

## **Impact of Social Media on Global Peace and Security - A Case Study of Egypt**

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**Abstract-** A person can share every moment of his life with others through social media platforms. Social media is also playing a crucial role in the professional life of the person. These media platforms have played a stellar role for social revolution, uprising and change of governments in Arab World. Most prominent example of this phenomenon known as Arab Spring is Egypt. This paper explains the impact of social media on global peace and security by taking the case study of Egypt.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Even a layman can communicate effectively using social media today. Father of the computer, Charles Bawedge invented the first computer in the beginning of 1st century. However, computer revolution has commenced in the last decade of the 20th century. Social media is used through internet. Applications like Whatsapp, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Hike, Telegrams are also successfully used for impactful interaction.

First use of social media was done in 1990. Geo Cities, created in 1994, was the first social media site. The premise was to enable people in 6 prominent cities to create their own website using this medium. It followed many changes in the field since then. But the real revolution came in when

Mark Zuckerberg started Facebook in 2004. It was followed by various social media sites like Twitter, Google Plus, Blog, YouTube, Linked In etc. There are no social, religious, political or

cultural boundaries to social media. Hence youth, thinkers, researchers are using it to get success in multiple field.

Social media is giving rise to a society, especially in developing countries, that is intellectually skilled/alert and well-versed with the modern thoughts. This resulted into increased public awareness and enhanced the ability of people to collectively voice their resentment against the contemporary government. A prime example of this was Egypt in early 2010s. Social media enabled the Egyptians to come in contact with each other instantly and people were able to connect with each other. This interaction, in turn, helped change the social situation. Jeffrey Gannam has said, 'Social media helps people with the same social ideology come together in Egypt. For the people who are physically separated from their families, social digital media is an effective tool to stay in touch with family, address social problems and create social revolution.' [1]

## **2. CALL FOR REVOLUTION BY EL SHAHEED**

Wael Ghonim writes about the Egyptian social revolution-'The day before the National Police Day in Egypt, El Shaheed posted on his 'We are all Khaled Saeed' Facebook page the protocol of the January 25 protest. The post covered six points: Who the protestors were, why they were protesting, why January 25 was chosen, the demands, the time and place of the meeting point for the protest, the protest guidelines, and the chants that were to be used. It stressed the point that the revolution was not to be a coup, but more so a revolution against the government to reclaim the people's right.' El Shaheed was the pseudonym used by Ghonim. This reveals that after the Tunisian revolution, Wael Ghonim firmly decided in his mind to hold, at least, protests in his country. Ghonim gave a call on his own to the Egyptian people for revolution with the twin objective of expressing solidarity with Tunisia and voicing discontent against the Mubarak regime.

Number of his followers was increased to 3.5 Lakhs by now. Ghonim, under the pseudonym of El Shaheed, called them all to join the anti-government protest. After consultation with his close associates, he finalized the date of January 25, 2011 for holding the protests. January 25 is observed as the Police Day in Egypt and is a public holiday. This day was especially chosen by Ghonim for demonstrations against the police brutalities and government policies. While describing those times, Ghonim writes - 'The location of the protest was announced, and the security threats started coming to the admin of the facebook page. They could not overstress the importance of maintaining a peaceful and disciplined approach. It was known that the security forces were going to be there who could make the protestors look thugs. They asked people to bring Egyptian flags and chant agreed upon chants- Long Live Egypt; Long Live Egypt; Bread ,Freedom, Human Dignity; Dear Freedom, where are you? Emergency Law is keeping us away from you. We will not fear. We will not bow as we have done for so long. It is my right to find work and love. The petty income is not enough'[3]. As the day of the protests neared, the support to them started to increase. At the same time, some influential people did not want the protests to happen.

This call of Al Shaheed received tremendous response. Within only 3 days, about 50, 000 people expressed their willingness to join the social movement protests. Though glad at the supporters' number, Ghonim was worried about one thing. Would the people expressing online support come on street in such huge numbers? He also raised this doubt in a Google chat. He said- Doubt about how this online support would get reflected in the actual protests disturbs my mind. Al Shaheed received

mixed response to his doubt. Some were optimistic. They firmly believed that there will be a social media-led revolution, social conditions will change and the atmosphere of fear in the society will disappear.

However, some termed Al Shaheed's call as ridiculous. They stated that there cannot be any revolution through Twitter. El Shaheed had only one response, "I do not know whether there would be any revolution or not. But I have no doubt that whatever I am doing is in the national interest. These demonstrations will indeed serve Egypt well."

### **3. DAY OF RESULT**

Apart from the support from the individuals, this movement received support from many political outfits. The 6 April Youth Movement was the most prominent amongst them. Similarly, Youth for Justice and Freedom, Coalition of the Youth of Revolution, the Popular democratic Movement for Change, National Association for Change and many other organizations declared their support to the demonstrations against the Mubarak Government.

The day of the result came- The day of the Anti-government movement announced from the platform of Facebook. Surprising the events on the day were reflection of the people's reactions on the internet. So Wael Ghonim claims – If you want to liberate the people, give them the internet[4]. After expressing solidarity on internet, people started coming to streets at various places. The cries of *Leave Mubarak, Leave Mubarak, Leave Mubarak* became deafeningly loud. The roads leading to the historical Tahreer Square in the capital city, Cairo, were crowded with the people. The protesters gathered there in the most numbers.

### **4. FIRST SOCIAL MEDIA-LED MOVEMENT IN THE WORLD**

Dhananjay Bijle writes – 'Young people outnumbered everyone else in this social media-led revolution in Egypt. Elite, techno savvy, brilliant youths wearing jeans and T-shirts were on the streets holding the placards. This movement was called from Facebook. This might be the first movement in the world that was called from a social media platform. The caller, El Shaheed, was himself not sure about the response. However, the phenomenal response stunned everybody- from the government to the general public. The movement was totally peaceful. People fought on their own through social media to overthrow the dictatorship of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt and change the draconian social conditions.' [5]

### **5. IMPACT ON GLOBAL PEACE AND SECURITY**

The world is looking at India as a rising superpower in 21<sup>st</sup> century. More than 16% of the global population lives in India. Being a secular country, India has a place for personal freedom. Hence, the social media is extensively used in India to express one's views. Kaplan Andreas states – 'A group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundation of web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-based content. This content helps a great deal for bringing people together and binding them based on common interests.' [6] Use of social media as per individual's choice has given rise to many challenges in India.

Use of social media in the daily lives of the people has increased across the globe. This extensive use of social media has impacted global peace and security to a large extent. Currently the most prominent

effect of use social media is to steal the data, to hack the password and to send the virus. Through social media people know each other, make friends and then abuse this 'friendship'. Facebook is used to malign the girls by uploading vulgar photographs. Number of sexual assaults through the social media-related incidents has increased in the big cities. The significant downside of the social media is its adverse effect on the productivity of the youth. Young people between 18 to 35 age group spend their time on unproductive activities like chatting or exchange of photo/video on social media. They spend hours sitting in front of computers which could have been used for many productive things. Social media has made people lose their interest in studies or agriculture or other meaningful things. This results in the loss of national productivity.

Social media needs internet, computer or mobile phone. So people are spending handsomely for the same that results in the misuse of money. It is an unfortunate thing for developing and undeveloped countries. People are addicted to Social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Google Plus, Twitter, Linked In. They keep on chatting till late in the night. They do not get adequate sleep. After careful analysis, the scientists have found that the young people are facing many health-related issues like Hypertension, headache, eye diseases, mental problems etc. All these have a negative effect on the world peace and security.

We can witness the tension in the relation between two countries as the information about one is purposefully used against the other. This creates serious threat to the world level security.

## 6. CONCLUSION

History of social media is less than 2 decade old. It was meant to bring the world together. It also has a premise to achieve national integration. However, the excessive use of this medium is affecting global peace and security. Now the whole world is like a family. This medium has helped humankind immensely. It has laso played a role in socio-political revolutions like Arab Spring. But it must not be forgotten that the pace of life has increased. Though there are benefits, there are crimes associated with it. Cybercrime is the newest form of crime as well as it has encouraged terrorism. Global peace is endangered by cybercrime and terrorism. Though these are negative effects, everybody knows that social media is here to stay. Since it is an independent medium, it should be considered as a platform to express one's views freely. As the Egyptian example has proven, use of social media can be made constructively for the benefit of society. It must be remembered that social media is for society and we all are part of the society. Moral thinking and positivity are essential to maintain global peace and security.

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