reasons for this study is the fact that the environmental crisis which we are experiencing right now is unprecedented in its magnitude, pace and severity. (Park 2001)
2. Environmental crisis encompasses mainly the following issues which are highly controversial and needs to be highlighted upon by social media such as anthropogenic climate change (Global Warming), the depletion of stratospheric ozone (Ozone Hole), the acidification of surface water (Acid rain), degraded water quality, degraded air quality, scarcity of fresh water, soil Erosion, destruction and depletion of forest (Deforestation) and the precipitation decline of biodiversity etc.
3. For examining environmental problems like sustainable development & reducing global warming and how environmental awareness and education is conducted.
4. For addressing the concern about economic, social, political and ecological interdependence in urban and rural areas.

5. For evaluating the social media's contribution to environmental education & awareness.
6. The Internet's huge reach and accessibility make it one of the best resources for common people to stay updated about climate change and environmentalism. Internet is now a days used more frequently to encourage environmental awareness as it provides opportunity to the people to respond and participate immediately. There is growing populations of younger generation that are ardent users of new media platforms. Although not limited to youths only, social media platforms are also utilized by industry and Government agencies as a more preferred tool of communication with their target audience.

Stipulated Definition of Social Media

Social media is a platform for providing data, facts, information, sharing of ideas and other content (such as photos, videos) by which audience can better understand any issue on a global level with an ease and can help them to become aware of its severity.

Objectives of the study

- ◆ To study the most suitable instrument for creating environment awareness (social media instrument) in the current scenario (18-25yr)
- ◆ To test the suitability of 'social media environment awareness campaign' over 'other ways'.

Research Methodology

Given the nature and focus of the present study, a descriptive research will be adopted. The study will be conducted on 75 respondents between the ages of 18 to 30 years in Lucknow.

Statement of the Problem

The research study evaluates the impact of a study of 'The impact of Social Media as a tool for Creating Environmental Awareness in Lucknow'.

Research Questions

- ◆ Which is social media platform do you use the most?
- ◆ Are your concern about the climate change?
- ◆ Do you follow any page/account which is reacted to environment awareness?

Data Collection and Interpretation

Primary Data Collection is done through Questionnaire using top social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat which were selected on the basis of their popularity and number of product placements on social media platforms. The sampling method used was a non-probability sampling method – i.e. Purposive Sampling. Purposive Sampling/subjective sampling, is a form of non-probability sampling in which researchers depends on their own judgment when it has choose the members of the population to participate in their surveys.

This study was targeted at young Indian social media users from the age group viz. young adults of age 18 to 25. Students which are most appropriate users of internet. This age group is most apt for this study.

The respondents were from Lucknow, representing urban youth population of the country, irrespective of gender. This is because most are built around urban plots and are aimed at urban population.

Data analyzed and Collected

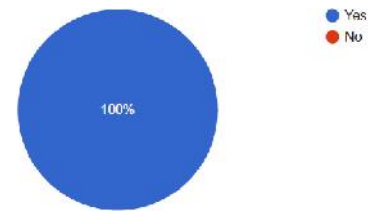
Data was collected through Google forms, whereas, was analyzed by using excel sheet for simple representation of respondents answering the various options and by making tables and pie charts for

presentation and the collection tool was the questionnaire method.

The targeted audience chosen was between 18-25 years.

1. Are you aware of various social media platforms available?

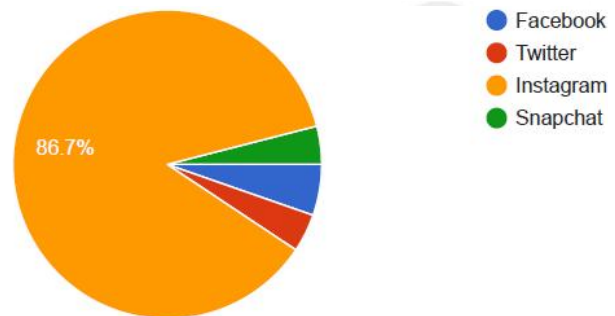
Analysis: This sample shows that all the respondents are aware of "Social media". As the data shows, 100% of the samples have knowledge regarding various Social media platforms.



2. Which along these platforms do you use the most?

Observation: 86.7% of the total samples show that the respondents use Instagram the most.

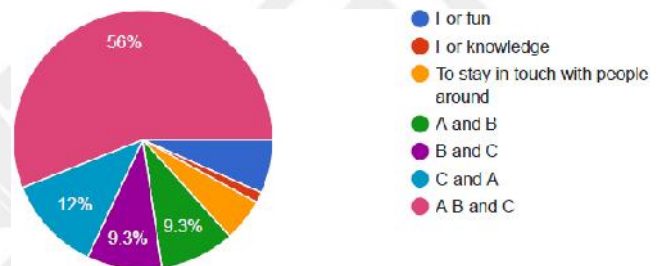
Inference: According to the survey, 86.7% of the total uses Instagram. While other social media platforms are being very less used in comparison to Instagram. Hence, Facebook, Twitter and Snapchat have very slight differences in their sample percentages which are respectively.



3. Why do you use social media?

Analysis: 56% of all the respondents use social media as a medium for fun, knowledge & to stay connected with the people around.

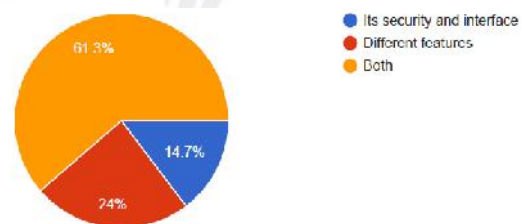
Inference: This shows that people finds it easier to stay in touch with people through social media and also know the benefits they can use given by social media platforms which are its multiple features.



4. What do you find best in your favorite social media platform?

Analysis: 61.3% of the audience chooses its security & interface, with different features.

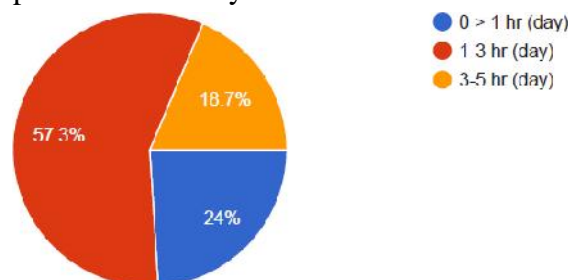
Inference: This show that today's youth focuses on multiple features along with keeping the security a primary need.



5. How much time do you spend on social media platforms in a day?

Analysis: 57.3% answered that they use social media on an average of 1-3 hours per day.

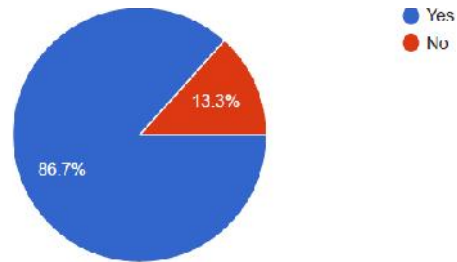
Inference: Although, 18.7% people spend 3-5 hours per day and 24% spend almost 1 hour per day on the social media platforms. This suggests that social media nowadays is an integral part of people's lives.



6. Do you like/follow any pages related with news/awareness content?

Analysis: 86.7% of the total respondents follow the pages related to news and awareness.

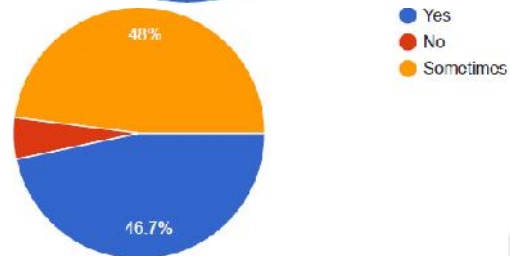
Inference: 86.7% of all respondents follow the awareness related pages which is a positive aspect of social media while 13.3% respondents like the pages according to their interests.



7. Do you find the content relevant?

Analysis: 48% responses show it depends on the content and varies occasionally.

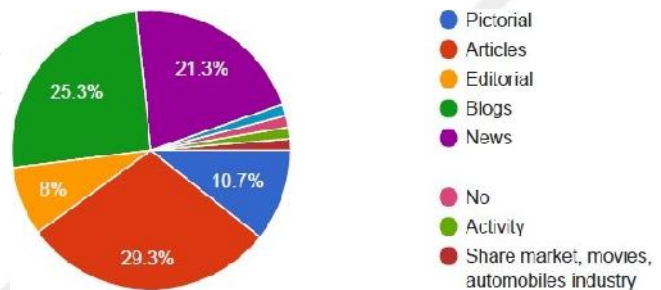
Inference: While 46.7% of the total respondents accepts and find the content on social media relevant. Yet there are still 5.3% of all the respondents which finds the opposite too.



8. If yes, then what kind of content is it?

Analysis: 29.3% of the respondents say that it was the Articles which they find the most relevant form of content.

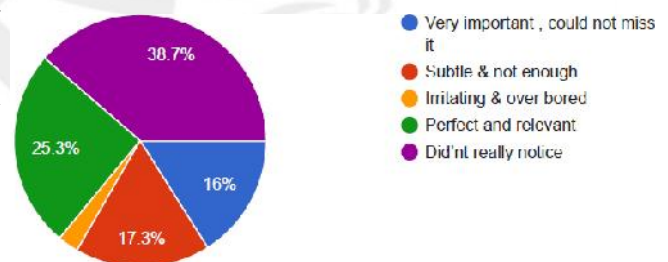
Inference: Most of the total respondents reacted with the content including Articles; still there is a large number of people which have different opinions such as 25.3% are with Blogs, 21.3% are with news content, 10.7% are with pictorial content, 8% are with editorial content while the rest 5.4% are with other entertainment and business related content.



9. How you see placement of content while using social media?

Analysis: 38.7% of the total respondents say that they didn't notice this.

Inference: Yet 25.3% of the respondents find the content on social media perfect and relevant. 17.3% people says it was subtle and don't contain enough knowledge. There is also a group of 16% of the respondents who believe it to be very important and could not miss it at all. While 2.7% people thought it to be irritating and boring.



10. Kindly name few of the pages/channel that you can recall. (Which you saw while using social media)

Inference: According to this survey, these are some of the most popular pages/channel which provides suitable content to the people- Zee News, Tedthestoner, Filtercopy, Ndtv, BBC India, Indiatimes, Unscripted News, Guardian, Womanizza etc.

Research Findings

As per the above study, the research came across the findings that the New media i.e. Social media is creating & increasing its space and value in people's everyday lives. Among all the social networking sites (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat) the most popular one is Instagram. Today's youth is continuously increasing its use which could help in creating awareness about environment change.

CONCLUSION

The data collected through Purposive Sampling, with a sample size of 75 people of age between 18-25 years living in Lucknow concludes that:

Youth in big urban cities like Lucknow are using Instagram more widely than the other social media platforms. As the data suggests, urban youth is more active on Instagram with 86.7% which is a big figure and leaves the other social media sites on a decreasing usage level.

The data collected through the study and the questionnaire concludes that all the respondents know very well about the social media and also use it on a great level. They find it as a vast, secure and considerable platform for most of the purposes which includes the knowledge and awareness too. More than three-fourths of the respondents like and follow the awareness and news related pages; also, about half the respondents find the content very good and relevant too. This clearly shows the importance of social media in young people's lives which can be used very effectively in creating awareness towards environment and climate crisis among the people.

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