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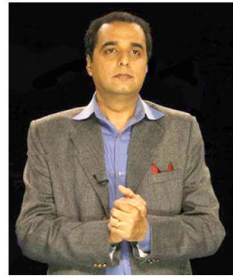
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Interview | By Vaidehi Taman

### 'Social media is a boon if used in a positive manner'



Raju Parulekar is a former blogger of Team Anna. He took his honors in ICWA. Later Raju pursued a Diploma in Journalism & Mass Communication and simultaneously began writing for newspapers and magazines. In 1994-95 he did a fellowship with Oxfam and wrote a paper on 'Sugarcane Cutters'. Since then he has worked with many national-international organisations as a political analyst.

His brief stint with fiction on television was a huge success as he wrote stories, screenplays and dialogues for daily television soap and short stories and films. Parulekar has written columns for leading newspapers. Raju Parulekar spoke about the benefits of social networking sites with our Group Editor Vaidehi Sachin.

#### What is your own definition of social media?

Social media is a platform to reach out to millions worldwide even from safe confines of your home or office. It curtails travel, enables one to one connectivity and is an excellent form of communication tool. The most important feature is its bilateral and not unilateral form of communication without anyone's monopoly. It's an absolute democracy.

#### Is social media a 'major threat'? Is it boon or bane?

Every invention has its good and bad points. It's up to us how we utilise it. If used in positive way it will surely help to build our profile, share news, and garner information as to what is happening in the remotest corner of the world. So it's a boon for people like us. It's bane for some news channels and paid media because social media exposes their hypocrisy and cerebral corruption.

#### Do you think social media is fuelling communal passions?

No, I do not think social media is responsible for spreading communal passions. Communal passion and violence has an ancient history which cannot be matched with comparatively infant social media! Communal passion is basic instinct of radical human being. It has nothing to do with social media.

#### Do you think Social media propaganda can really benefit politicians or political parties to get voters to polling booth?

Certainly any new technology of communication would be beneficial for genius propagandist and its propaganda machinery. In history we have seen Goebbels and Lenin for example who used the then prevalent communication tools for their propaganda.

#### Has sharing information about oneself become easier with the help of the social sites?

Yes, sharing information has surely become easy and convenient as it enables us to reach out to millions worldwide in matter of seconds.

#### Teenagers are becoming more socially awkward and growing up having no sense of manners in a public forum?

Social media has enabled the teenagers to raise their voice providing them an effective platform where their voice won't be snuffed out. They can speak their minds, give opinions, keep themselves abreast with latest happenings and incidences; maybe political or apolitical and motivate change in right direction. Social awkwardness and lack of social manners is a disease of suppressed hypocrites' society. Social media only expresses the symptoms and is not responsible for its origin.

#### Personal lives are getting affected as people have started sharing their personal things on social sites?

Sharing personal data is an individual's wish. People who want to be discreet have the option to be so. Social networking sites are a better platform for those who want to be vocal, heard and seen, share photographs and personal information. It's a good way of communicating with your friends and families and celebrate occasions. One can see increasing number of people who use social sites to promote their talents and businesses. In fact it's a kind of psychological remedy in this lonely world.

#### How social network has benefitted you in your growth in all aspirations?

It has been a boon to me and other thinkers and writers as we can voice our opinions on any burning issue and do not have to really wait for our views to appear in newspapers. Social networking is not controlled by any individual so I value the freedom it offers. My views reach out to people in the world in nano seconds enabling a reaction too at the same speed. Social networking sites make the saying come true; 'strike when the coal is hot.' I always do that so the effect multiplies in my life as my experience says.

#### Do you think social media will ever dominate or overpower main stream media?

Yes. It is seen that new technology takes over the world. It can be likened to the fact that old generation makes way for the new. Now in smart phone era do you remember pagers! Gradually it has to happen.

#### Do you agree that people have lost contact with the real world being on social network?

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#### Is social network is an addition to the 21st century society?

Definitely so and believe me social networking will be a major player in the next few years and reckoned as information generating machine.

#### Describe the disadvantage of social network.

Irresponsible and cunning people can use social network to malign a person's image especially criminal and anti-social element, disperse rumours and harm people's personal life by spreading malicious messages. Compared to advantages, disadvantages are very narrow.

#### What are the advantages of social network?

Dispersing information, effective means of communication, keeping abreast with national and international happenings, voicing opinions can put social networking in favourable position and multiply your creativity without obstacle of any ideological ism.

#### What is your message to our readers, those who are on social network?

Use social networking as a tool of communication, to bridge gaps between our world and outside world, make it work in your favour, use it positively to reach out to family and friends and respect each other's privacy. Latest communication and technology with human face is a blessing for budding stars. USE IT OR LOSE IT. CHOICE IS YOURS.

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