Essay - Social Media - EOA

Not everyone is entitled to social media. To what extent is this correct?

The advent of social media has brought revolutionary changes that overwhelm the society and its benefits are immense and mankind is reaping its features of being informative, entertaining, productive and influential. However, there is an issue we may need to consider which is the concern who will be using or entitled to its use. Most critics are quick to point out that not everyone is entitled to social media as this influential and powerful invention has an immense adverse impact on society if it is used by the wrong people and for the wrong reason and this is correct. However, it is not easy for society or any institution to make such judgements to conclude which type of users are not entitled to social media and it would be effective to make this decision correct by examining the issue from a dimensional perspective when discussing the issue.

One group of people who would not be entitled to the use of social media would be those who have spread fake news to misguide and confuse the individuals with ill intent to discord the social relationship, creating adversity and conflicts in society. With or without an ill motive, the spread of fake news by these malicious individuals, many people are misinformed and misguided and would often conceive wrong information and subsequently, forged biased views which create subjective mindsets. As a result, individuals may make mis-guided decisions and invoke negative behaviors that disrupt society, creating social disruptions that undermine social stability and fabrics. This is evidently seen by the introduction of POFMA which is illegally forged to prevent the spread of fake news and thus,restricting people who spread fake news from using social media. Hence, it can be observed that those who will corrupt the minds of the masses and destabilize the society would be forbidden from using social media

However, it is not correct to impose this restriction on every individual who spreads fake news as most of the individuals who share the fake news are victims of tech deprivation and impoverishment in their social environment. Individuals who are simple users of social media are drawn into the habits to share posts and videos as they feel that such a behavior is a common and prevalent part of social media engagement and are unaware that they are fallen victims of the fake news propagators. Such ignorance or weakness cannot be used as a strong reason to forbid individuals from using social media. Instead, there are other measures to prevent them from becoming part of the manipulation by fake news propaganda and one such measure would be education. This can be seen from the education programme by the Ministry of Education on "Information Literacy" which is introduced to shape students to be responsible digital users. At the same time, as part of the Silver IT Programmes, senior citizens are also taught on the danger of fake news from being trapped as part of fake news saga. Such a measure has shown that it is better to educate the individuals rather than a strong imposition on those who have intentionally or unknowingly spread fake news to justify who is entitled to the use of social media.

Another group of people who are often criticized for the misuse of social media are politicians who often use the social media for the spread of their agenda to gain their electoral votes by manipulating the thinking of the masses. Politicians need the support of the masses and social media is the most instrumental system to garner their votes. In this process, politicians would go the extra mile to use social media in all ways, right or wrong, to achieve their political aims. However, very often, politicians would misuse social media and resort to any means to smear the names of their opponents and twist the information to blur the views of the individuals. In any election, like in the recent 2022 Malaysia Elections, the former prime minister, Mohamad Mahathir has claimed that fake news is part of the manipulation their rivalry has employed to further their agenda. In the US election, Donald Trump has also been criticized by Facebook and Twitter, for arousing his supporters to take extreme measures to depict their political views which leads to the pro-Trump riot at the capital hill where Donald Trump is accused for using scoial media to incite this protest, leading to Twitter and Faebook to close Donald Trump’s account with them. This is a good reason why some politicians must be monitored and judged whether they should be allowed to use social media.

However, some politicians have played the rules well in their use of social media and deploy them in a fair and imperative manner for the interests of their political agenda and the country. It is not wrong for politicians to spread their agenda and adopt these social media to campaign for the support of the people but they must not be used with integrity and this advocacy brings great benefits to our society. It is logical and natural for politicians to use social media for this agenda as it is means for the politicians to connect with the masses and present their political agenda but this means must be applied with guidance and regulation. In another US election campaigned by President Barack Obama, the focus was on the political aims to bring ‘Change’ and reform the nation and democracy was well served when Matt Ronney and John McCain lost in a fairer fight. It is therefore, a right choice to make that politicians who are willing to use social media in a regulated and fair manner are still entitled to use social media.

In retrospect, we can conclude that it is not easy to make a judgment on who is entitled to social media or not, but a simple general rule is feasible. It must be noted that there must be no adverse impact on society like riots, prejudice and discrimination that undermines. Those who would create chaos and disruptions to our society would be on the list should not be entitled to social media.