

Facebook: Self-experiences, Superiorities and Deficiencies in Afghanistan

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Abstract: Social media and Social Networks are an important part of modern journalism that their roles in globalized world and 21st century cannot be understated. Facebook is one of the most widely used and popular social networks in many countries. According to surveys India, United State of America and Indonesia are the three countries which have the most Facebook users.

In Afghanistan among those people who access to internet 95 percent have a Facebook account. Insecurity, corruption, instable governance, poverty, lack of initial life facilities are the key problems in Afghanistan people's life. After Taliban collapsed in 2001 the new western backed government tried to solve the mentioned problem as possible but many of them is still as has been before.

Social Networks user especially Facebook users in Afghanistan are one of the biggest critics of government. Corruption, historic root problems like racism (ethnic Nationalism) and over mentioned challenges are the points which Facebook users always try to highlight the weakness of government for solving these problems. This controller role has its superiorities and deficiencies. For instance, Afghanistan is a multi-ethnic country and competing for role of state is an historic problem between ethnic groups, during elections the Facebook user are divided into ethnic groups and it weakens the power of central government and also break down the national trend.

In other hand the social media and especially Facebook has played valuable roles in counter corruption, civil advocating, women rights and empowermentⁱ, freedom of expression and many more. This mean is that, positive consequences of social Networks are much more considerable than negative one, which is amendable by making regulations and using frameworks.

Keywords: Internet Access, Social Networks, Facebook Superiorities and Deficiencies in Afghanistan, Self-Experience.

1. INTRODUCTION

Taliban the previous political regime of Afghanistan defined the internet illegal even they stopped the broadcasting of TV stations as they said its disseminating counter Islamic believe contents. The post-Taliban regime which is backed by United State of America and its alliances allowed to the private telecommunication companies to be established and pave the way for public accessibility of internet in Afghanistan. Afghan wireless communication company (AWCC) was the first company which launched the 2G internet generation on 2002. Etlisalat Telecommunication Company has awarded the first 3G internet on 2012 and it was a key advanced point in internet access and its speed in Afghanistan. According to Afghanistan telecom regulatory authority (ATRA) 76% of internet user have been accessed to internet through their smartphone on 2014. (Social media in Afghanistan, 2017). The 4G LTE was lunched by AWCC on 2017 and the other private and governmental company supposed to start their 4G service in the future.ⁱⁱ Presently, the every capital of 34 provinces can use the 3G and some of them also can use 4G service but there are some villages and districts that the people do not have access even to mobile phone services because of mountainous location and impassable ways. A survey by Asia foundation on 2016 shows that 89 percent of afghan family access to mobile phone service somehow. Internet accessibility has increased to 37/8% in 2018 which was 32/8% in 2017 (Tabasum Akseer & others, 2018). There are six telecommunication companies in Afghanistan which four of them are private (ROSHAN, ETISALAT, MTN AND

AWCC) and two governmental nominated SALAM and AFGHAN TELECOM. Despite of company diverse the internet rate is also as the past 250 Afs per 1 GB. The internet user and mass media activist launched a campaign which was entitled where is ATRA to make pressure at the Afghanistan telecom regulatory authority to decrease the rate of internet package, the consequence was the declining of internet rate to 115Afs per 1GB by Salaam Telecommunication Company.ⁱⁱⁱ

According to national and international surveys there are 67 percent of afghan people under 35 years old, and more than 80 % of social network users are also among this generation. 96 % of social networks user can read and write in the country which the rate of public literacy is 38 percent (internews, 2017). Facebook, Facebook Messenger, twitter, YouTube, Whats Up, Imo, snap chat and Viber are the most common social networks and online platforms in Afghanistan. Facebook is the most famous social network which is used by 95 percent who access to internet, and the other networks are in next orders. (Social media, 2017) The telecommunication companies has special appraisal and promotion for Facebook network users like daily, weekly and monthly bundles that's why the Facebook is the most famous and has the widely users in Afghanistan. Rohan Telecommunications Company was the first company that appraised special offer for Facebook using and then the other companies tried to imitate and make special offers for social networks at all.

2. METHODOLOGY

This research is a combination of librarian and case study of internet and Facebook using in Afghanistan. For collection data There has been conducted some surveys be Altai consulting and Internews and also Asia foundation about internet accessibility and especially Altai consulting has conducted surveys about using of Facebook in Afghanistan that I have used as primary resources in this paper.

For pros and cons measurement of Facebook there have chosen some serious topic which has been discoursed in Facebook virtual space in Afghanistan, like corruption, instability and insecurity weak governance, discrimination against women and so on. The online Facebook campaigns and their consequences has been analysed according to values and achievements. Pros and cones analysing were documented by government official's expression and some piece of writing proves which has been published in printing media or online platforms in Afghanistan.

3. DISCUSSION

I argued that social media and especially Facebook has many good and bad impact in the Afghanistan and it depends to the netizen utilization. I believe that social media and especially Facebook which it is using by myself has their positive and negative effects in multidimensional aspect of our life.

3.1. *Internet and social networks self-experience*

This paper was a good reason for me to review my Facebook profile, I never known that how much I have changed, since 2009 I read all of my Facebook contents and posts again, there were many things from first years of using Facebook that I am not agree with now, many different ideas I have had on that time I will never have again, some of those sense and trends that I believed five or six years ago they seems to be ridiculous now. What does it mean? I think the response is that, I have changed. Naturally because I passed age's period to become adult and experience more bittersweet moments of life. Without online platform which I used and it achieved all moments it was not sensible and tangible. Social media and especially Facebook can be important in our growth procession as I experienced in my personal life. Practically I knew how to deal with different cognition and perspectives.

Unfortunately Afghanistan has spent three decade of imposed war by regional and global super power countries and our people have suffered many tragedy and worse situation. Under this condition the mistrust and non-believable space has extended and the toleration and dialog spaces has been died. Being in social media is an opportunity to open a new dialog perspective and culture for interaction and public discourse which are not possible in certain places.

Why I and most of other Afghans do not use other social networks as most as they use Facebook? If this question is asked from Afghan social networks activist that, why you do not use the other social networks, beside of their favor of Facebook and commonly using of it, they will answer that we cannot afford for using of other social networks. As it has said before 1GB internet is selling 250 Afs which is about 3 US Dollar^{iv}. All telecommunication companies have special

offers for using of Facebook which is cheaper than the other offers. For instance you can activate 1GB of Facebook by 120 Afs but if you want to activate the other offers you should to pay at least 250 Afs for each 1GB.

3.2. Superiorities & Positive points

Social media and especially Facebook which is widely used among Afghans people has its own goodness and evilness. Afghanistan is a post-crisis country which is transitioning to stability and democracy. According to Democracy values, free expression is the core element of this ideology and state structure, that's why the free flow information has known a key factor for state evaluation and supervision. Regarding to this part, social media especially Facebook has played significant roles in public awareness, news resource, state evaluation, counter corruption, women right, human rights, environmental campaigns and so on. Facebook has facilitate the procedure of free flow of information among government officials. Meanwhile, the lack and obstacle of availability to official news and information is one of the most serious critics which is permanently asked by Afghan Journalists. Nowadays, there are many news and reports which are collecting and broadcasting via mainstream media according to information which has been shared by official on their official Facebook pages^v. Facebook users has played constructive roles in different national process like Electric National Identity cards which a part of government tried to enrolled a word as nationality which the most of afghan people were not agree with, it was really hard to make a referendum by the government on such emergence time so that the social media user launched a campaign, according to that the all ethnic group will be enrolled beside the nationality and the Electronic National Identity card law was adopted under pressure of social media especially Facebook users.

Also, the Ex-parliament election result was postponed for six months and it was strongly faced to Civil Society and Social Networks user critics. The government took the all commissioners to the prosecuting attorney because of misusing of their qualification and corruption during parliament election and the court has sentenced them to the jail.^{vi}

Where is ATRA? Is one of the other social networks campaigns which made the Afghanistan Telecom Regulatory Authority to decrease the rate of internet in Afghanistan It was one of the other effective role and big achievements of social media and especially Facebook in Afghanistan.^{vii} More importantly Facebook and other social networks are as a widow through fact of other world, you can experience as it is. In traditional media if you want to know the other world the difference between people through them there is someone who is monitoring and gatekeeping the contents which flows up through the media and the content is something that obviously chose to be shown but the social media space is none- mediate world because of that many taboos are breaking. Breaking taboos are one of the other important key points that social media especially Facebook accomplished in Afghanistan.

Advocating is another key positive point of social media and particular Facebook in Afghanistan there are many serious topics and case which were led by Facebook users. Lynching of Farkhunda is one the most disgusted event after presence of American and its alliance in Afghanistan. She was killed in brutal way by a mob of furious people, it was wrongly alleged that she has burnt the holy Koran. Some of official also support this inhuman manner by posting on their Facebook accounts when video of violence and brutal murdering of Farkhunda published in an anonymous Facebook account and the people saw the depth of the tragedy under pressure of public opinion and social media user the all people was regretted about such heinous and evil behave that was occurred with that innocent girl. It was the most tragic event not just for afghan women that saw the video with their eyes also for international and other community it was the worst event. The public opinion and Facebook user has requested to the official who had somehow confirmed the lynching of Farkhunda should to apologize from all the people and resign from their position and finally the two official were ousted by the government (NORLAND, 2016). The committed stakeholders of this inhumane lynching sentenced to the prison.

3.3. Deficiencies and Negative points

In spite of all these things there are some negative points that faced the society to more and more challenges and difficulties. As we know social media are not as easy as traditional media to be regulated and well-disciplined. Fake Facebook accounts which are spreading illegal content, online harassments, scandals, defamation, abuse to people, institutions and believes are the most challenging and serious problem for those country which have not a specific and arranged cyber system like Afghanistan. There are hundreds of fake Facebook accounts which propaganda against the legal government of Afghanistan these accounts are related to political opposition and also terrorist groups like Taliban who are fighting against the government and people of Afghanistan right now^{viii}. The afghan government has tried to adopt the law of cyber-criminal but it has not finalized yet. Aman Ryazat the spokesman of ministry of justice said "in

panel code of Afghanistan, in second part of first chapter there are denounced a large number of cyber-crimes which is criminalized and punishable” (8am, 2018). There are many cyber-crime files which has not prosecuted because lack of law and regulation in this field. Beside hacking of governmental sites especially the national security council of Afghanistan for twice, there has been many cases which are depend to social media and especially misusing of social network like Facebook, several personal and official accounts has been hacked and there is no any official organization to persecute them. For instance a group of hackers had taken video from a girl and then warned her to pay money for avoiding the publishing of the film on public pages or also the hacker took the control of private account and penetrate to his private photos, then they blackmailed him to pay 500 thousand Afs though they will publish it on public sites. He said no one was helping him and he had to give them ransom. (Fragile security of cyber space in Afghanistan, 2018). Afghanistan government already has sent official letters to Facebook Company according to Ministry of Telecommunication and Information Technology of Afghanistan there has written if Facebook does not observe the domestic law and regulation of Afghanistan and did not close the fake accounts the afghan government will filter the Facebook site in Afghanistan (bahzad, 2019).

Blindly and superficial judgment are the other problems and challenges of Facebook users in Afghanistan, on mid of 2016 a women whose name was Farkhunda wrongly she accused to burned the holy Koran, the Muslims Holy book. She had lynched by a mob of people they run a car over her then burnt his body and killed her intensively in a brutal way. It was originated from a Facebook page by the name of Sharaf Baghlani but the investigation had shown which she had not burnt the holy Koran she just had argued with the religious man who was setting in Sha-E-Dushamshira masque he was selling the amulet. Then he shouted the mob and accused her that has burnt the holy Koran. (ROD NORDLAND and JAWAD, 2016). But after investigation it was seemed that she was innocent and all those who were accused to killed her sentenced by the court.

In modern world time is the most valuable thing this mean we should to use from every moment of our life which will not come back. Social networks damages 150 million pound daily to England economy a big part this loss is due to consuming of the time for patrol of these sites. According to a survey on 3500 UK companies 233 million hour monthly time has been wasted for using of social media by their staffs.^{ix} Facebook users in Afghanistan especially the young generation spends most of their time whit Facebook, social media are an open platform of communication you can find any one from every part of the world if a person wants to spend his/ her time with using of Facebook it will have sufficient and different amusing content like text, pictures, videos, games and... so on. It can be very harmful for students who are hope to make the future of country. And also some of government clerk who are using internet they spend a lot of their time for using of Facebook that's why many official organization has filtered the social networks and social media sites in official organization during work time in Afghanistan.

Family relationship is really traditional in Afghanistan that's mean there are many restricted role should to obey in an Afghan family. Afghan family are mostly very close together a man may the father of the family will be responsible for all expenditures and outdoors and all other man also should to work hard for getting more money to afford their necessities (Linda Merrill, 2006). The men should to work all day to afford the family and during the night they should to set with their wives and children and just spend their time with them. Now days Facebook takes the time of being together and it makes a real problem between men and their wives and if it protract for some days there should be find an emotional gap in their relationship. According to investigation utilizing of social networks are like to be addicted to them, 350 million are addicted to Facebook syndrome.^x In Afghanistan beside of other harms the misunderstanding between family members are one of the most common and serious problem which is formed as an impact of irregular using of Facebook and other social media.

4. CONCLUSION

Social networks especially Facebook which is used mostly by youth generation and literate peoples has penetrated to every aspect of their life. Facebook is a complex of events, memories, happiness, condolence and congratulations which I have felt in my personal live as a user of Facebook. Mostly Facebook users in Afghanistan are judged according to their virtual personality which is made in virtual space of Facebook. Facebook has changed and facilitate the ways of reputation and being well-known. Competition on publishing news, valuable content and common favorites made many people as reputed even there is few such reputed from traditional media.

Social media perception is ongoing in promotion able in future of Afghanistan but it still depends how the government stability and express policy will be prolong. Social media and especially Facebook has played many and many key point and valuable function that hopes to be protracting and continuing these key elements will able the citizens to accomplish their own responsibilities and take part for a self-sufficient and stable country. The different campaigns of online media had worked successfully, advocating process was well ended the counter corruption struggle by social media activist were achievable and more importantly being the voice of those illiterate majority who are not able to stand and defend their rights is a conscionable combat and It will has its own positive result.

In spite of positive paths and achievements there are some negative ways that the policy makers and all charged should make solution for them uncontrollability and penetration should be solved by arranging the law and regulations to can preserve the cyber space security. Understandably every phenomenon has its own good and bad it depends on up how we deal with we should try to educate the correct way of social media utilization to our youth generations it's one of the basic solution that every family can do it with their members.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Social Networks are the exigencies of 21th century, these are the tools which Marshal McLuhan had predicted in 60 decade for global village, and they connect us to each other and help us to be get in touch in every corner of this global village.

Neither we ignore them and nor we cannot use them as global village connecting tool in such way they are, social networks which are using all over the world without any border should to seem as the mirror of diversity, humanity and multiplicity.

There are some suggestion and recommendation to all people which are using Facebook in Afghanistan it includes the government, teachers, university professors and family as the base educational platforms in Afghanistan.

1. The Facebook social networks which is using worldwide can be disciplined much more than now, there should be planned to make much more regulations according to users diversities and values.
2. The Afghan government should to encourage the domestic social networks version as it was previously designed by Afghan students, it empowers the initiation and creativity of young generation and the National values and standard will be observed much more domestically.
3. According to Afghanistan constitution it's the every afghan rights to access to the information and publish or broadcast his/her perceptions and opinions so the telecommunication companies can facilitate it by expanding their coverage and offering the social networks bundles and reducing of internet package prices.
4. Public awareness and media literacy can reduce the negative points of Internet and Facebook using as it is valuable in mainstream Media as well. The in charge governmental organization specially the ministry of education and ministry of higher education can make up left public awareness about media utilizing based on teaching and initiating of specific curriculum.
5. Family and parent can play their effective role in giving logical and beneficial path way and guidelines for the youths and teenager which shows them to how they can use Facebook and other social Networks in less hazardous ways.

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