# Learning Descriptive

# Essays on Social Media: (300 WORDS)

## *First*:

Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi shared pictures of his visit to Lakshadweep on social media, showcasing its serene beauty. This post triggered a remarkable 3400% increase in searches for the island on travel platforms and sparked campaigns promoting travel to its pristine beaches. This demonstrates social media's immense power to influence travel trends and shape public perception. However, the impact of social media extends beyond promoting safe destinations; it also includes other, more complex aspects.

## Scrolling Goods and Bads

With over 5.04 billion people worldwide and 470 million (33% of social media users) in India alone, social media provides unparalleled access to global communities. It has revolutionised information dissemination, transforming the way news is shared—from the days of slow newspaper updates to the rapid, real-time updates of today. For instance, Twitter user Upendra brought attention to a village in Odisha in desperate need of safe drinking water, highlighting social media's role as a catalyst for social change. Campaigns driven by hashtags like #MeToo and #SaveAareyForest have amplified voices and mobilised action, such as halting deforestation in Mumbai.

## The Downsides of Social Media

Despite its advantages, social media has significant drawbacks. MIT research indicates that chronic use of social media can increase depression by 7%. The unfiltered freedom of speech on these platforms can lead to the spread of misinformation, shifting political discussions from local settings to online arenas. For example, protests against the Agneepath scheme gained significant traction online. Additionally, issues such as FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) and cyberbullying present serious concerns.

## Trending Towards Positivity

In our 21st-century lives, social media is omnipresent, underscoring the need for enhanced media literacy and critical thinking. Users must learn to identify and avoid fake news, adhering to principles like #VerifyBeforeYouShare, and support content creators who contribute positively. Recent awards for content creators who focus on uplifting and constructive content highlight the importance of promoting positivity in our digital interactions.

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Moving forward, we should focus on creating effective solutions rather than succumbing to digital disturbances. Engaging in practices like digital detox, such as taking a short trek to serene places like Lakshadweep, can offer a refreshing break from online negativity. By doing so, we can foster a more positive digital environment and enjoy life beyond the endless scroll of social media.

# Learning Descriptive

## Second:

The easiest thing to misuse is often the easiest thing to use. A social media influencer commits suicide. A religious group openly shows hatred towards another religious group! A popular political leader appears in a scandalous video. Oftentimes, people come across such headlines, like and share the same with others. Then, after a few days or weeks, they come to know that the above was misconstrued in one sense or the other. What do they do? Nothing. They just ignore it and move on. This proves that misinformation and fake news are mainly influenced by social media today.

Gone are the days of old when information took weeks or months to travel from one place to another. Gone are the days when people didn't believe anything until they had seen it with their own eyes. Nowadays, people get information instantly from social media. It has brought the whole world under one roof. Events in Alaska are known to people living in China. However, this luxury has come at a high cost. People have started to treat social media as gospel truth. Whatever they see or hear, they tend to believe, and it's hard to convince them otherwise. Naturally, this has posed many dangers to society. In some areas of the world, religious intolerance is increasing due to purposeful misinformation on social media, done to sow social enmity.

One can also see many instances of deep fakes or AI-generated content showing celebrities or leaders in a negative light, linking them with malicious content. Misinformation or fake news is also being used as one of the easiest methods of harassing people. It's often seen that critics of a popular figure spread misinformation against them to undermine their popularity, and gullible common people easily believe it.

So, how and why did things like this happen? Just as one would read a manual before purchasing a new mobile phone to understand its features, it's important for people to be less gullible and naive on social media, to verify information before believing and sharing it.

However, a change needs to be made. Social media, although a promoter of misinformation and fake news, is also the one to bring the world together and closer. Hence, one can surely say that social media is in itself a solution. As the world embraces the use of AI, all social media platforms can introduce real-time fake news detection and strict measures for people who frequently spread misinformation. Governments can also create fact-checking ministries to keep a regular watch on fake news

## Third:

Social media is often attributed to its negatives; however, it has a flip side full of opportunities. "SKILLBOT" is an initiative to transform the rural landscape of India. It is the first Telegram-based chatbot designed for building digital skill capacities of weavers, artisans, and youth, especially in rural areas of India, to enhance their livelihoods. With all these possibilities, we can rely on the power of the Internet and social media.

### Social Media: The Game Changer

Change is nature's way of teaching. With the changing trend, social media and the Internet come as torchbearers of upgrading the way we live and work. Currently, the trend has shifted to local journalism, which is beneficial in the quickness and reachability of news to public officials (Economic Times reports that Railways receive 3,000 tweet complaints per month on its official Twitter handle). It also helps amplify voices to highlight social issues like the #MeTooMovement and #BlackLivesMatter. Online education as a resource is affordable, reachable, and available. Indian government platforms like CPM E-Vidya and E-Pathshala are impressive.

Does social media have any challenges, or is it all good? Let's find out.

### A Medicine in Moderation is a Poison in Excess

Behind every angel, there is a devil waiting to play. If we lack mindful use of social media, the challenges are many. Chronic social media users are found to have poor health, unhealthy sleeping patterns, depression, loneliness, and even suicidal thoughts. MIT research found that chronic use of social media leads to a 7% increase in depression among students. It also induces "confirmation bias" and "polarisation of society." Social media has the power to make you addicted, obese, and develop a low self-image.

### Keep Your Eyes Open and Your Feet Moving Forward

About 58.4% of the population uses social media. If used mindfully, it can do wonders. "Don't use social media to impress people, use it to impact people" ~ Dave Willis. Truly stated by Dave, its fair use is crucial to uplift and shape the world. To achieve this, we must increase media literacy, educate critical thinking, instil digital detox habits, and turn on the "code of ethics" in journalism and device focus mode.

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Now, it's time for us to accept it thoughtfully and bring about a harmonious and fruitful future.

# Fourth:

Social media has become an inseparable part of today's world. It is a medium that has completely changed the way we communicate, share our thoughts, visions, and many aspects of our lives with people. Through social media, we can connect in every area, from business to education and social service. It facilitates impactful sharing of thoughts with the world.

However, there are negative aspects of social media too. Its improper use can waste our time, influence us to imitate others, and spread misinformation. The fake news and misinformation spread by social media can mislead us. Hence, we should use social media wisely.

## Essay: Social Media and its Role in Spreading Misinformation and Fake News

"Fake news thrives where critical thinking takes a backseat on social platforms."

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, numerous instances of misleading information were reported on social media. This misinformation created vaccine hesitancy, ignored public health guidelines, and caused panic about resource shortages. Additionally, the Global Risk Report 2024 has stated that misinformation and disinformation in India are among the top five risks. The same report has highlighted it as the top global risk for the last two years.

### Root Causes and Current Risks

The speed and ease of sharing information through the internet, with about 58.4% of the global population using social media, creates a risk when the content is fake and fabricated. According to the GRR 2024, AI-generated misinformation bears a 53% risk potential in the current scenario, followed by societal polarisation with 46%. AI-generated misinformation challenges detection, while societal polarisation hampers constructive dialogue, reinforcing preconceived beliefs and impeding the democratic process.

### Strategies for Addressing Misinformation

Enhancing global networks, institutions, and industries fosters communication and resource-sharing. Developing critical thinking skills to identify misinformation, false narratives, and clickbait headlines, and verifying information from reliable sources before sharing it further, are crucial. The Government of India issued an advisory in November 2023 to control social media platforms. The advisory mandated social media platforms to swiftly remove reported deepfake content within 36 hours. Non-compliance results in forfeiture of safe harbour immunity under Section 79(1) of the Information Technology Act, 2000.