

How to Drive Social Change through Social Networking

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Social networking is a Magic wand- the power of which is getting to be seen incrementally as the Internet becomes an inseparable part of our lives. India, blessed with a sizeable chunk of the population around 30 yrs of age, is at an opportune position to take control of this century powered by all the right things-one of which is Social Networking (SNing). SNing has unmatched advantages with a cross section of the literate population speaking English. But then the threats are real and debilitating.

One of the most important threats is the lack of equitable development across rural and urban pockets, corruption, lack of a speedy justice delivering system, Information asymmetry among the populace on development issues, Voter apathy, Criminalisation of Politics, Politics not being seen as a career option by youngsters, lack of Women empowerment in various pockets of the country. All the above can be effected through a wave of coordinated attempts for which Social Networking is a Boon.

Social Networking as a Boon to Aam Aadmi:

The power of social networking is immense no doubt, earlier we used to communicate through 'snail' mail where information sharing was itself a challenge as it was extremely time consuming and expensive. The pace of social revolution suffered. Today we have millions of people getting connected instantaneously through the power of Social Networking...The power of Social Networking is immense as it has the capability of not only bringing in millions of people from different background but the cost of bringing them under a discussion forum is near negligible.

The true spirit of a great and robust India can only be fully realized when the country becomes one where growth is all pervasive where the difference between the haves and the have nots, the real poverty stricken and the ultra affluent, narrows down. This is one where speedy justice is ensured. This is one where Geography is truly History, it should not matter whether a person is in Malegaon or Mulund. **It is one where the power of activism is not a prisoner of location of the activists.** Where truly the Keypad is mightier than the sword. One of the things that social change can bring about is an awareness of dowry harassment etc.

Be it the NREGA, be it Campaign against Dowry, other domestic disputes, be it the Campaign against Alcoholism or be it the quest to understand the latest farming techniques and agricultural developments and sharing thought processes like the Bt seeds. From all these perspectives there is huge power of SNing that is waiting to be tapped.

Social Networking –The Power to Change your Life and the Lives of Generations to Come:

Social networking is not merely about a community of users sitting in different parts of the world/country sharing jokes and spoof videos. It is about a huge wave of social activists displaying the courage which has great potential to change the way we live.

Future elections would be fought on the internet, powered by SNing. Candidates with better online presence, better participation in online discussion forums and the ones who are receptive to feedback are

bound to make a better impact among net savvy users. With the parallel advent of 3G and other initiatives to improve broadband/net access across the country and given all the other positives, Social networking is here to stay.

Social Networking and the Power of Consumerism:

Social Networking is an extremely powerful tool in Consumerism. The rights of consumers can be easily shared and discussed through Sning. For example, it would have been difficult to counter the practices of large corporates in the pre Sning era, but not anymore. Sning gives the platform for an aggrieved consumer to voice his/her opinion to take the issue to its logical conclusion. The power of Sning is here to stay. Companies are taking this very seriously, recently a CEO was intimidated of a delay in the delivery of a SUV (of a popular SUV maker in India) and the complainant got his vehicle delivered within 48 hours of raising the issue to the CEO, through an Sning platform. There are multiple instances of health insurance companies and other service providers taking action after a splash in the Sning sites which spreads in no time.

Social Networking and Budding Entrepreneurs

India is a nation which requires Job Givers. Sning is a great platform to discuss ideas, to bring all the factors of production together. Many a time budding or would be Entrepreneurs require motivation to take the plunge, which can be a catalyst not only for them for the society around them. As our Nation grows to be a superpower these are the changes are the pre requisites to bring out the Entrepreneur in all of us.

Social Networking-Building a Knowledge Society:

Social Networking and RTI

For any mass based movement to be very effective, it has to have a huge mass appeal. In today's fast paced world where people are running behind their own agenda, it is critical to galvanize opinion on a particular interest area. Sning acts as the platform to bringing people together.

Decentralisation of power to Panchayats has been the key plank of the present government, and quite rightly so. The impediments in the achievement can be greatly overcome by social networking.

Social Networking: A Boon to a good hiring policy for India Inc:

Corporate India can actually check quite a lot of information from the online presence of a candidate. The recommendations and the profile that the candidate has online through his SN site can go a long way in identifying the best candidate for the right position. It can make the process of recruitment highly efficient and eliminate the requirement of the candidate to seek a suitable fit. It would be a case where the company and the job seeking candidate benefit from the SN revolution.

Social Networking- A boon to the Justice seekers:

Social Networking brings out the best in us, in terms of Ideas, the fruits of those ideas get to the most required section of the society. Sning enables knowledge sharing and the awareness of rights of every citizen of the land. This would encourage people voicing protests seeking rights through various means both through the judiciary and through the executive. There can be numerous cases which can be thought of like that of Jessica Lal's case, SPS Rathore's case, the Bhopal tragedy which are creating a huge flutter because of the social networking. There is tremendous amount of sharing of information and galvanizing opinion that is getting possible because of Sning.

Sning as a free consulting service:

Right from understanding geographies for a first time traveler, businessmen the online chat forums offer huge advantages.

Social Enlightenment is the key to the population becoming aware. Spread Social Messages- Best way to communicate with Youngsters, people on the move, the Next Gen is to spread social messages right from anywhere to anywhere through a SN platform.

Unnecessary Litigation- Avoided

Indian courts are already flush with pending cases. Take, for example, a case of a marital discord..A social network can, while maintaining anonymity of the concerned, discuss the issues at hand, at length, and come to a conclusion which can be suitable to both parties.

Social Networking and Creative Thinking/Thought Leadership:

Social networking (Sning) can be used for

1. Forming a geographical clique to get to interact with like minded people on a particular topic- the advantages of giving to seeming simple and outlandish thought can be potentially life changing. Contributions from multiple heads may lead to a much better refined thought. Most of the time we have a like minded group with a SN forum interested in fine tuning our thoughts.
2. Sning can help people communicate with each other during a crisis; say a set of people in Australia can help a village in Rajasthan through an NGO based in Singapore by sharing their inputs on water conservation, wheat harvesting techniques etc.
3. Sharing of best practices can help tremendously, be it in farming or in Practical Marketing. A success can be replicated.
4. Governments can learn about acceptance of their various policies.
5. Discussion papers can be thoroughly read and interpreted to bring about a robust platform.
6. True democracy will flourish with people sharing opinion and thoughts pouring in. Collective Decision making will thrive.

Social Networking and a Giving Society

Last but the most important of all, Social Networking has the unique power to connect the haves and the have nots, the needy and the neednot. It is truly borderless and makes the society what it is today. Charity being an integral part of any society makes the wheel move for the downtrodden. Amidst all the crass, Charity thrives- one of the most important reasons is the connectivity through social networking.