

Social Media Maybe Useless

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Abstract:

Businesses, Politicians, Celebrities use Social Media to further their best interests. They spend lot of time, effort and even money on Social Media. However the question is if Social Media does indeed further their interests. This paper presents data that provocatively proves that Social Media may not add much value. This paper collects data of politicians, celebrities and businesses from India to make rather sacrilegious, blasphemous and heretical argument.

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I. Introduction

Beginning in the 21st century, Social Media has started to occupy important space, rivalling electronic media of 20th century and traditional print media. And almost the whole world is on Social Media. Some people even presume that social media has replaced electronic media and traditional print media. Indeed Media Relations professionals have to include Social Media in their brochure of offerings.

Ordinary people also use social media, mostly to communicate with their friends and family. However ordinary people cannot get fame, power and success through social media. Hence this paper entirely stays out of the question of utility of social media for ordinary people. This paper restricts itself to the utility of social media to politicians, celebrities and businesses. This paper further restricts its analysis to only three forms of social media – Twitter, Youtube and Instagram. Furthermore this paper is restricted to India only.

This paper questions if social media is all that it is made out to be? Or is it the case of Much Ado about Nothing?

Social Media is Widespread

The world has almost 8 billion people and it seems almost 60% of people in the world are on social media. What is even better is that almost 90% of Internet users are on social media. The average time spent on social media is 2 hours per day. Every individual on an average uses 6-7 social media platforms and gender distribution is almost evenly distributed with women forming nearly 48% of users which is similar to gender ratio of world. Social media is growing at rate of 3% adding 150 million new users every year.

Social Media Platform	Number of Users in 2023 Approximately(millions)
Facebook	3000
Twitter	450
Instagram	1500
Youtube	2500
TikTok	1000

From Internet sources

Clearly if a platform has 500 million or 1000 million or 1500 million users, it is bound to be very attractive to politicians, celebrities and businesses to further their interests in terms of success.

Social Media Platform	Number of users in India in 2023 approximately(in millions)
Facebook	360
Twitter	25
Instagram	230
Youtube	500
Tiktok	200

From Internet Sources

Obviously both of the above statistics are very appealing to those who seek success through public approval.

Wide Popularity in Social Media

The best part is that not only social media is widely spread, but what makes it more enticing is that politicians and celebrities get huge number of followers, which may make it seem that social media can significantly pave their path to success.

Let us see social media followers of some politicians and political parties to start with. We will restrict ourselves to Youtube and Twitter only.

Politician Name/Party Name	Social Media Platform	Number of Followers (million)
NarendraModi	Youtube	16
NarendraModi	Twitter	90
ShashiTharoor	Twitter	8.4
Rahul Gandhi	Youtube	2.6
Rahul Gandhi	Twitter	24
BhartiyaJanata Party	Youtube	4.8
Congress Party	Youtube	3.38
Rajnath Singh	Twitter	23.7
ArvindKejriwal	Twitter	27.1
Yogi Adityanath	Twitter	25.7

From Internet Sources.

Clearly the huge number of followers can be very enticing for Politicians. Now let us see the number of followers for celebrities – movie stars and cricketers. While Politicians are more popular on Twitter, Celebrities are usually more popular on Instagram where they provide entertaining content and videos and photos. Hence for celebrities this paper uses their Instagram rather than Twitter or Youtube.

Celebrity Name	Number of Followers on Instagram(millions)
Amitabh Bachchan	35
KaartikAaryan	30
DeepikaPadukone	75
Shah Rukh Khan	39.7
Alia Bhatt	78.6
AnanyaPandey	24.5
Ranveer Singh	44.2
Salman Khan	63.8
ViratKohli	256
Katrina Kaif	74.7

Is Social Media Really Useful To Politicians or Political Parties?

Of course it would seem that social media is very useful to politicians and political parties. After all if on a social media you get millions of followers or subscribers and these followers or subscribers are potential voters, a tweet or a video can really entirely change political fortunes. However what is more important is not the number of followers or subscribers but how many people who actually see a tweet or a video. In the table below we have shown how many people actually see a tweet or a video. Of course, it is not possible to list all the videos or tweets and see how many people have seen it. What has been done instead is that 10 random tweets or videos are selected and average of number of people who have seen it is taken.

Politician Name/Party Name	Number of Followers (million)	Average number of people seeing 10 Randomly Chosen Posts	Percentage of Followers/Subscribers who see it
NarendraModi(Youtube)	16	187000	1.1
NarendraModi(Twitter)	90	9,50,000	1.05
ShashiTharoor (Twitter)	8.4	172000	2.05
Rahul Gandhi(Youtube)	2.6	280000	10.7
Rahul Gandhi (Twitter)	24	1700000	7
BhartiyaJanata Party(Youtube)	4.8	9400	0.19
Congress Party(Youtube)	3.38	74000	2.18
Rajnath Singh(Twitter)	23.7	122000	0.5
ArvindKejriwal(Twitter)	27.1	350,000	1.3
Yogi Adityanath(Twitter)	25.7	197000	0.77

As you can see in the table above, only 1% to 2% of followers or subscribers actually see a post(tweet or video). Rahul Gandhi gets 7% to 10% people to actually see the post. And in a democracy if you are not reaching to just 98% to 99% , then it can actually be hardly useful.

Indeed there is a social media war between political parties. But if 98 to 99% of people who are your followers on social media do not see your post, is that not a waste of medium.

More importantly, is social media useful at all. Politicians stake their career on social media and yet social media touches a very small percentage of population.

Is Social Media useful to Celebrities?

Celebrities are more followed on Instagram. And they get as much followers as Politicians. However again, their posts on Instagram, no matter how entertaining are seen by just 1 to 4% of people who follow them on Instagram. Thus social media does not help them in their careers. Instead social media is just a waste of time. In fact celebrities earn their fame through movies or sports and social media is just reflection of their popularity and does not enhance it.

Celebrity Name	Number of Followers on Instagram(millions)	Average Number of People Liking 10 randomly chosen post in Millions	Percentage of People Liking
Amitabh Bachchan	35	0.15	0.5%
KaartikAaryan	30	0.30	1
DeepikaPadukone	75	1.5	2
Shah Rukh Khan	39.7	1.5	3.75
Alia Bhatt	78.6	1.27	1.60
AnanyaPandey	24.5	0.3	1.34
Ranveer Singh	44.2	1	2.29
Salman Khan	63.8	1.7	2.68
ViratKohli	256	3.1	1.23
Katrina Kaif	74.7	3.0	4

Is Social Media useful to Businesses?

Companies get very few followers on social media. Yet companies have huge staff managing social media. You would expect employees to follow the companies they work for. Former employees also follow their company even after they have left it. So unless the ratio of number of people following a company on social media to number of employees is substantial, it is safe to say that social media is not helping company. As can be seen below the ratio of followers on social media to number of employees is insignificant, suggesting that social media is a waste for businesses as well.

Company Name	Followers on Twitter	Number of Employees	Ratio of Follower on Twitter/Number of Employees
Infosys	512000	336000	1.52
Wipro	538000	240000	2.24
TCS	560000	614000	0.912
Mastek	1888	5800	0.32
Datamatics	1387	10000	0.13
Seclore	1000	210	4.76
Zensar	85000	11000	7.72
Tech Mahindra	146000	152000	0.97
Hexaware	13800	14747	0.93
Mphasis	10100	29473	0.342

II. Conclusion

There is a wide spread belief that social media is important and worth investing in time, money and effort and that social media can provide benefits. However this paper proves that most of social media effort does not get any traction and while celebrities and politicians can get many followers very few of them actually see a post. As far as businesses are concerned, few apart from former and current employees may actually bother to follow the business on social media. Thus social media may be useless.