Social Media And Its Effects On Society Today

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**Introduction**

Social media has played a vital role in impacting society. Social media serves a forum which brings people closer by exchanging ideas. The world has witnessed social media mobilizing masses for a cause and offer solutions to different problems (Amedie, 2015). Even people living in repressive countries are empowered to voice their dissent democratically (Amedie, 2015). Although social media allows people to connect with ease around the globe, it has born a negative impact on society by eroding the culture (Amedie, 2015). It has allowed people to replace physical human interaction (Amedie, 2015). Furthermore, it has snatched away the ability of people to think independently by allowing people to pursue narratives that tickle their ear and amuse their sense without considering the consequences (Amedie, 2015). Ironically, social media has turned us into the most antisocial generations. In the discussion ahead, I will explain the negative impacts of social media on society. The impacts are categorized into two categories; first, social media has developed a false sense of online connections that lead to various psychological complications. Second, social media has been employed as a tool to commit horrible acts by criminals.

**Discussion**

**Social media and psychological complications**

Excessive use of social media leads to numerous psychological complications. Youth today over-analyze and criticize each other and their issues. According to many pieces of research, a new term has been coined; "Facebook Depression" (Amedie, 2015). The name has been given by the researchers because Facebook is the largest social media platform. This has been defined as a type of depression that is found among the individuals spending excessive time on Facebook. Staying updated and seeking acceptance from friends has become a central element of the life of social media addicts. Constantly remaining in engagement adds an element of self-awareness which generates depression in many individuals (Amedie, 2015). Individuals experiencing "Facebook Depression" are at increased risk of isolation from society. Most of the times individuals turn to online help which advocates drugs to reduce the depression.

Apart from depression, social media is a source of anxiety among individuals using it. The anxiety is produced because the individuals are continuously trying to disseminate their unrealistic image among their social network. The anxiety produced due to excessive use of social media is because individuals try to project a perfect self-image at all times (Amedie, 2015). The continuous struggle to cultivate an image which displays perfection stimulates cortisol which is a stress hormone. This results in individuals experiencing anxiety.

People have been spending so much time over social media platforms that their personal lives are subjected to sufferings (Amedie, 2015). There is a growing trend of catfishing on social platforms which has affected numerous lives. The term catfish suggests that people create fake social media account to become friends with strangers. In the process of creating fake accounts, they steal the identity of others. This act of tricking has resulted in increased numbers of divorce across the country (Amedie, 2015).

The excessive use of social media renders irreparable damage to individuals making them increasingly anxious and depressed.

**Social media and crimes**

Apart from the psychological complications discussed in the previous section, social media has been used as a tool by criminals in many ways. The criminal minds have benefitted significantly from social media by lying to, attack, and hurt people in multiple ways (Salter, 2016). These criminal elements shroud their identities and commit a variety of horrible acts. These acts are cyberbullying, drug dealing, human trafficking, and cyber-terrorism (Salter, 2016). In the next two paragraphs, only cyberbullying and terrorism will be discussed.

Cyberbullying has become a major scourge for American society in the last decade. With the internet reaching every corner of the world, criminalistics minds bully people online. Cyberbullying is aggression demonstrated electronically. Most of the perpetrators conceal their identities and harass their victims (Salter, 2016). 25 percent of American teenagers have reported different posts, comments, and images over social media for bullying (Salter, 2016). The detrimental effect of this has resulted in teenager becoming suicidal. The link between cyberbullying and suicides has been consolidated by the fact that many teenagers who committed suicide wrote in their suicide note that they became the victims of uncalled for cyberbullying. It is incumbent on the government to enact stringent laws that provide strict punishment to the bullies.

Besides, many terrorist organizations have used social media to disseminate their narratives and compel people to join hands in spreading terror. The world has seen an increased layer of terrorism in the last couple of decades. Although terrorism organizations are based in many Muslim states, their ideology has been easily spread all over the globe. This argument was manifested by the terrorism model of the ISIS (Salter, 2016). The ISIS used cyberspace to project its propaganda across the globe. The ISIS had twitter handles, Facebook and Instagram accounts, though they were immediately shut down by the authorities. Many people from different countries reached Syria and Iraq to fight for ISIS (Salter, 2016). Those who could not make their way to Syria and Iraq started conducting terrorist activities in their countries of residence (Salter, 2016).

**Conclusion**

The positive benefits of social media are undeniable. However, the negative impacts of social media are both more in number and complications. The excessive use of social media has made people anxious and depressed. Moreover, incidents of cyberbullying and terrorism have surged due to the prevalence of the internet and social media. There is a dire need of enacting strict policies that not only limit excessive use of social media but also provides harsh punishment for misusing it to harm mankind.

**References**

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