

Published:
May 27, 2025

Social Media and Pakistan: A Conceptual and Descriptive Estimate of Social Media's Impacts on Pakistan

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Abstract

The article under consideration provides a conceptual and descriptive estimate of Social Media's impacts on Education, Students, Youth, Politics, Religion and Business in Pakistan. It covers the historical genesis of social media and gradual expansion of its impact in the world. The article focuses primarily on Pakistan and its society. It attempts to indicate that social media can be a source of strengthening of solidarity within the country as also indicated in Pakistan's recent confrontation with India in May 2025 and Pakistani people's social media response to it.

Keywords: Social Media, Pakistan, Impacts, Internet Penetration, Facebook, You Tube

Published:
May 27, 2025

Historical Background

Social media has been around for generations and generations around the human race in different forms. If we study the history, it will be revealed that human race always evolves some medium to communicate with each other and we have witnessed a huge transformation in this domain during different eras. For example: The Postal service (Persia 550 B.C), The Telegraph (France 1798), The Telephone (1890), The Radio (1891), The Television (1926), e-mail (1966), Blogger (1999), Wikipedia (2001) and in last two decades social media has shown a boom in the shape of social networking (YouTube, face book, twitter, Instagram, etc). *‘Forms of electronic communication, such as social networking sites and microblogging, through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other contents like videos,’* is how Merriam-Webster defines social media. Eventually we can describe social media as, *‘It is a websites and applications that enable users to create and share contents or to participate in social networking’*

Social networks have progressed over the years to the modern era diversity by utilizing digital media. However, the social media isn't that new as it didn't emerge with the evolution of computer but instead the telephone. Social networking, photo and video sharing, interactive media, and blogging/community building are the five main categories of social media that are now in use. We all agree that knowledge is power, yet few people fully understand how social media has empowered humanity. Anyone with an internet connection can contribute to their knowledge bank at any time thanks to social media. It is indisputable that

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social media has a significant impact on our culture, economy, and worldview in the modern period. Social media is the newest platform that enables individuals to interact, relate to one another, share ideas, rally for a cause, and ask and give advice. It made it possible for everyone, including those in oppressive nations, to have a voice and take part in democratic processes by removing obstacles to contact and establishing a decentralized communication channel. This media platform can support a wide variety of texts, including non-scholarly, formal, informal, and impromptu ones. It encourages creativity and collaboration with a wide range of contributors on a number of subjects, such as politics, economics, relationships, education, racism, and health. Like anything else, social media has its benefits and drawbacks. Even if social media offers many benefits, such as facilitating communication with friends and family throughout the world and helping us to overcome national and cultural barriers, there is a price to pay. Ironically, social media is making us one of the most antisocial generations. Text messages are preferred over phone conversations, online chat is preferred over face-to-face meetings, and many people have replaced face-to-face interactions with easily accessible social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. *"Every step forward in social media has made it easier, just a little bit, to avoid the emotional labor of being present, to convey information rather than humanity,"* said Jonathan Safran Foer in his writing, *How Not to Be Alone* (Amedie, 2015). Pakistan has seen a huge surge in social media use, like any other nation in the world, with both pros and problems. This article's goal is to explain social media and how it affects Pakistani society.

Social Media and Pakistan

Pakistan has a long history of social media and internet use, even though it is a relatively new online culture. Since 1992, Pakistan has had access to the Internet. Historical data from the Internet Service Providers Association of Pakistan, or ISPAK, indicates that Imran-Net's dial-up email service in 1992–1993 marked the birth of the Internet in Pakistan. A new initiative known as the Sustainable Development Networking Program was introduced in Islamabad in 1993 as a result of the success of this dial-up email endeavor. Simon Kemp's essay, *Social, Digital, and Mobile in Pakistan*, claims that since his initial research, social media usage in Pakistan has increased by 50%. Figures show that there are 8,007,460 Pakistanis on social media. This report states that nearly two-thirds of Pakistan's population is under the age of 30, and the country is projected to be the 4th fastest growing country in terms of world population. This allows an even larger portion of the population to engage with social media, as the younger demographic tends to be the most dynamic in communication (History of Social Media in Pakistan, 2022).

The number of people using social media has grown with time in Pakistan, just like in other nations. Pakistan had 116 million internet users and 66.9 million active social media users at the beginning of 2025, or 45.7% of the country's total population. With 55.9 million users, YouTube leads the list of digital apps in Pakistan. Facebook comes in second with 49.4 million users. There are only 4.5 million Twitter users, or 1.9% of the world's population. Nonetheless, when the

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amount of Twitter activity was examined over the previous few weeks, a significant uptick was seen in March as a number of political events were taking place, such as the recent conflict between India and Pakistan following the 2025 Pahalgam attack close to Pahalgam in Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir. It is important to note that Twitter has greater political relevance because practically all influential figures in both local and foreign politics have accounts, which lends the platform more legitimacy and authenticity. For outreach purposes, every political party also keeps an official Twitter account. Memes, messages, and tweets with improved content went viral on Twitter. Furthermore, different hashtags were trending for days in a row and finally became social media campaigns (Arif, 2022).

YouTube is another site that has seen an increase in viewers in recent weeks. One possible explanation for the increased involvement could be the platform's abundance of channels providing political analysis. YouTube is a wonderful venue for expressing one's thoughts because it's easy to start a channel and gives you more freedom. Any individual can start their own channel and utilize it to share their ideas with audiences of any size. In contrast to talk shows on television, prominent Pakistani journalists and talk show hosts have started their own YouTube channels to offer unbiased and uncensored views. Additionally, YouTube is more user-friendly because its content is video-based, which makes it comparatively more interesting.

The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) said that the nation's total internet traffic has increased by 15%. In addition to amusement, more

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Pakistanis flocked to internet forums to stay informed about COVID-19 news during the outbreak. According to the Dawn News outlet, social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp use the majority of Pakistan's bandwidth (Jahangir, 2020). People in Pakistan, including 93 million 3G/4G subscribers and 178 million cellphone users, share a variety of news in real time and take action in response to it. Additionally, they are discovering new channels for communication, using Twitter hashtags that become viral to notify authorities and Facebook groups to share fast updates. With over 435,000 members from all throughout Pakistan, the Haalat Updates Facebook group keeps each other informed about traffic congestion, law and order issues, and even requests assistance from individuals in the area (Zafeer, 2021).

With time, we have seen increase in the percentages of twitter and YouTube in same month causing decline in percentage of Facebook because people shifted towards YouTube and twitter. Facebook is the most used app in Pakistan currently with total user base of about 50 million as it is the oldest social network functioning in our country. As per Meta's advertising resources, Facebook had approximately 49.4 million users in Pakistan in 2025. Second popular platform today is twitter and can be considered the most authentic platform. Nowadays there is new trend of video sharing apps like TikTok and snack video mainly grabbing audience of young community. TikTok is one of the social media apps for sharing 15-sec to 1-minute movies and expressing yourself via anything you are appropriate.

Impacts of Social Media

People in Pakistan today frequently use social media as a way to communicate with others without any restrictions, therefore it has become a part of their social lives. As a result, it has opened up a world of potential effects on social media's ability to influence society both individually and collectively. Throughout the world including Pakistan the most influencing and impacting source is social media. Today, social media affects everything from TV industry, education, students, politics, economy, business, job market, youth and revolutionary waves as well. This article would highlight some of the impacts of social media upon Pakistan society especially in the domain of education, students, physical and psychological health of youth, politics and business.

Impact on Education and Students

Social media has made possible for Pakistani students to get education even outside the Institutes on social media platforms. Especially during COVID-19 pandemic education through social networking really got encouragement in Pakistan. Institutes were able to teach/ guide their students and cover the syllabus through digital means in an effective manner. Social media not only help students to communicate each other to resolve their queries / difficulties in lectures but also provides an opportunity to connect with the teachers all around the world. By the virtue of social media, the standard of education in Pakistan enhanced significantly due to the availability of knowledge in the shape of digital guidance at our door step. The same benefits of digital education are not available to all

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students due to non-availability of internet access especially in rural areas. 63.5% of the population i.e., 144.4 million people living mainly in the rural areas of Pakistan currently do not have access to the Internet. This number will most likely decrease over time (Arif, 2022). However, 3G/4G connections has already been raised up to 93 million (43.5% of population) subscribers in Pakistan as per PTA report. In due course of time, benefits of education through social digital means would be availed by all rural and urban students throughout the Pakistan.

Social media has also both good and bad impact upon students of Pakistan. Social media has huge influence upon the students due to enhanced exposure of the students regarding the current affairs not only about Pakistan but of the entire world and thus created more awareness amongst the students. According to a study published by BBC News, 67% of all respondents were on Facebook, a popular social media platform used by students and young people. This suggests that students in Pakistan are very active on social media, which supports the idea that they are more focused on and connected to these platforms (Sekho.com.pk, 2013).

Students from Pakistan are so receptive to social media that they react quickly to posts made there. Compared to even electronic and print media, social media has become a quicker and more intelligent source of information. As a result, Pakistani kids have completely identified with it. Among the most popular social media platforms are YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and others. Social media has a significant impact on students' life, so it must be embraced in a constructive way to avoid endangering the future of millions of Pakistani

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children. Students who participate in unethical actions on social media platforms, disseminate pointless material, and upload photographs that harm the nation's reputation abroad are engaging in detrimental use of these platforms.

Recently, we have seen some very positive results that were initiated through social media. Pakistani social media erupted in a wave of rage, grief, and incredulity following India's overnight airstrikes on Pakistan in May 2025. Many people questioned the moral comparison India was attempting to make between the Pahalgam attack victims and those killed in the strikes in Pakistan. This put India in a very defensive position in the world. Indian attacks and her effort to stop water flowing in Pakistan was perceived very negatively by the world audience. It was the social media that immediately responded to this issue and through it the information spread to millions of people in Pakistan and around the world. The students and youth of Pakistan immediately reacted to this.

Impact on Youth

Social media is extensively used by Pakistani youth approximately around the clock in 2025. Although social media has empowered the youth of Pakistan by providing them an opportunity to express themselves freely but simultaneously its excessive usage in also creating psychological, physical and mental health problems among them. These days our youth actually has become a slave in the hands of social media as they think that their day and night could not be completed effectively without the usage of social media platforms in a befitting manner. Approximately, 80% of youth in Pakistan use social media throughout the day and night as revealed by Syeda Sadia Shahid in her article about the subject that more

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than 75% of teenagers less than 20 years old, the millennials, are highly indulged in using social media platforms that they have become fully addicted to it. Their life is limited to receiving and uploading updates every minute as stories on various platforms. They are trying to attract as much attention as possible and get more and more likes and comments. It gives them satisfaction. However, many appear to trade the negative effects of this addiction for the enjoyment they receive from utilizing social media. Social media's negative consequences, like stress, depression, weight difficulties, and poor mental health, are serious problems that cannot be disregarded (Shahid, 2020). It's ironic that social media platforms increase distances between loved ones, even though their apps were designed to shorten those miles. People have completely forgotten about in-person encounters and conversations since they began using social media, especially young people. They ignore the blood relatives seated just in front of them as they continue to use their computers and update their life stories with friends on social media. To become an influencer, everyone is racing to outdo one another. You tubing is now a verb, YouTuber by profession and vlogging everyday life has now replaced work. Social media is changing drastically every day. After Facebook, all the teenagers headed to Snapchat, Instagram and now everyone is rushing to the TikTok platform. Even now, youngsters have started using their social media accounts to showcase their acting skills, make makeup tutorials, advertise a brand and you name it. As a result, they feel stressed if they don't get the likes and shares, they expect.

Pakistani youth have also been reported to be victims of "Facebook Depression" and "Cyber Bullying" which creates psychological problems among

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them such as aggression and extreme depression which is not only healthy for them but also for our society. A well-read psychiatrist would always advise spending time with your loved ones and the outdoors. The greatest cause of tension, worry, anxiety, and despair is nature. However, what are people doing now? When they go to natural settings with their loved ones, they shoot a ton of photos and videos, which they then post on social media. To satiate their souls, they continuously check their likes and comments on those images or videos. However, it ultimately destroys their mental tranquility. "Social media, instant messaging, and texting make it very easy for teens to become even more anxious, which can lead to depression," Dr. Davila says. Social media seems to be unintentionally contributing to young people's overconfidence, anxiety, and eventual depression.

Impact on Politics and Religion

Information is being shared more quickly and easily across Pakistan because to social media. Our lives now revolve around a number of sites, including Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Snap Chat, YouTube, and LinkedIn. Due to its ability to swiftly spread messages via the aforementioned digital platforms, social media has also emerged as a powerful instrument in political matters. Recent events in Pakistan are an obvious example of this reality. The political landscape of the nation has been tumultuous in recent months, with unexpected new developments occurring in a comparatively short amount of time. Political reflections and unplanned emotional outbursts on several platforms have also been a result of the increasing usage of social media platforms. These patterns show that Pakistanis were quite interested in social media in relation to current events.

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It is clear that social media is becoming a powerful force and will remain so in the future when it comes to domestic politics. The game of narratives and counter-narratives is what social media platforms are. It has never been more important or difficult for various stakeholders to influence public opinion, yet social media is starting to be a useful tool in this process. Additionally, Pakistani political players use these social media platforms to efficiently gauge the mood of the populace at any given moment. The social media phenomena isn't just about technology anymore; in Pakistani culture, politics and protests are becoming increasingly social and digital. Political parties in Pakistan have realized the importance of social media and now diverted their effort in establishing their social media cells. More politicians and religious scholars have started actively using social media to spread their messages, interfaith harmony and for preservation of Muslim culture. Being more credible and authentic and eventually influence people political and religious views and involvement as per their desires. With so much information available to the public from a variety of sources, it's simple to fall victim to false information. It is becoming commonplace for bogus and unsubstantiated political news to circulate. It is crucial to remember that not every information that is disseminated is accurate and could be driven by harmful intentions. Ignorantly taking in all of the various narratives can result in extreme political polarization, which over time exacerbates Pakistan's internal instability.

Inappropriate usage of social media can have disastrous consequences, even while it is crucial for removing informational barriers regarding current

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events. We must therefore be aware of the destabilizing impact of fake political news on the internet, be more careful when evaluating information sources, and make judgments based on the facts rather than rumors and "trending." In Pakistan, social media has been crucial in fostering a new mindset and political consciousness. The planet became more expansive and attained a progressive aura. The usual divide between the public and politicians has shrunk to the point where our leaders must alter their methods in order to remain credible. Our nation's accountability system has always been poor, and administrations have been charged with purposefully keeping the populace ignorant, but this is no longer a credible premise. Social media has taken over the task of exposing dishonest political leaders. A single encounter with disorder in the public domain can spread like wildfire throughout the nation due to its pervasiveness. The ignorant public will notice the moss growing around them right away, which could lead to many prominent politicians permanently leaving politics unless future elections are conducted in a free and fair manner.

These days political parties in Pakistan have their own media cells in order to run their political campaigns efficiently as it is as essential as door-to-door political campaigns were in the past. It helps to mobilize the supporters and voters very effectively as and when required. Social media has provided the tool of accountability to the common people to judge their politicians judiciously prior to general elections. As now people ask question from the electable about their performances, show them the mirror by posting their videos on social media later it gets by the several channels and they broadcast it as breaking news (Irshad,

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2015). With so much information available to the public from a variety of sources, it's simple to fall victim to false information. It is becoming commonplace for bogus and unsubstantiated political news to circulate. It is imperative to remember that not every information that is shared is accurate and could be driven by harmful intentions.

Impact on Business

Social networking is now a popular marketing tool employed by Pakistani small and large enterprises. Increasing consumer reach and improving brand visibility are the primary goals of social media marketing. Social media marketing gave business owners the chance to track the effectiveness of their marketing strategies in addition to growing their clientele. Pakistani businesses are now using social media to reach a wide range of stakeholders, primarily the general public, prospective employees, and current and potential clients. By successfully reaching out to new clients and discovering new markets, this aids firms in growing. It is important to note that a company can only achieve the intended outcomes if it creates postings that are both visually appealing and educational. It has been noted that even Pakistan's top firms are now using Facebook profiles to advertise their goods and services. In Pakistan, social media is a major draw for both individuals and companies. The number of 3G and 4G customers in Pakistan increased from 141.64 million in February to 143.442 million as of March 2025. As a result of this expansion, the penetration of Next Generation Mobile Service (NGMS) increased from 57.68% in February to 58.31% in March. Pakistanis use social media for several purposes, such as following their favorite companies,

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communicating with friends and family, and discussing important issues pertaining to socio-political action. Since 3G and 4G have become available in Pakistan, the number has only grown, and businesses have benefited greatly from using social media to promote their goods and services.

Social media serves as Pakistanis' primary information source, just like it does in every other nation. To efficiently reach the consumer market, practically all brands, whether they are leading or not, use social media to market their products. The number of people utilizing social media platforms has drastically changed in recent years and is predicted to increase in the years to come. Let's examine Pakistan's current marketing trends (Shaikh, 2022). In the past, businesses used Daily Motion, Vimeo, and YouTube to promote their goods. This has now changed, though, and big businesses are now using Facebook and Instagram sites to advertise. There are many social media marketers in Pakistan who use different marketing techniques like video marketing by utilizing mostly platforms like Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter which have thousands of users across the country. Companies desire to have more and more likes on their Facebook pages and followers on Twitter to boost their businesses. This trend of businesses reflects that in future, there will be a rising tendency of advertisement through paid marketing on social media in Pakistan. Famous you tubers and influencers are already doing paid promotion of different leading and emerging brands effectively in Pakistan. In Pakistan, people's purchasing habits have evolved in recent years. Facebook has made it easier for people to buy things by allowing them to do so through corporate pages. In a similar vein, users of a

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number of other social networking networks will soon have this choice. Over the past several years, Twitter marketing activity has skyrocketed. Numerous companies are attempting to interact with Pakistani Twitter users. Every time you read a tweet on Twitter, you'll see how companies are increasingly employing hashtags to promote their goods. In order to differentiate their brand in the future, an increasing number of businesses will adhere to this approach. In Pakistan, social media significantly contributes to increased brand awareness. Facebook has a broad audience reach because it currently has almost 3.07 billion members worldwide, which represents a significant portion of the global population. Companies can use a variety of tactics to connect with these users if they decide to use Facebook as their marketing platform. A large, carefully chosen audience gains great brand awareness as a result. For instance, Pakistani apparel company Furor used social media to increase its brand awareness and clientele, and it quickly saw the intended outcomes. Businesses' social media posts, which primarily consist of images, audio, and videos, draw in their target audience and boost website traffic both domestically and internationally. This indicates that social media opens up new options even outside of Pakistan in addition to raising company awareness. Both small and large businesses in Pakistan benefit from increased sales and a higher search engine ranking after customers are directed to a company's website through social media platforms.

The quickest and most affordable approach to reach a huge global audience is through social media. People can talk about the brand on this platform. According to a recent survey, about 35% of buyers base their decisions about what

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to buy on internet reviews. In order to boost brand loyalty, Pakistani businesses must have a strong reputation, much like some of our top designer brands, like Khadi, Gul Ahmed, Nishat linen, J., Sana Safina, Adnan Sami, etc. Additionally, the messages that buyers post on social media can be used to gauge the product's quality. Controlling this will undoubtedly aid us in promoting Pakistani goods in a favorable light.

Since social media allows for two-way communication between the company and its customers, businesses in Pakistan that use it to market their brands also benefit greatly from this source of customer insights. This allows the company to get instant feedback from their existing and potential customers, allowing it to shape the product or campaigns as per their customer demands. The best way for a business to shine is to listen the complaints of their customers and then make changes to suit the customers' needs. For example; Honda Atlas launched Honda Civic (10th generation new model) in Pakistan in 2017, which had some built-in quality issues initially, but later on, were removed as per customer feedback gathered through social media. And the same model proved to be one of the best in Pakistan.

The virality era has arrived in our culture as a result of increased social media use in Pakistan, smartphone availability, and faster internet thanks to 3G and 4G. Through apps like Instagram and TikTok, social media has given average people a platform to express themselves, but it has also spawned ridiculous trends that depend on virality. The impact of social media on shaping society's course and illuminating the unpredictable nature of the future. Social media's widespread

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use may have made it possible for regular people, whether or not they are influencers, to become viral. People's sensitivity to current trends is further shown by this phenomena, which also shows how much opportunity there is for marketers to plan events around these trends. It offers a chance for enormous expansion with little financial outlay (Zafeer, 2021). Social networking has taken center stage in helping businesses locate and hire top talent in a timely manner. In Pakistan, there is a growing need for social media and networking abilities, which is opening up career opportunities for our citizens in this field. This is advantageous for businesses as well as the country.

Conclusion

Social media is an internet platform that helps our various communities share ideas, views, and information. It gives us quick electronic access to stuff, including news, photographs, videos, and articles. Anyone can use a computer, tablet, or smartphone to access social media. Social media is a very effective tool for communication since it can instantaneously link individuals worldwide and share information. Depending on how we use it, social media can have both benefits and drawbacks. It is one of the most potent tools we have at our disposal, influencing our society in all spheres including economic, social, political, and educational. Due to the exponential growth of social media users, businesses are using this platform to advertise their products, promote brands, talk about features, and raise awareness. Furthermore, information is disseminated via social networks more quickly than through conventional news outlets or any other type of media. Since it has transformed our lives, its abilities ought to be used sensibly and

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prudently for the advancement, prosperity, and development of our modern society. In nations like Pakistan that are trying to shed their archaic mindsets while embracing modern principles, social media is dealing with its own identity difficulties. Currently figuring itself out, the media's values are occasionally overtaken by extortion and hyperbole. Pakistan has a predominantly young population with 64% under the age of 30 and social media adoption is growing rapidly thanks to readily available technology. It is influencing every age and individual in Pakistan and one who are reacting to it more devastatingly are the Youth and the Students of Pakistan; therefore, it is essential to take this social media very productively in positive manner and to avoid its negative impact on the society; especially, on youth of the nation. For years the Pakistani media has been suppressed of freedom of speech by military/ political leaders in different eras. Now the media has opened up due to a boom in social media/ networking in Pakistan compatible to world. Better laws to combat the negative effects of social media abuse and fake news, as well as programs to promote constructive use of the technology, are urgently needed. The unexpectedly high growth in Pakistan's social media industry also highlights the necessity of social media rules to ensure that social media has a beneficial influence on our society. It will eventually discover its individuality and maturity, insha'Allah. Pakistani society doesn't have to suffer because of social media. In times of need, it can be a fantastic way for us to express our solidarity. If social media is thought to be a platform for the spread of false information, we can teach our current and future generations at the school, college, and university levels the value of evidence-based research practices as a way to

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weed out and avoid sharing false information on social media. This should improve social media for all time.

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