Social Media Use among Youth in India

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In today’s world social media use is becoming popular among youngsters. Therefore, a study was conducted to find out the social media use among youngsters of Pune city. The sample consisted of 137 students belonging to the age group of 12 to 19. Incidental sampling technique was used for data collection. After taking informed consent, students were administered the SNS scale developed by the researcher. The results were analysed using percentage analyses. Obtained results showed that the primary reason behind use of social media use is to keep in touch with family and friends. For example, 68 percent of the students have joined social media because they want to be in touch with family and friends. Very few students are using social media to promote ideas and to share the information. Results were discussed in the light of earlier research.

Key words- Social media, Youth

Introduction
Social Media is a platform created by and for the target audience of teenagers and young adults of our world. It is a way to connect millions of people around the world using a public forum by which they can share their profile created by themselves. Through this forum these people can blog, chat, livestream, video chat, message (privately and publicly), post, call, etc. Social Media is also used as a platform to spread and receive entertainment, download pictures and videos, browsing and surfing, etc. Youth today prefer to spend time on social media more than anything else in the world. They have difficulty concentrating on their work and would rather focus on anything that pops up on their dash (board). As a growing boon or curse, either way social media is becoming a prevalent issue of our everyday life. People between the age ranges of 8-70 are all using social media for various reasons relevant to their generation. However, the youth, specifically people between the ages of 15-28 are the biggest target audience and the most technology and social media-oriented generation. Study conducted by Andrew & Monica, (2019) on the share of U.S. adults using social media has shown that in the United States, the steady growth in adoption of social platforms over the past decade appears to be slowing. The shares of adults who say that they use Facebook, Pinterest, LinkedIn and Twitter are each largely the same as in 2016, with only Instagram showing an uptick in use during this time period.
Review of literature has shown that India has become a part of the digital world. This is due to the introduction of the government’s Digital India initiative and increasing internet penetration over the recent years. For example, there are over 560 million users online as of January, 2019.

It started with Google, and now it has expanded over the digital universe to social networking giants Facebook, Twitter and others becoming part of everyday life of the Indians. For example, survey published by (Sanika Diwanji, 2019) on the number of social network users in India has shown that the number of social network users in India stood at around 216.5 million in 2016, and the forecast is that it is growing to increase to 336 million by 2020. Facebook is most popular social network India. For example, research by (Sanika Diwanji, 2020) has shown that Facebook users in India as of May 2016 was 195 million as against 190 million in the USA. The forecast is that Facebook will continue to grow in the coming years in India and add up to 320 million by 2021 (Sanika Diwanji, 2019).

In a study conducted by Lenhart, A, Purcell K. et al (2010) on social media use among teens and adults in United States in (2010) it was found that adolescent boys and girls are equally likely to go online. It was also found that younger teens remain slightly less likely to go online than older teens. In this study it was also found that 95% of the teens between the ages of 14-17 go online.

Study was conducted by Vikramaditya Singh Bhati and Jayashree Bansal (2019) to find out whether Social Media Sites have a good or bad impact on youth and what are the major concerns from Indian perspectives. This paper gives an account of good points of use of social media and bad points of social media and how youngsters should be using social media carefully.

Another study was conducted by Siddiqui and Singh (2016) on social media and its impact with positive and negative aspects especially review on cyber bullying.

The researches have so far focused specifically on social network sites where some of these are connected to social media, social software, Web 2.0, social bookmarking, educational technologies, communities research etc positive and negative impact etc.

But research needs to be done on how the Indian youth is using social media. At what age the millennials start using social media? How they are using the social media? Are there gender differences on social media use?

In order to answer to the questions raised a study was conducted to find out the social media use among youth in India.

**Objectives of the study** -

1. To study the social media use among youth in India.
2. To study at what age the millennials start using social media
3. To study the gender differences in social media use.
Methodology-

**Sample:** - Sample consisted of 137 students belonging to the age group of 12 to 19. Sample consisted of 62 males and 75 females. The incidental sampling technique was used for data collection. After taking the informed consent questionnaires were distributed.

**Tool:** - Questionnaire was developed by the researchers was used for data collection. The questionnaire consisted of a total of 43 closed end questions.

**Analyses:** - Percentage analyses were carried out for analysing the data.

**Results and Discussion** –

Obtained results showed that the youngsters in Pune city start the use of social media at the age of 11. Around 83% students between the age group of 12 to 19 have at least one account on social media; while 16% students have 2 SNS accounts. Social media use is maximum between the age of 16 to 18. With increasing age, the students have multiple accounts on social media. For example, at the age of 18 seven accounts on social media.

When the school students were asked what is the primary reason behind the use of social media use? They said that they use social media to keep in touch with family and friends. For example, 68 percent of the students have joined social media because they wish to be in touch with family and friends. Very few students are using social media to promote ideas and to share the information.

Refer to the graph below.

Graph -1 Showing age and primary reason for use of Social Media

Regarding parent’s permission to use social media results showed that 67 percentage of the students have joined social media with parent’s permission. Refer to the graph below.
When the youngsters were asked has the use of social media affected the time spent with family and friends? Obtained results showed 50% of the students feel that social media use has affected the time spent with family and friends.

Graph – 3 Showing use of Social Media & time spent with family and friends

Regarding the question on parent’s monitoring the time spent on social media results showed that 59% parents did not monitor the time spent by their children on Social Networking Sites (SNS). When the students were asked about use of social media affecting the studies results showed that students do not feel that social media use is affecting their studies and this conviction increases with age.

Regarding the parents monitoring time spent on social media results showed that around 59% of the students said that their parents do not monitor the time spend on social media.

When the students were asked do you access social networking sites in your family's presence? 71% of the students said “Yes”. They do access social networking sites in the presence of family members. Refer to the graph below.
Graph- 3 Use of social media in the presence of family.

Though students do not mind using social media in the presence of parents; at the same time, they do not wish to add their parents on social networking sites. For example, obtained results showed that 51% of the students said that they do not the wish to add their parents on social networking sites.

There is not a particular fix time when these youth would be using social networking sites. For example, only 38% of the youth reported that they do stick to a particular time limit when using social networking sites; but remaining percentage of the students do not adhere to a particular time for using social networking sites. Particularly, with increasing age this tendency was found to be more with the youngsters. For example, maximum number of students of the age of 18 said that they do not stick to a particular time limit when using SNS.

The youth between the age group of 17 & 18 spend maximum time on social media. For example, 53% of the students belonging to 17 to 18 years spend more time on SNS weekly. Refer to Graph below.

Graph – 4 Age and Hours spent on Social Media

As far as posts on social media is concerned, obtained results showed that 75% students rarely post anything on social media whereas, 24% of students responded with very often. Refer to the graph below.
As far as SNS affecting the studies are concerned, obtained results showed that 30% of the students felt that the use of social media is not impacting their studies, 11% students feel it has a serious impact on their study, 48% students feel that it is slightly affecting the studies and only 11% of the students felt that social media helps in study (Refer to graph below).

Regarding the social media use and the responsibility of doing the homework is concerned, results have shown that 37% of the students have ignored the responsibility like homework because of social media use.

When the question was asked regarding staying awake till late night or getting up early morning for spending time on social media, most of the students responded that they do not stay up late or get up early because they want to spend time on social media. For example, 63% of the students replied that they do not stay up late or get up early in order to spend time on social media (Refer to Graph- 7 below)
When the youth were asked, “Do you have more friends on social media than in real life”? Results showed that 45% students replied that they have more friends on social media than in real life. This shows that there is not much difference as far as the number of friends in real life and number of friends on social media. With increasing age, the number of friends on social media has increased. Results showed that the students in the group of 18 reported that they have more than 100 friends in their primary social networking sites.

Even though with increasing age number of friends on social media is increasing, still these students felt that they prefer face to face interaction with people including their friends. For example, 64% students prefer to interact with people face to face. This shows the importance of face to face communication in interpersonal communication particularly for the youngsters (Refer to Graph- 9 below)

When the question was asked regarding the number of friends that they have on their primary social networking site, it was found that with age the number of friends on social networking sites is increasing (Refer to Graph 10 below).
Results showed that youth between the age group of 12 to 19 is rarely using social media to impress others. For example, 75% of the youth reported that they rarely use social media to impress others. Only 33% of the students have tried to impress others through the use of social media. When the youth were asked “Why do you try to impress others”? Obtained results showed that 49% of the students reported that they try to impress others in order to gain acceptability and 45 % said they try impress people for getting popularity (Refer to Graph- 11 below).

When the youngsters were asked “Does getting more likes and followers make you happy”? obtained results showed that 61% student feel happy by getting likes and followers (Refer to Graph 12 below).

When the youngsters were asked “Does the appeal of your social media profile hold much importance in your life”? Results showed that 63% of the students feel that SNS profile does not hold much importance in their life. Regarding the use of SNS empowering youngsters are concerned, obtained results showed that for 50% of the students SNS does empower them.
The striking finding was with increasing age the youngsters feel that social media is a way to relieve stress. For example, obtained results showed that 73% of the students said that Social Media is a way to relieve stress (Refer to Graph 13 below).

Graph 13 Age & Social media use and stress relief

Most of the youngsters felt that there is no need to follow the trend. For example, 71% youngsters do not feel a need to follow the "trend" on social media. Only 28% of the youngsters feel burdened by SNS.

It was also found in case of 75% of the youngsters that they do not feel the need to change themself because of SNS.

Another striking finding was 80 % of the youth have not portrayed a fake personality on SNS.

About 97% of the students have not had the experience of Cyber Bulling, Trolling. Only one student reported a serious impact of cyber bullying.

Around 77% of the students check SNS before going to bed and after waking up.

Majority of the students reported that a break from SNS helps them feel relaxed than uneasy.

If they are not able to use SNS for a day then 49 % of the students spend time with their family or friends, 38% in reading or doing some other tasks. Only 11 students between the age of 15 to 18 reported that they feel uneasy when they are not able to use SNS.

Obtained results showed that 70 % of the students visit SNS without any purpose in mind.

Around 58% students said that not using social networking sites will make their life more productive. Around 60% students said they do not rely on the information shown on SNS. Whereas, 40% students said they rely on the information shown on SNS.

Most of the students check the authenticity of the content on a news article on social media. For example, 78 % of the students do check the authenticity of the content on a new article on social media.

Majority of the youngsters said that on a daily basis they use two or more than two social applications (Refer to Graph 14 below)
Graph -14 Age and checking social applications on daily basis

Majority of the youth have social account than private account on SNS (Refer to Graph 15 below).

Graph 15 Age wise distribution of use of Social account or Private account

This section presents some of the striking findings-

Does use of SNS make you feel relaxed? Around 71% of the youngsters responded with “Yes”. The use of social networking sites makes them feel relaxed.

When they were asked “If not free, would you be willing to pay for social networking apps?” Majority of the youth responded with “NO”. Thereby, suggesting that they do not wish to spend money on SNS apps.

Following section gives an account of gender differences in Social Media use.

Gender differences in Social Media use-

Gender differences in time spent on social media has showed that both males and females spent less than five hours on social media.

Both males and females rarely post on SNS.

In case of both males as well as females in all ages they don’t ignore their responsibilities related to study.

Regarding the gender differences on number of friends on SNS, obtained results showed that with increasing age, the number of friends on SNS has increased for both males and females.

For females getting likes or getting more followers on social media is more important and it is related to happiness than in case of males.
Regarding gender differences in social media holding importance in the life of students, obtained results showed that in case of male (age: 17) & female (age: 14) they feel social media profile holding much importance in their life.

Results also showed that with increasing social media use affecting the studies is high in case of both males and females

Regarding gender differences on social media use obtained results showed that for both male & female cases, the primary reason for joining SNS is to keep in touch with family & Friends while the secondary reason is to share information, media (pictures, videos, etc).

As far as permission of parents for the use of social media is concerned, results showed that there are no gender differences in this regard. This means that both males and females take parental permission for the use of social media; except in case of males between the age group of 16.

Regarding parental monitoring use of their children’s social media use, obtained results showed that in case of males parental monitoring of social media use starts at the age of 12 and in case of females it starts at the age of 13.

Both males and females do not wish to add their parents on social media.

**Limitations** - The present study was limited to only school going students between 12-19-year-old age group. The study was limited to only students from Pune city. Self-report measures were used for data collection; therefore, limitations of self-report inventories are applicable for the present study. Only percentage analyses were used for data collection.

In spite of these limitations, it can be said that it is one of the few studies on the use of social media network among school going children of Pune City and in that sense, it assumes importance.

**Suggestions for future research** – Future study may be conducted collecting data from more youngsters. Study may be conducted using personality and use of social media. Study may be conducted to find out social media addiction. Future study may be conducted to find out the socioeconomic differences in social media use.

**Implications** – The present study will be useful to understand the SNS trends among youngsters in India. The current study will also be helpful to parents and educators as it will help them understand the SNS trends and accordingly, remedial measures can be taken.
References


