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Social Media: Encouraging or Discouraging Socialization

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Abstract

Today's are the time of fast pacing technologies. In the face of ever growing technology human life is increasingly driven by new gadgets and tools, rather it became dependent on technological resources from menial to noble jobs. It is just impossible to imagine now the life without mobile internet, computer and social media. Out of these technologies of communication and information the social media is the one which has changed our ways of interaction, communication, sharing, talking, connecting, expressing and learning. Various social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Youtube, Whatsapp are facilitating learning in all forms from the comfort of the home. One can learn and perform almost anything through these social media platform from pin to plane, from scratch to rocket. This article throws light on how social media as cutting edge technology surpassing and over powering all traditional agencies of socialization which used to play central role in learning and development till birth to death.

Introduction

Socialization or simply called learning is a constant process through which an individual learns socially expected behavior, cultural norms and values. This is a lifelong process starting from childhood continues till old age. At the initial stages of this process children learn how to become a contributing productive and respected member of their society. Socialization has a significant impact on the development of children during early stages of childhood. It is the process through which and individual is molded into an effective

participant of society. Socialization teaches social roles and responsibilities. The process of socialization is mainly aimed at the development of self and formation of personality with skills and capacities making and individual a good fit for society. The function transmission of culture from generation to generation is performed through this process.

Social media can be understood as online facilitator of human networks who enhances social connectivity in the network of individuals. It refers to the means of interaction among people in which they create, share and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. Social media is a composite term for websites and applications that focus on communication, interaction, content-sharing and community based inputs. People use social media to stay in touch and interact with family, friends and various communities. Lately social media has come up as an effective and powerful tool of learning about local and global.

Importance of Socialization

Socialization is the process whereby the helpless infant gradually becomes a self-aware, knowledgeable person, skilled in the ways of the culture into which he or she was born. (Giddens 2006)

Talcott Parsons (1956) has analyzed two forms of socialization primary socialization and secondary socialization. Primary socialization happens in primary groups during early years of childhood within family, peers, groups of close friends, neighbors. The primary socialization is very crucial because of two important processes: one, the internalization of society's culture two, the construction of personality. The importance of family in primary socialization stated by Parsons "families are factories which, produces human personalities". Secondary socialization occurs during later years in secondary groups such as school and work association. Individuals and groups who contributed to socialization are called agents of socialization. Role of the agents is very influential in process of socialization because we have established strong relationship with them. As children our lives are tightly controlled by our primary caregivers. Through limitation and interactions we begin to shape our understanding of behaving in the home and in the public. What children learn here most likely to carry as move forward is their life and is everlasting.

Effect of Social Media on Socialization

Lately internet, mobile and social media the latest communication technologies have become important agents of socialization. Once, televisions used to be a critical force in the

socialization of children all over the world. The average child born that time spent more time watching television than in any other activity except sleep. Spread of mass media accompanied by electronic media, now digital media and social media have become all-encompassing medium of learning and growing. Much research has been done to assess the effects of these media on various aspects of society and its functions. The most extensive study carried out by George Gerbner on the impact of television on propensities to crime and violence for all the major American networks since 1967. On average 80 percent of programmes contain violence, with a rate of 7.5 violent episodes per hour. Children's programmes show even higher levels of violence although killing is less commonly portrayed. Cartoons depict the highest number of violent acts and episodes of any type of television programme (Gerbner 1976).

On the same lines research and studies are going on how social media is impacting our learning experiences in present times. In no time we can know and learn and about different cultures and societies of the world through social media. In this process we are overlooking our own culture and surroundings. In some way social media has provided us the seamless opportunity to be the most socialized creature in the world but, at the same time this has created possibilities that we are losing the sight of our close environment, neighborhood, friend and family relationship.

Socializing in Common or Unique Culture

In family we were taught our own culture and social roles because societies have unique culture that distinguished one culture from another. Through social media we are heading towards common culture norm, which is dangerous for indigenous cultural practices and learning. Social media is drifting us away from our core cultural identities necessary to sustain a fulfilled and contented life.

Socialization in Real and Virtual Spaces

When there were no media and social media children used to learn and socialize in the intimate contact of family members whom had direct control upon children's behavior what they should learn and how they should be taught. There was a mechanism of direct reward and punishment on learning behavior to ensure that socialization always moves in positive direction in real world. In the times of fast pacing technology world we are losing control over ourselves and over our next generation. We find ourselves lagging in use of technology where new generation takes the control of these devices. We leave them with devices to

learn as they wish on virtual spaces. We are losing our handholding on our generation due to not being up to date.

Are We Learning Own Culture

When socialization takes place in close primary groups it is called primary socialization which has long lasting effects on child's character and personality building. Here children are taught very basic and necessary cultural practices which are indispensable for an individual to become self-dependent and self-reliant. The language, religion, food habits, clothing are fundamental to human survival. Social media is taking us away far from our own culture making us keen and peeping in others life, where we become so engrossed in others life-style and culture that we don't find any charm in our own cultural practices a start taking it for granted.

Socialization under Surveillance

In traditional learning process there is a mechanism to test and evaluate that through socialization children learn only those practices and behavior that are beneficial for their life forward and negative socialization is checked through various sanctions informally. Members of family and neighbors are really concerned about the child and its future as a whole.

Socialization through social media is devoid of this safety measure. What to see and what not to see is a serious matter and requires a minimum level of social media literacy on the part of parents. Social media is open space where children learn whatever they feel like or they come across. The substance and messages on social media are alluring.

How Socialization Occurs

Socialization in conventional manner happens in step by step and in a quite systematic way. Children don't feel overwhelmed and confused during different stages of learning. It also occurs in a very calculated manner, who teaches what, when and how much. They don't get everything bundled at once rather in gradual process. Social media platforms are always accessible without restriction of time and space. Where unlimited knowledge and information is continuously coming in every moment, this feels like information over loaded. There is a fair chance that one may skip the important and carried away by unimportant under continuous flow of information. In person socialization provide maximum chances of useful and positive learning by protecting from handful and negative experiences. Social media does not offer such demarcation between right and wrong.

Social media is lucrative and addictive in nature because it has profound impact on brain functioning. Use of social media tapping and hitting the buttons on screen activate release of dopamine, an important neurotransmitter and hormone that influences mood, feelings of reward and motivation. Due to surge of dopamine in brain, we feel pleasure, satisfaction and motivation while learning through social media.

Conclusion

There is no denying that social media has become integral part of life and learning. In the light of above discussion it is equally true that Gen Z and Gen alpha, born in the era of technology, they are grown up with mobile, internet and social media. These technologies have facilitated various function of molding and shaping of new generation by sharing responsibility of family and parents. We have to be cautious while over-relying on these media for our part and function to our children and young ones. Learning at early age happens effectively only in face-to-face direct interaction. Socialization through social media and in family setting can be compared to differences in behavior on screen and off screen activities. Let not social media be the only agent of socialization by understanding firmly the need of the hour to nurture future generations. Failing which may pose serious threat to our cultural identities.

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