

Chapter 7

Impact of Social Media on Environmental Awareness

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ABSTRACT

Social media has become a part and parcel of present day lifestyle. With the advancement in industrialization, science, technology, and globalization various environmental issues are taking place locally and globally. This social media can be utilized as a tool to promote awareness regarding various current environmental issues in a much faster way and to a large mass within a very short span of time. The importance of environmental education in determining the value of social media can be done through interaction between environmental educators and students or common people. People are using social media nowadays to support environmental campaigns and to connect people locally and globally on minor to major environmental issues. It also provides ordinary people with the ability to track the quality of the air, water, climate around them, and then share this data with others. The present chapter will focus some of the advantages of social media over creating environmental awareness and developing connectivity among the people with some examples and case studies.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-5291-8.ch007

INTRODUCTION

Facebook, QQ, WhatsApp, QZone, WeChat, LinkedIn, Skype, Google+, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat – all these names are very much known in present days. These are top rated social media networks that are bonding people globally. Every social networking sites have their own format own style own attraction and applications. Overall all of these social networking platforms are doing excellent work in the promotion and action on various issues of environment. From global warming, climate change to solid waste management, renewable energy news, these social media are very much active with participation of a large number of people especially the youth or young generation (Robelia, Greenhow & Burton, 2011). Technology has given people the ability to change some of their behaviours and conduct clean and green business but still people are not keeping up with the pace of the environmental changes happening locally and globally because of indiscriminate utilization of natural resources. Social media has become an important tool for providing a space and means for the public to participate in influencing or disallowing environmental decisions made by governments and corporations that affect all. This has developed a mode for people to get connected with local environmental challenges and interpretations to larger-scale stories that will affect the global community (Warner, Eames & Irving, 2014).

Social media has rapidly become an essential marketing and communication tool for Govt., private, public and non-governmental organisations, institutes, and autonomous bodies across the world to promote their organizational mission, vision, action, publications, events and initiatives. Common people use social media to post or share real time photos on a variety of environmental issues such as air, water, noise, soil, solid waste pollution, forest fires, chemical or oil spills in waterways, illegal dumping, plastic menace, affected plants or animals. This simple, yet effective action can result in prompt awareness of an environmental incident and timely response from various agencies responsible for the environment (Roshandel Arbatani, Labafi & Robati, 2016).

Five important areas where social media is affecting the environment include:

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