

FROM COURTROOMS TO NEWSFEEDS: SOCIAL MEDIA AS A TOOL FOR LEGAL AWARENESS

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Abstract

If we want to raise widespread awareness about the importance of the law, social media is our only option. As a whole, society may use social media to help its fight for justice. When a problem gets a lot of media exposure, people are more willing to rally behind it and work to find a solution faster than when the issue gets less attention. If the people do not know their rights and obligations, the purpose of any legislation that the government passes is for that law to be ineffective. Increasing one's own legal literacy is an important step in improving India's precarious situation in this area. This article aims to focus on legal literacy and how it benefits society. It also explores how social media may be used to promote legal understanding.

Keyword: Consumer, Government, India, Rural and Urban Area, Law, News, Online platforms, Young Generation

1. INTRODUCTION

Websites and applications that prioritize collaboration, content sharing, participation, and community input are together termed social media. Social media platforms are utilized daily by billions of individuals worldwide, with around 59% of the global population engaging with these platforms. The global social media user base comprises 4.76 billion individuals, with the typical user spending around 2 hours and 30 minutes on these platforms. Users are preoccupied with skimming through posts and seeing short videos and reels. The media-facilitated awareness serves as an effective instrument for implementation among the nation's populace. Legal awareness, commonly referred to as Public Legal Education, empowers individuals

concerning legal matters. It also encourages individuals to be aware of legal culture and informed about legislative engagement. It also enables individuals to vocalize their opposition to criminality. Non-Governmental Organizations in our nation play an effective role in raising awareness. The constitution of our country grants rights to the populace, establishes the judiciary as its protector, and empowers the courts while ensuring their independence.

Social media is a constantly expanding platform that has become an integral aspect of daily life for individuals. Through social media, individuals may connect, read, discuss, and produce information to raise awareness among the public. socioeconomic media serves as an effective instrument for influencing the people to become informed about the laws governing their society, regardless of their merit, as well as their corresponding rights and responsibilities, reaching many socioeconomic strata. Social media also has a role in shaping and transforming the Indian judicial system. Conversely, it also enhances public awareness of news, court orders, and legal information disseminated through social media platforms. Social media enables us to readily access answers to fundamental questions, eliminating the necessity of consulting books. This approach saves considerable time and facilitates the acquisition of knowledge with minimal effort; one merely needs to visit social media pages that offer legal information. However, it is important to verify the accuracy of the information. As a democratic society, all individuals are aware of their liberties and rights to live in accordance with established regulations.

Legal literacy, commonly referred to as legal education knowledge, empowers the people with societal legal issues. India possesses several laws across various areas; yet, due to a lack of awareness, the advantages derived from them are little. Illiteracy continues to prevail in

India, leaving residents unaware of the various legal measures available for their advantage. There is a necessity to educate individuals in this evolving society. It is essential to broaden the accessibility of legal instruction to the general populace. Individuals should be informed of the necessary guidelines and procedures for their advancement. Legal literacy also aids in combating injustice against women, so empowering them. The Honorable Mr. Justice Kabir has indicated that ignorance and lack of education are primary factors of prejudice against women with disabilities. Women must be cognizant of the legal protections for their rights to effectively lodge complaints with the relevant authorities and secure justice. It is imperative to acknowledge that fundamental legal education is the initial step toward India's ascendance as a superpower capable of effectively addressing social issues and avoiding the exploitation of its inhabitants.¹

2. DIGITAL YOUTH AND THE LAW: SOCIAL MEDIA AS A MEDIUM OF AWARENESS:

The advent of social media presents a duality of advantages and challenges. The benefits—be they religious, physical, or social—are eclipsed by the disadvantages. The decision about its utilization currently rests with the populace. Despite the circumstances and behaviors indicating that even legitimate social media users cannot protect themselves from unlawful operations. In the contemporary era, women allocate 68% of their time to social media, whilst males dedicate 32%. Some scientists assert that social media accounts for 80% of social prejudice, upheavals, and the disintegration of family systems.²

Facebook Depression, an emotional condition associated with social media usage, is the most recognized negative consequence of social media on adolescents. Individuals who perceive themselves as inferior to others on social media may succumb to despondency. Similarly, individuals exhibit greater interest in the activities of others than in dedicating time for self-reflection. Consequently, those who engage with social media more commonly experience despair and

¹ Available at: <https://ijalr.in/volume-1/issue-4/acceleration-of-legal-literacy-through-social-media-by-anshita-naidu-jahanvi-jain/> (Last accessed on 17 Dec, 2024)

² Available at <http://risingkashmir.com/the-impact-of-social-media-on-younger-generation> (Last accessed on 17 Dec,

anxiety due to its detrimental effects on their mood and cognitive functions.

(A) How to protect Young Generation

You may encourage appropriate social media use and reduce some of its harmful impacts by taking certain actions. Take into account these suggestions:

- **Define sensible boundaries**- Your adolescent should be instructed on utilizing social media without permitting it to disrupt their activities, sleep, food, or academic responsibilities. Restrict phones and tablets from teens' bedrooms and advocate for a nighttime ritual devoid of electronic media usage. Demonstrate compliance with these rules.³
- **Watch your teen's online activity**- Notify your adolescent that you will be regularly monitoring their social media sites. Strive to accomplish this at a minimum of once every week. Ensure you take action on it.
- **Describe what is improper**- Urge your child to abstain from disseminating rumors, engaging in harassment, or damaging the reputations of others, both in-person and online. Engage in a dialogue with your adolescent on the types of information that are suitable and secure for dissemination on social media platforms.
- **Promote in-person interactions with friends**- This is essential for adolescents susceptible to social anxiety disorder.
- **Discuss social media**- Discuss your own engagement with social media. Ask your adolescent about their social media usage and its impact on them. Advise your adolescent that images on social media are often exaggerated.

(B) Issues and Challenges

1. Wrong Information:

The primary issue in legal awareness is the dissemination of accurate information. The social media platform is universally accessible and readily available to

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³ Mayo clinic staff, <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/tween-and-teen-health/in-depth/teens-and-social-media> (Last accessed on 17 Dec, 2024)

anyone. The accuracy of supplied information is not assured, resulting in uncertainty and misunderstanding on legal matters. This can solely be accomplished by someone seeking to deceive or manipulate the public.

2. Share Limited Content:

A further issue with legal knowledge on social media is its restricted scope of information dissemination. Legal matters are inherently complicated, making it challenging to communicate all pertinent information on social media platforms. The lack of comprehensive and accurate information results in misdirection and misunderstanding among the population.

3. Legal Ethics:

Lawyers and legal experts are obligated to uphold ethical standards by disseminating truthful and accurate information without contravening any ethical guidelines. Maintaining this may be somewhat challenging on social media due to the presence of several individuals, some advocating for and others opposing the use of harsh language and nasty comments.

4. Language Barriers:

It is a worldwide platform; yet, the legal language has significant challenges for comprehension due to the complexity of legal terminology, which can result in confusion and misunderstanding. This can be especially difficult in areas where several languages are utilized.⁴

5. Online Fraud and Scams:

The surge in internet activity during the epidemic has correspondingly led to a rise in online fraud and scams. Similar to cyberbullying, social media is also employed

as a means to harass and intimidate those seeking legal aid.

"Equality before the law in true democracy is a matter of right. It cannot be a matter of charity or favour or of grace or of discretion." - Justice Wiley Rutledge (US. SC)⁵

3. FROM KNOWLEDGE TO JUSTICE: THE IMPACT OF LEGAL AWARENESS:

Legal literacy is the initial step in understanding the law that may transform individuals' lives. Social media is the most expedient method for disseminating legal knowledge, as it effectively facilitates connections with individuals. Socioeconomic media has shown to exert the most significant influence on individuals, affecting many socioeconomic strata extensively. It has now progressed to a point where unelected individuals from many nations determine our emotions, responses, and reactions to certain events. These decisions can either incite or suppress collective anger aimed at specific events or persons.

It positively influences society by promoting justice and reducing inequality, ensuring that individuals are cognizant of their rights and capable of safeguarding them. It renders all matters apparent when individuals are cognizant of the laws that regulate their existence. It also facilitates economic development.⁶

Legal awareness can be enhanced through various methods. Legal education need to be integrated into every school curriculum to provide knowledge of rights and responsibilities to students regarding their nation. The government and NGOs should collaborate on public outreach initiatives to disseminate legal information to the populace through campaigns, workshops, seminars, and webinars.

4. CONCLUSION

Legal knowledge constitutes the essential element of every democratic society. It empowers individuals by providing awareness of their rights and responsibilities towards their nation, hence promoting justice and

⁴ Available at:
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/355033543_Legal_Awareness_Compliance_by_Social_Media_Users_in_India (Last accessed on 17 Dec, 2024)

⁵ Available at:
<https://www.legalserviceindia.com/legal/article-82-legal-aid->

[and-awareness-in-india-issues-and-challenges.html](https://www.legalserviceindia.com/legal/article-82-legal-aid-) (Last accessed on 17 Dec, 2024)

⁶ Available at: <https://ijrl.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/ROLE-OF-SOCIAL-MEDIA-IN-LEGAL-AWARENESS.pdf> (Last accessed on 17 Dec, 2024)

mitigating inequity. In our collaboration, we guarantee that all individuals are informed of their rights and responsibilities, and that equity is maintained. Nonetheless, it cannot be accomplished without encountering hurdles and concerns; these obstacles must be handled to guarantee that legal knowledge on social media serves as an effective and dependable instrument. By understanding the laws, individuals may safeguard themselves and avert legal repercussions.

Social networking has demonstrated an impact on youth in both beneficial and detrimental manners. Individuals must determine whether to persist in utilizing the websites, cease usage, or impose limitations on their engagement. Parents have to guide and advise their children on contemporary topics such as social media use, warning them of the potential harm it may do if misused or overused. To ensure students practice prudence when utilizing social media, the educational curriculum should be revised to include social media studies within its disciplines.⁷

⁷ Impact of Social Media on Adolescent Behavioural Health in California." Impact of social media on Adolescent

Behavioural Health in California | National Clearinghouse on Families & Youth. N.p., 2011. Web. 20 Feb. 2017