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**ACCELERATION OF LEGAL LITERACY THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA**- Anshita Naidu & Jahanvi Jain<sup>1</sup>**ABSTRACT**

Human activities and social media experiences have been preserved as highly complex social structures in real time that reflect individual social knowledge at fine spatial, temporal and digital resolutions. In a democratic country like India, social media is a very strong weapon. The best tool for preserving democracy is the constructive function and use of social media. From the police state to the welfare state, our nation has changed itself. Because of this transformation, the state 's responsibility has risen in several ways. It is necessary to disseminate current legalnews and the climate to the general public for whose benefit it has been created. Social media helps to seek justice from society. In the modern age, it is clear that the social and legal problems that have arisen in the community in which social media have taken measures have gained more legal protection and have quickly come to an end than those that have never drawn the attention of social media.

The paper has been written to study how social media has impacted the legal literacy of the people. The paper majorly revolves around firstly, is social media a helping hand for the enhancement of legal literacy. Secondly, it talks about is social media accessible to the people of rural areas. Lastly a big question that has arisen that is social media a substantiate source for legal literacy. This paper has both the primary (Data survey) as well as secondary sources (Research already done) to make the research more authenticated and relevant.

**KEYWORDS**

Legal literacy, social legal issues, social media, social awareness, legal awareness, rural areas, verified platform

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Knowledge of laws and provision is a power and helping tool for self-realization. India being the largest democracy has a need for generating awareness of rights and duties as general knowledge so that justice can be granted in every part of the world. Legal literacy also called as legal awareness or public legal education is the empowerment of a person in accordance to issues of the law. Legal Literacy at the most basic level is making people aware of their rights and entitlements. It can also be defined as the cognizance of various legal issues and judgments that shape a society and its people in their thoughts and behaviour. Such knowledge can be attributed for facilitating the aggrieved individual to take swift resort to the channels available for redressal of grievances, through agencies such as the Police, the Executive and the Judiciary.

India is a land with diverse laws on a number of subjects. Most of these are formulated keeping in mind the betterment of citizens. However, due to the lack of knowledge of such rules, there is a little benefit to them. Even literate people sometimes are unaware of their rights and entitlements under the law and also of the current legal issues prevailing in the country due to which deception, exploitation and deprivation of rights is a common phenomenon.

The awareness of one's legal rights paves way for contribution of the general population in the decision-making process. This participation usually takes place through Social Media. Social Media helps to safeguard prevalent rights and stimulate legal empowerment of the society. The convenience of social media has opened the door of society towards recognition of their rights. Social media is a niche of the general media which is known as the fourth pillar of democracy. Social Media is defined as websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. Social media contains a huge variety of blogs and applications. The Internet is used by people of all ages and is also one of the most popular means of communication. The communication of people on the internet takes place through various social media platforms such as Twitter which is skilled in exchanging links and short

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written posts and Instagram and Facebook which are designed to simplify the sharing of images and videos etc.

Social media plays a vital role in legal awareness creation by providing this mode of communication to unlimited number of individuals and organizations. This helps in the propagation of ideas in the form of written words, pictures, videos symbols etc. from one person to another. Social media allows the society to seek justice. In the present period, it is undeniable that those social and legal issues that have emerged in the nation in which the general population through social media has taken part have gained more legal support and have been resolved swiftly than those that have never gained any social media coverage. The public has awakened and now know about their rights and duties. In dealing with government departments, public awareness acts as a great motivation to fight corruption.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The encyclopaedia of education defines legal education as a skill for human knowledge which is universally relevant to the lawyer's art and which deserves special attention in educational institutions. The present study also mentions the importance of legal literacy in India by stating that effectiveness of the administration of justice can only be reaped if the legal education is governed not only for the person who wishes to take the law as a profession but for those who wish to be a responsible and enlightened citizen. (Yadav, 2016) It is due to lack of awareness of beneficiaries that most of the legislations are ineffective at the stage of their execution. To quell this problem, the step of generating among the masses, awareness of their rights has been recognized as the appropriate initiative. The source of power among the masses has been attributed to such awareness. This paper investigates the need and concept of legal literacy as a tool for qualitative change. (Kumar, 2013) The present study explores the connection between the justice system and social media. It defines social media as "forms of electronic communication (as Web sites for social networking and micro blogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (as videos). The legal community has also joined the ranks of social media users in record numbers. An ABA survey of 179 attorneys, marketing partners and marketing directors, indicated that about 85% of attorneys are using social media in some form, and 70% are using a blog. (Boothe-Perry, 2014) Media device: the role of the media in developing a culture of awareness of the law is a central and active role, whether written (newspapers and magazines) or television or radio or electronic (on internet), as those methods are the eyes of the masses and tongue. This

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research discusses the role of media as an important device in spreading legal culture in a society as it helps in informing the community members the importance of law and the need to apply it and be bound by it. (Matar, 2017) The present study investigates how the print media and social media help the society to demand justice. It mentions how in the present era, it is evident that those social and legal matters aroused in the society in which the media has taken initiatives has got more legal support and reached to the conclusion soon than those which never got the attention of the media. The media has the power to correct the action of not only of the government and its servant but the wrongful action of the public also. (Tiwari, 2018)

### **THE NEED FOR LEGAL LITERACY**

As envisioned by the Ex- Chief Justice of India, P. Sathasivam, 'Legal Literacy is essential for the survival of our Constitutional Democracy. The judicial set-up works on the presumption that all people are aware of their rights. People must be made aware of their rights and duties for a systematic functioning of the nation.' Law in any country is formulated for the benefit of all its citizens. But to avail that benefit people must have the basic knowledge of the laws prevalent in their country. Legal education is a concealed asset. Law is the pillar of a culture that fertilises a sterile land and makes people's lives worth living within that culture. Legal Literacy at the most basic level implies the awareness of the primary level in law. When people (particularly disadvantaged or underprivileged groups) become conscious of the rights they possess under the law, they will use this knowledge as a weapon to combat injustices as such knowledge can be attributed for facilitating the aggrieved individual to take swift resort to the channels available for redressal of grievances, through agencies such as the Police, the Executive and the Judiciary. Hence such awareness can improve their lives. For the guarantee of justice, protection of common rights and encouragement of society, there is always a need to make people aware of their rights and entitlements.

India has the recognition of being the largest functioning democracy in the world. Ever since India's independence, the development in the country has taken place through a democratic system of governance which means that the entire structure of our legal framework depends on self-rule by the people. In simple terms, in a democratic system, the citizens of a country form the government through representatives for which they vote. Since all the power lies in the citizens' hands they need to be aware of their rights, duties and remedies.

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Also illiteracy still persists in India, and citizens have no knowledge of the numerous legal provisions in force for their benefit. There is a need to educate people in such a changing culture. There is a need to expand the reach of legal education in the masses. People ought to be made aware of the guidelines and policies needed for their progress.

Legal Literacy also contributes in fighting injustice against women thus empowering them. Hon'ble Mr. Justice Kabir has accurately pointed out that lack of knowledge and education are the key sources of discrimination against the oppressed especially women. Women should be aware of the laws that protect their rights, so that they can submit their complaints to the appropriate authority in order to ensure swift justice.

It is therefore essential to recognise that basic legal education is the first step towards the emergence of India as a super-power country that easily tackles social problems by preventing exploitation of its citizens.

### **ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN COGNIZANCE OF LEGAL LITERACY**

According to the Oxford dictionary, the media is characterised as 'a major means of mass communication (broadcasting, publishing and the Internet) that is seen collectively. Easy access to the Internet has opened the door to a new form of media known as social media. The effectiveness of the media has opened the door of society towards recognition of their rights. Thus media is known as the fourth pillar of democracy. The media's role in cultivating a culture of law-awareness is crucial and efficient, whether it is published (newspapers and magazines) or television or radio or interactive (on the Internet) media. This is because media especially social media is the eyes and the tongue of general population. In present times social media is not just a platform for informal communication and entertainment but has become a source of legal assistance as it not only makes people aware about their rights and entitlements but also helps the society to demand justice. Social media continues to get more powerful as membership rises day by day. It is not just a fleeting trend but has become a mainstream commonplace in a society both locally and globally. The use of social media has become a commonly recognised and successful method of legal marketing. Social media has also been identified as important for networking, obtaining legal information, raising awareness and encouraging legal reform. Social Media creates a cultural awareness regarding legal provisions and judgements among masses including those who are low cultured or ignorant as social media is used by almost everybody these days. Social networking websites such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube,

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Twitter and blogging sites take a large initiative to spread the culture of law-awareness to all classes and ages of people, particularly non-lawyers, and to create permanent channels of contact between those associated with the growth of a country.

Due to propagation of thoughts of lawyers, law students, politically and socially active citizens on social media platforms, awareness increases among the general population as they take part in the discussion of those thoughts by providing their opinions. In fact a 2010 Reuters report noted, the ‘explosion of blogging, tweeting and other online diversions has reached into U.S. jury boxes, raising serious questions about juror impartiality and the ability of judges to control courtrooms.’ The legal community has joined the ranks of social media users and 70% of them use social media platforms as blogs to impart legal knowledge these days. Many law firms also tend to have Instagram, Twitter and Facebook accounts so that people can easily communicate them for the redressal of their grievances.

Social media also helps the society to seek swift justice. In the present period, it is clear that those social and legal issues that which had the involvement of social media have gathered more legal support and reached to a conclusion faster than those issues which never had any social media involvement. For example the historic ‘Partial Decriminalization of Section 377’ by the Supreme Court was the result of popular support of the LGBTQ community by general population on social media.

Right to information Act due to its advertisement on social media has revealed the value of social media as a tool for the betterment of any citizen living in a country. The citizens now have woken up and have a basic idea regarding their rights. In engaging with government offices, the consciousness of the general population acts as a good catalyst to fight corruption.

### **LITERATURE GAP**

There is limited research with respect to social media as a niche of general media for enhancement of legal literacy. Also, the major gap found in the researches before was that only the impact of social media on judicial system and judicial decision and not the impact of social media platforms on legal literacy of people and how social media has changed their preferences in terms of informational platforms.

The researches before lacked primary survey data which gives an factual justification regarding the influence of social media in terms of legal literacy. Interaction with the local people and knowing their priorities is what research gap this paper will be fulfilling.

### **STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

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Legal literacy is also called as legal awareness or public legal education, which basically empowers the people in accordance to issues of the law. The role of social media in the creation of knowledge of law is a central and active, as this is method is the eyes of the masses and their language, as well as their prompt collective mind and organiser of popular cultural, in spreading these methods and reaching intensive audiences.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research methodology used in this paper is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. The question investigated was how does social media enhance an individual's legal awareness.

Qualitative methods were practiced through reading numerous research papers and articles and highlighting the best points which help in answering the above-mentioned question. Observation of various categories of people using social media was also practiced to gain practical knowledge.

Quantitative methodology included formulating a Google survey and administering it to friends, family members and general citizens and recording the responses for further analysis.

### **RESEARCH OBJECIVES:**

1. To discuss the need for legal literacy in a country
2. The objective of the research paper is to investigate if social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter and WhatsApp accelerate legal literacy among in a country.
3. To evaluate the attainability of social media among rural population and if it helps them to advance their legal knowledge.
4. To assess the validity and authentication of social media as a platform to access legal literacy.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS:**

1. Does social media contribute in enhancing the legal literacy in a country?
2. Assessment of Social Media as a platform of legal literacy
3. Are people in the rural area taking advantage of social media for enhancing their legal literacy?

### **HYPOTHESIS**

4. H1: Social media is an influence on people to enhance legal literacy
5. H2: Social media is a perfect bridge between people and legal knowledge.
6. H3: Social media is accessible is every part of the country.

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**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**



**PRIMARY SURVEY DATA ANALYSIS**

1. DOES SOCIAL MEDIA ACCELERATE LEGAL LITERACY?

	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	VALID PERCENT	CUMULATIVE PERCENT

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Strongly agree	108	58.7	58.7	58.7
Agree	68	37.0	37.0	95.7
Neutral	6	3.3	3.3	98.9
Disagree	1	0.5	0.5	100.0
Strongly disagree	1	0.5	0.5	99.5
Total	184	100.0	100.0	

### **Interpretation**

As shown in the above table the question asked was that “Do you think legal literacy is important for empowerment of a citizen?” and as it is very well clear that Majority that is 58.7% strongly agree that yes Legal literacy is important for empowerment and for enhancement of a responsible citizen of a country. Also, more than half responded as strongly agree and agree which means that people understand that knowing legal your environment in 21st century is very crucial.

#### 1.1 SOCIAL MEDIA- AN INFLUENCE

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	.5	.5	.5
Often	132	71.7	71.7	72.3
sometimes	41	22.3	22.3	94.6
rarely	8	4.3	4.3	98.9
never	2	1.1	1.1	100.0
Total	184	100.0	100.0	

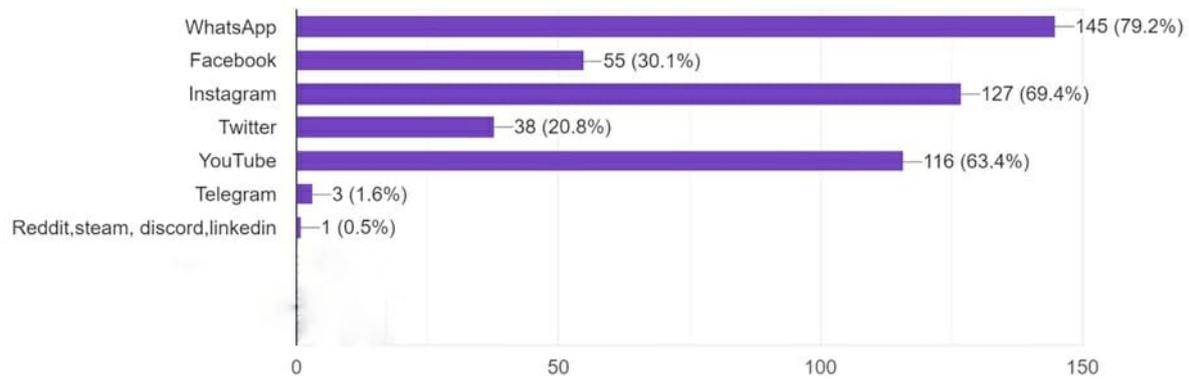
### **Interpretation**

As shown in the table above, to know approximate percentage of people using social media it was asked that “do you use social media”. And now it is very much clear from the data above that 71.7% has responded as “often” that is they use social media frequently.

#### 1.2 SOCIAL MEDIA THAT IS BEEN PREFERRED

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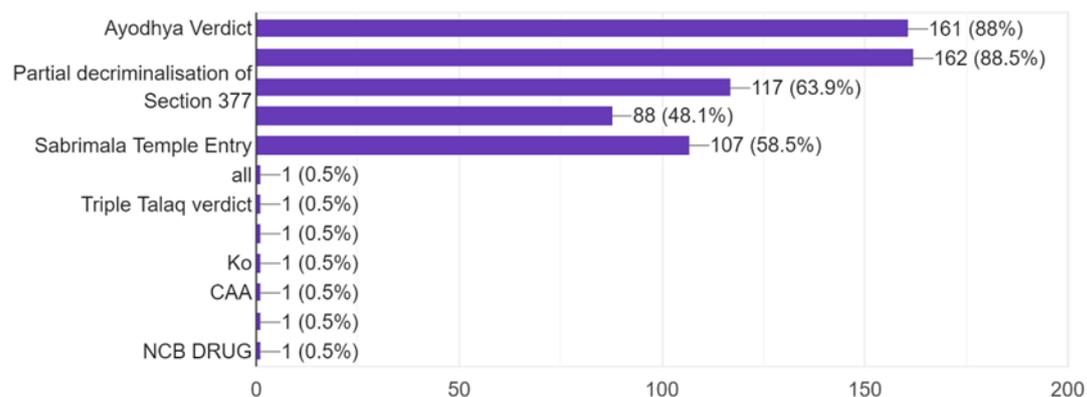
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### Interpretation

Also, to know the priorities we also asked which ones do you prefer. In the above graph it is very well mention that more people use WhatsApp (79.2%) than Instagram (69.4%) and YouTube (63.4%). This means that many people are diverted towards WhatsApp and YouTube. In the survey there were many other apps and social media platforms like telegram, Reddit, steam, discord and LinkedIn.

### 1.3 CURRENT LEGAL NEWS PEOPLE ARE AWARE OF



### Interpretation

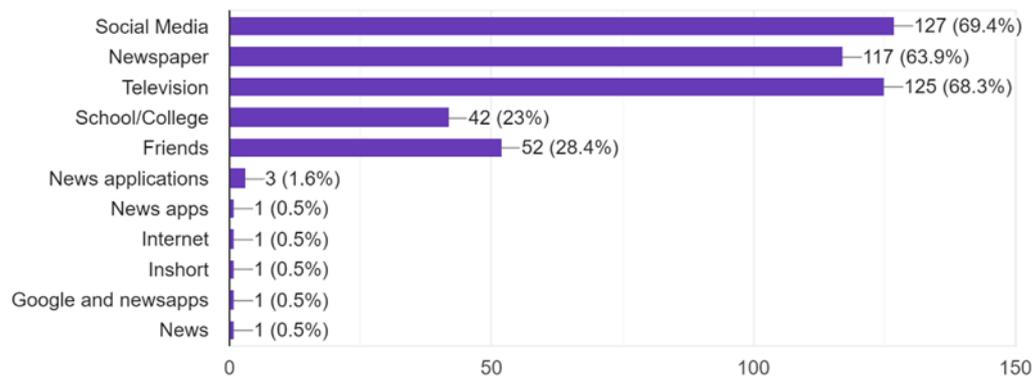
To examine how much people, know about current legal scenario and basically how much people are aware of current legal news some questions were asked that which of the following some news are you aware of. There was certain legal news given and majority of the people were aware of the Ayodhya verdict, Revocation of article 370, Partial decriminalisation of section 377, decriminalisation of adult and Sabrimala temple entry. Most of the people were aware about the Ayodhya verdict 88% and revocation of article 370 (88.5%). It justifies that

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most of the people are aware of the current legal news in our country.

#### 1.4 SOURCES OF THE ABOVE LEGAL NEWS



#### **Interpretation**

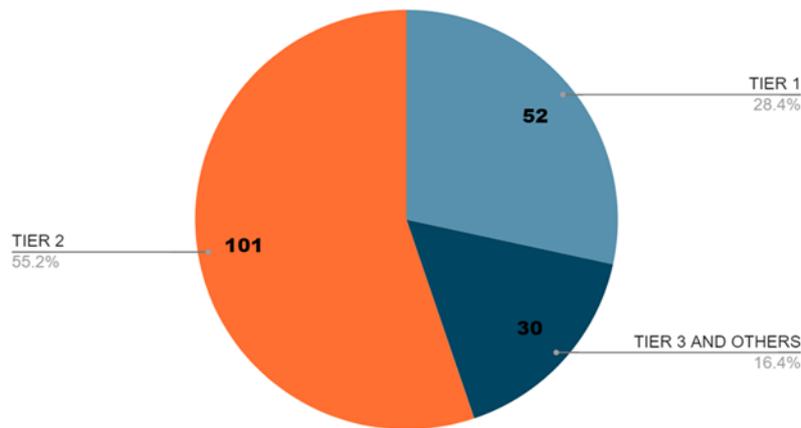
Now after knowing that how much people are aware about the current legal news and the step taken was the enquiry about the source that they came to know from the above news. As shown in the table no. \_\_\_ above it is much clear that the maximum vote was given to Social Media platform with 69.4% of the total and Television being voted as the 2nd most informational platform for legal news and literacy. It clearly justifies the statement of that “Social media is one of the major and the most influential platforms for Legal literacy.” After the analysis it can be deduced that people consider social media as a platform for Being legally literate. There were other platforms also which also contribute to accelerate legal literacy like Newspaper (63.9%), School/college (23%), friends (28.4%), and others (news applications, Internet, Inshorts).

## 2. ACCESSIBILITY OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN RURAL AREAS      ACCESSIBILITY OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN RURAL AREAS

### 2.1 NUMBER OF RESPONSES FROM TIER 3 AND OTHERS

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**Interpretation**

It was enquired that what type of place do the respondents of the survey belong to so the question was “Which type of city do you reside in?” Majority of the people that is 55.2% belong to Tier 2 cities which technically means population from 50,000 to 99,999 according to census 2011. Second would be with 28.4% belong to Tier 1 which is 100,000 and above according to census 2011 and the Tier 3 and others with 16.4% of the total. Tier 3 and others means population of 20,000 and below according to census 2011.

**2.2 USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN RURAL AREAS**

	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER	TOTAL
TIER 3 & others	22 (73.3%)	6 (20%)	2 (6.6%)	0 (0.0%)	30

**Interpretation**

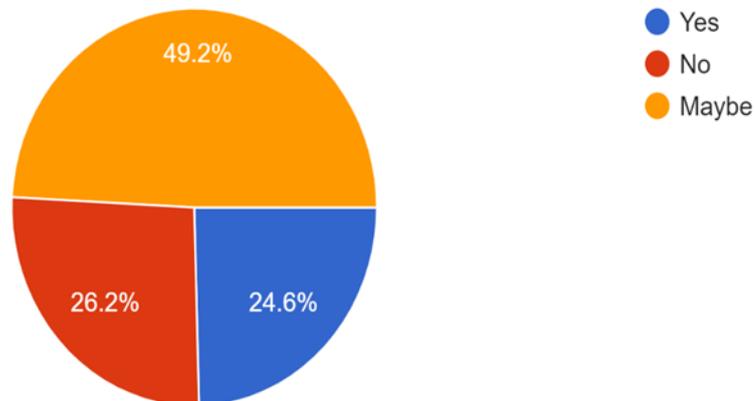
Above are the responses of the people from Tier 3 and others when asked question as do you use social media?”. Larger part of the people use social media Often that is 73.3% of the total. And the rest use it sometimes (20%) and rarely (6.6%). Not one respondent doesn’t use social media. This justifies the fact that today everywhere people has access to social media and internet.

According to our Analysis yes people of the rural areas have access to internet and social media. Which there is a scope of people being able to enhance there legal literacy through social media. And it is made very well clear that social media is a platform that is a helping hand for the enhancement of legal literacy in today’s world.

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### 3. SOCIAL MEDIA A VERIFIED PLATFORM FOR LEGAL LITERACY



#### **Interpretation**

It is important to assess the most important thing which is whether social media is a verified platform for legal literacy or not. It is clear from the above analysis that social media is an influential and the most informational source that is considered for legal literacy so to check whether is a substantiate platform to be known as an informational source. As shown in the above diagram it can be said that 49.2% of the respondents were not sure on this while 26.2% said yes and remaining 24.6% said no. Greater number of the people think that social media is may or may not be a authenticated place for knowing and educating for legal literacy.

There are times where the news on social media is not true and is represented in a manner in which falsify and lead to mass disturbances. Social media is no doubt one of the best influential platforms but it sometimes led to misguidance.

#### **FINDINGS**

The population is influenced by social media for legal literacy as the study shows that the use of social media has increased immensely. The analysis above reveals that 71.1% of the total respondents use social media frequently. This means that people rely on social media more than the other available resources for example print media, television and books and humans.

Knowing our legal environment is the major part to grant justice for the society. It is important for one to know his or her rights and duties also the current legal issues. And from the survey it is very much evident that 58.7% of the total strongly agreed on the point that there is a need for

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legal literacy in a country. Rest agree on it. This justifies that people also understand and think that there is necessity to increase legal literacy.

Since social media is one of the most used platforms in today's digital world the survey enquired about the knowledge of their survey and the source through which they came to know about it. Majority of the respondents were aware of the current legal news of the country also the source rated the highest was Social media (69.4%). This gives reasons for the research objective that yes social media is a helping hand and a contributor to increase the legal literacy of people across.

Since is a developing country and lack technology somewhere that is some things are not accessible to the rural population of the country. To investigate on that matter the type of cities they reside in to know the rural population amongst the respondents. 16.4% of the people were from the tier 3 and other city. Their responses in terms social media use was answers after the analysis which is 73.3% of the people use social media often which means that people of the rural areas have availability and approachability of social media which means that they have a scope to be legal literate through social media.

The path followed by every youngster nowadays is internet and social media for everything they want to know. So, it was very important to know whether the path used is verified or authenticated or not. When asked greater part of the population responded as "MAYBE" which means that people are still unsure and do not trust and completely rely on social media. They still have doubts regarding social media as an informational source for legal news and provisions.

## **CONCLUSION**

Social media has the potential to change the country's future. The use of mass media or social media is a way of enhancing contact with each other. The growth of social media has opened the door to accountability in society and the work of the government.

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As a critical medium for human dynamics and events, social media content can be mined in various approaches to evaluate how individuals communicate and exchange knowledge and travel through scales and resolutions. When social media activities are connected to location information, these online human activities will create enormous electronic footprints on the Digital Earth.

Advances of communication technologies in the new millennium have redefined the ways in which most of us exchange news and information. Economic upheaval and technological disruption have forced many journalists to rework as bloggers, public relations consultants, multimedia producers and social media editors. These functions add exciting new dimensions to journalism and strategic communication — including interactions and interaction with readers, and instant global publication by pressing a button. However, they also raise new legal risks that most competent communicators – and even regular people – did not envisage in the twentieth century.

So, the study above shows that people use social media on regular basis and frequently which lead their dependence more on it than other sources. And to use this as an opportunity the study shows that social media is not only used for connecting to other people but to exchange news and other relevant information. It comes out of the study that social media is an influence for people in terms of legal literacy.

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