

Impact of Social Networking on Indian Youth - A Survey

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Abstract

The extensive use of Social Networking in India has been on the rise among the new generation youths. In today's world, life cannot be imagined without Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, LinkedIn or Twitter accounts and online handles. The new age social networking culture has been well accepted and has met an enthusiastic response and acceptance. There are reports of cultural changes and in the way traditional interactions and social communications are conducted in India. Research studies on this new age social media impact and usage within India have been limited to specific surveys and theories. The objectives of this study is an attempt to investigate the extent of social networking impact on the Indian youth. The reason for selecting youth as the target audience is because the direction of a country and culture is decided by the direction taken by youths of that country. This paper is an attempt to analyse the pattern of social networking usage and impact in order to determine the social networking addiction.

Keywords: Facebook; Indian Culture; Social Media; Social Networking; Twitter; WhatsApp

1 Introduction

While social networking met with huge enthusiasm among new generation initially, this new social culture seems to have been accepted by all age groups in India. The rise of internet access speeds and smart phones helped social networking even more and days of considering social applications as waste of time is long gone. Initially the use of social networking was limited to corporates and businesses for connecting with peers, customers, clients with twitter handle, Facebook accounts or WhatsApp mentioned on business and visiting cards. Social networking has now branched to include friends, family associates and classmates as well. Social networking offers several opportunities like access to information, videos, extension of social group, ability to express, learning opportunities, seeking and maintaining friends and relatives. A global media survey report on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Google+ presented statistics as shown in Table 1.

Off the 7.3 billion global population worldwide, social networking has 2.3 billion active users which has seen a rise of 176 million just last year [15]. Social networking advertising earnings are estimated at \$8.3 billion in 2015 even as 385 organizations spent over 20% budget on social media channels which has been up by 15% compared to 2015 [5]. The increased use of social networking culture and social networking sites by youth has helped bring friends and family closer for those living in distant locations,

Table 1: Social networking statistics (Source: Brand Watch, October 2016) [17]

Social Media	Active User	Daily Users	Leaders	15-34 Ages	Indian Uses
Facebook	171 billion	113 billion	169	91%	142 million
Twitter	320 million	4.5 million	139	79%	28.5 million
LinkedIn	450 million	100 million	930	56%	37 million
Google+	300 million	1.6 million	89	83%	10 million

low additional cost of connectivity, sharing information, voicing opinions and updating each other on happenings in their lives.

The extensive use of Social Networking however, makes it an interesting study [6] regarding the risks and consequences on the existing youths. Social networking with the ability to effectively vanish boundaries, the anytime anywhere availability has seen impact on privacy as sharing too much, false unnecessary information about themselves or voice opinions, even getting exposed to fraudsters or cyber criminals and most critical of all the increased addiction to Internet and Social applications [13]. These tend to influence the youth for their social, emotional and psychological well-being. Adverse outcomes are seen as increasing exposure to cyber-bullying, unknown persons accessing personal information, online dating, exiting, and sleep deprivation, exposure to unsuitable digital content, outside influences of third-party groups encouraging to transfer money and low social interactions and limited face to face communications.

Examples of popular Social Networking sites are as follows:

- Facebook is currently one of the most famous social networking application site globally, is available in 37 languages and permits registered users to create profiles similar to a 'wall' like a virtual bulletin board, add friends, and send messages, comment, upload and share videos, photographs, web links. This application has several public features like
 - 'Marketplace' to post and respond to classified advertisements online;
 - 'Groups' to publicize events and invite guests and friends for attending that event;
 - 'Pages' to create and promote a personal or business ideas or involve others in a topic;
 - 'Presence Technology' which allows video calls and text chat for those online on the web site o 'Privacy' to block/allow specific or all members from viewing the profile, photos or comments.
- Twitter is a micro blog service which allows registered members to broadcast and follow replies to short posts, better known as 'Tweets' with no approvals required. Other users can subscribe to follow or reply to the tweets which may include hyperlinks to other blogs or posts and receive update messages by adding 'Hashtags' to keyword on the post, this acts like a metatag, expressed as #keyword. The tweets are searchable and available for the public. Twitter works on Ruby-for-Rails which is an open source web framework and its API is available for application developers.
- LinkedIn is designed primarily for corporate business community to promote personal brand online and allows registered members to establish a network of other professionals whom they know and trust as 'connections'. This requires preexisting relationships unlike Facebook or Twitter. Educational and Professional qualifications are the main display items on user pages here. This application is available in 24 languages.

- Google+ provides ability to Google users to post status updates or photographs, available to friends for view and comment in to 'Circles' which is primarily a group for multi-person instant messaging social networking system. Text and Videos are posted on 'Hangouts'.

2 Literature Review

This section presents a review of the research studies related to social networking aspects in order to determine which areas have already been explored and investigation in which area can add value. This help formulate objectives and undertake this research work. These research studies also provided an understanding into the existing efforts for understanding of the complexities of the social network sites.

Isodje, A. [7] presented an overview on the use of Social Media for business promotion, since social media as an online collaborative platform has the power to impact cultures and business. This further infiltrates communities, professional groups, peer bodies, which can be successfully used for promoting ones business.

Mamta et al. [10] tested for affiliation that exists between Higher Education and Social Networking Site. Mining algorithms provided by NASA tools like Like-Analyser, Gephi, Wolfram Alpha and NodeXL to assess presence and participation factor of students and education professionals in social network graphs are utilized in this study and analysis finding related to social network analysis predicted that social networking on Facebook and higher education work in parallel.

In times of traditional print media, there used to be one-way information dissemination which was restricted to geographical limits and presence. The process of information diffusion with arrival of Internet transformed significantly. Purva et al. [12] presented that online social networking like Facebook and Twitter have the fastest means of communication and having gained wide popularity, have revolutionized interpersonal communications by providing a platform to individuals for expressing themselves at a global level, beyond their immediate geography. The authors present the study on diffusion dynamics of specific real world events, discussed on Twitter, with respect to location and time. The events were categorizes into broad categories based temporal (short or long), geographical distribution (local or global), information diffusion (viral or gradual), influence (popular or unpopular) and the cause (natural or planned). It was conclude that the three-dimensional analysis of real-world events by exploring relationships among them.

The number of social networking site users is increasing immensely not only in India but also across the globe. Davmane et al. [3] analysed the factors for the online social networking sites as per users behavior regarding user friends, the peer groups, access patterns, amount of time spend, the effect on personal and professional life. User attitude and behavior is also surveyed for over seven hundred users using a questionnaire consisting of 27 questions which focused on behavior of Indian users in terms of usability, trends and access.

Singh et al. [14] presented the research effort in ensuring awareness about the social networking site concept, merits, demerits and meaning. The research methodology in this paper was based on primary and secondary data regards to grouping of users having similar type of interests, jobs, activities, backgrounds or some other type of real life similarities.

Purti at al. [2] focused on Big Data Management for Social Networking Sites by review and analysis of how Big Data is being managed for social networking sites by Facebook and Twitter. The data size for social networking sites constitutes almost 105 terabytes of data for every thirty minute, which in itself is a huge chunk of the data, unlike other data sources which has structured, limited data to handle. Facebook uses Hive for storing the data on HDFS (Hadoop Distributed File System) while Twitter has implemented a set of solutions storage inside Hadoop to store the data in LZ0 compressed format.

Kumar et al. [9] propose a sentiment analysis method on the tweets in Cloud environment and utilized Hadoop for intelligent analysis and storage of big data on Facebook and Twitter. The reason is that

handling huge amount of unstructured data is a tedious task to take up. The current Analytics tools and models used that are available in the market are not sufficient to manage big data. Therefore, there is a need to use a Cloud storage for such type of applications. The big data due to rise in social media has gathered huge interest among users and social networking site data is being used for various purposes including prediction, marketing and sentiment analysis.

Mittal et al. [11] analysed the effects of online shared sentiments of emoticons, interjections and comments extracted from posts and status updates. The authors also conducted a survey on the responses on the World Wide Web as an extensive large virtual space with users sharing and expressing views and opinions. Communication with the known and unknown residing anywhere on the globe at any point of time with the consumers being influenced by the social media whether intentionally or unintentionally.

Shang et al. [4] investigated why and how people use location sharing services on social networking platforms in China. To accomplish this the authors conducted research questions and forty three in-depth face-to-face interviews. The results indicated maximum users are concerned about privacy issues¹⁵ when using the location sharing services from social networking platforms, even as some indicated that they were not aware of this feature and did not know how to use location sharing services.

Muhammed et al. [1] reviewed research papers from 2010 to 2016 on Sybil attacks regarding use of fake and malicious identities on the online social network. The authors presented ideas for future research and also discussed a new taxonomy for Sybil attacks.

Zhou et al. [18] proposed a unique system called ProGuard for detecting malicious identity accounts in financial institutions dealing online with real and virtual currency. The authors suggested using behaviors, recharging patterns and currency usage by such accounts and even demonstrated experimental results proving their proposed system accomplished 0.3% false positives only.

Kiliroor et al. [8] presented a trust analysis system for online social networks to improve privacy and approval process for authentic social network site users. The authors discussed that real users may not be willing to disclose their identities due to privacy issues on public sites and social networks.

Wang et al. [16] proposed use of a probabilistic model for detecting identity thefts on social networking when using mobiles over unsecure Internet. The authors conducted experiment on real time data sets and displayed their proposed system achieved better performance and response by use of user behavior analysis as a key parameter for identity theft detection.

3 Social Networking Aspects

There are many positive aspects of social networking, but there are equally as many dangers and negative aspects that come with the use of sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, Pinterest, Tumblr, Instagram, gaming sites, and blogs.

3.1 Positive Aspect

Some of the positives arising from social networking are listed in Table 2.

3.2 Negative Aspects

Some of the negatives arising from social networking are listed in Table 3.

Table 2: Social networking Positive Aspects

Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Helps in better collaboration and communication between teachers and students; - Access to online resources helps students to learn better, faster; - Student grades improved along with reduced absenteeism in online sessions; - Educational topics and school assignments being discussed on social sites.
Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase in voter participation, seeing their friends voted on Facebook post; - More likely to attend a political meeting and rally seeing others on social sites; - Social movements have easy fast method of mobilizing people and sharing info.
Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information dissemination is faster than any media - breaking news spreads fast; - Access to previously inaccessible resources for academic research; - Helps inform and empower individuals to change themselves.
Social Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social media allow people to communicate with friends and this increased online communication strengthens those relationships, friendships; - People making new friends - 57% online teens report making new friends online. - Helped find and keep in touch with friends who are geographically far off.
Job Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Great for marketing professionals - connect and find business opportunities. - Employers find candidates and unemployed find work faster. - Social media sites have created thousands of ecommerce jobs, new avenues.

4 Social Networking Survey

The authors conducted a survey analyse the impact of Social Networking on Indian youth and culture. The survey involved sending a detailed questionnaire to respondents via Survey Monkey and 532 responses were received, the breakdown and survey analysis is presented as shown in Table 4.

The respondents were asked few questions on the social networking and the responses are illustrated in the below graphs for reference.

Question #1. What is the amount of time you are spending daily on Social Networking sites? Most respondents spent over 1 to 2 hours on the social networking sites each day, which in a country like India is substantial given the closed culture (See Figure 1).

Question #2. What is the extent of the addiction for social networking? The respondents religiously checked their social networking accounts each morning, which shows a trend in the rising interest and addiction to social networking (See Figure 2).

Question #3. What is the main purpose of social networking for your use? The primary reason for using social networking tends to be non-essential, voicing opinions which in Indian culture is limited as speaking out or against is looked down upon (See Figure 3).

Question #4. Mental and physical impact on health? (See Table 5)

Question #5. What are the different ways of accessing social networking applications?

Table 3: Social networking Positive Aspects

Apps access User Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social apps force users to grant access to their apps for list of things; - Access public profile information - user name, profile picture, friend list birthday, favorite movies and books, etc. - Send email - sending direct emails to the user email address; - Access posts in the News feed, Video and Photos posted; - Access family and relationships information; - Post to the wall -Add new message posts on the user's behalf.
Detriment to Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enables copying and cheating when submitting assignments; - Grades improve for light users, while heavy users of social media suffer -; <li style="padding-left: 20px;">- Students have an average GPA of 3.06 while non-users have 3.82 GPA; <li style="padding-left: 20px;">- For every 93 minutes over the average 106 minutes spent on Facebook daily, college students' grades dropped. <li style="padding-left: 20px;">- Students going online while studying scored 20% lower on tests. <li style="padding-left: 20px;">- Possible negative effects on college admission - 35% of admissions officers scan potential candidate social media blogs and posts which can affects hiring and educational decisions. <li style="padding-left: 20px;">- Social networking sites harm employees' productivity - 51% of users aged 25-34 checked social media at work. - Harm to employment and prospects - <li style="padding-left: 20px;">- Job recruiters check a prospective employee's social media accounts, things like profanity, poor spelling, grammar, racism, and sexism, health references to alcohol, drugs, sexual or religious content can count against you.
Lack of Privacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Young people often give out personal information when online without reading the fine print privacy policies and unaware about misuse by third parties. - Exposure to corporate and governmental intrusions - Insurance companies use information gleaned from social media. - Online advertising policies are an invasion of privacy. If clicked "like" for a brand, browser cookies give the company information and access about personal information and preferences.
Users Vulnerable to Crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unauthorized sharing of intellectual property can cause loss of potential income. - Cyber-attacks like ransomware, hacking, identity theft and phishing are common problems faced by end users. - Criminals browse social media to know user whereabouts and are known to commit crimes when away on vacation.
Waste of Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Constant browsing and replying online posts and blogs, takes the user attention away from core work and often take some time to return to original task.

Social Detriment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cyber-bullying or use of electronic communication to bully someone by sending intimidating or threatening messages is commonplace online. This causes emotional trauma and sometimes even leads to suicide. - Excessively being online correlated with personality and brain disorders - poor social skills and narcissistic tendencies or even need for instant pleasure with addictive behaviors and other emotional issues leading to depression, anxiety and loneliness. - Less time for face-to-face interaction with loved ones. - Youngsters are prone to feeling isolated, disconnected from real world and face higher risks of depression, low self-esteem and eating disorders.
Misinformation	<p>Enables the spread of false rumors and unreliable information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-diagnosis of health problems and following amateur medical advice; - Befriending someone to gain information; - Revealing reconnaissance data unknowingly to the public; - Studies have shown that sites such as Facebook influence you, via advertisements, to spend more money.

Table 4: Breakdown of Respondents organization

Organization Category	Respondents	Breakup %
Financial Services	46	9%
Education	173	33%
Information Technology	99	19%
Retail, Ecommerce	65	12%
Internet Service Provider	39	7%
Gaming	22	4%
Media & Travel	31	6%
Pharmacy	57	11%

Accessing social networking applications by users range as follows

- Mobile Devices - 45% (Includes Smart Phones, iPads, Kindles, Tablets);
- Desktop Computers - 22%;
- Laptops - 33%.

5 Conclusion

The Social Networking patterns shown by people in the study are largely consistent with those recorded in previous research studies with respect to impact of popular social media sites on Indian culture and the extent of the use, purposes, mode of access when using these sites. The author also reviewed benefits of the social networking sites in culture development, building self-identity, developing relationships and acquisition of social, communication, and technical skills. For future research, there is a need to increase the sample size and select a better representative sample. This study might also suffer from the disadvantages of judgment sampling viz., researcher’s bias and stereotypes that may distort

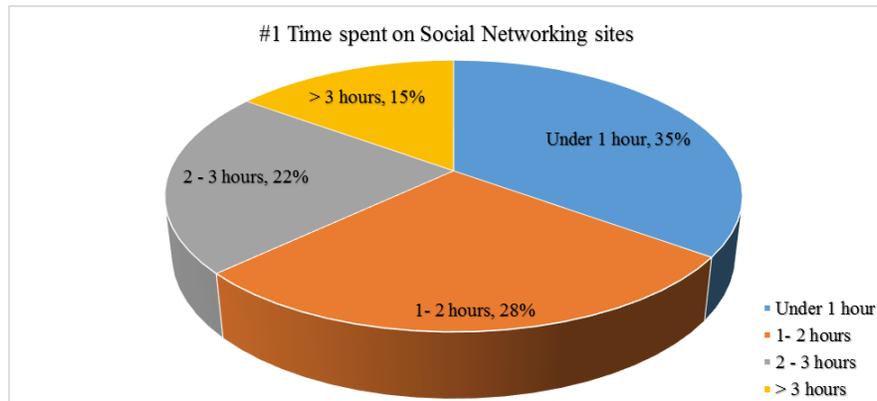


Figure 1: #1 Time per Day Spent On Social Networking Sites

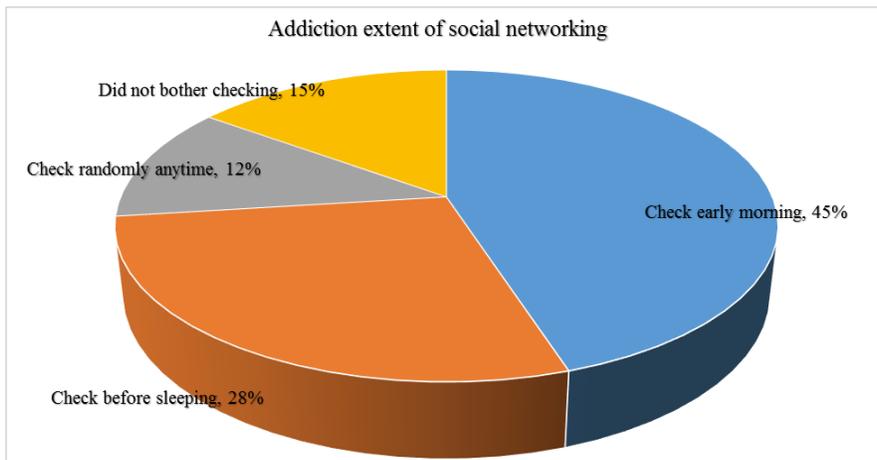


Figure 2: #2 Addiction extent of Social Networking

the results; group selected may not represent all the population and also it might not be possible to accurately identify the sample using this method in case the population is very large. Also, since Social Networking is a global phenomenon, comparative analysis of students from within India and also of various countries can yield interesting findings, implying whether SN addiction exists, also if it does is the pattern of students from different region differs or not.

6 Recommendations

Based on the findings drawn from this study, the researcher has made the following.

- Recommendation to College and University Authorities:
 - Regulation on use of mobile phones during lectures.

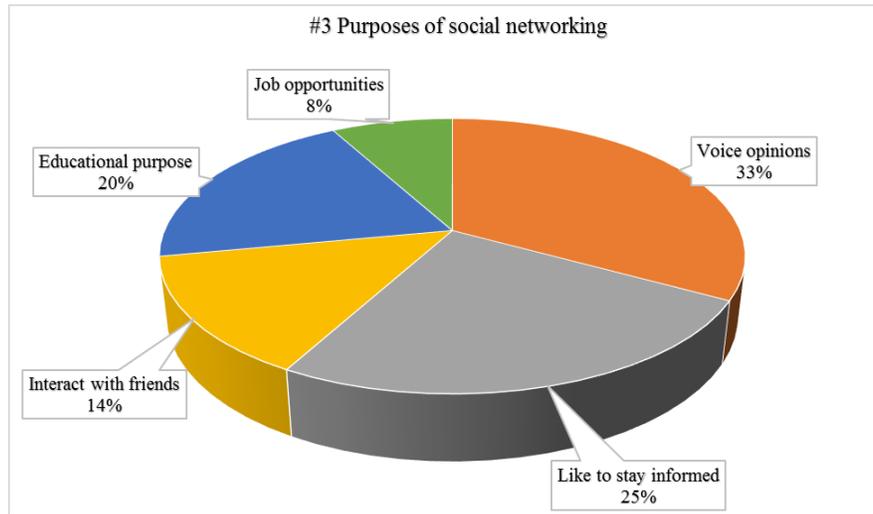


Figure 3: #3 Use of Social Networking

Table 5: Mental and physical impact on Health responses

Social Networking	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Way of life for youth & old	15%	43%	19%	16%	7%
Is Highly addictive	18%	55%	13%	10%	4%
Compare our lives with others	41%	42%	11%	5%	1%
Making us restless, sleeplessness	23%	53%	13%	7%	4%
Gives rise to Cyber Bullying	18%	43%	22%	13%	4%
Glamourizes Drug & Alcohol	26%	29%	20%	17%	8%
Can make us unhappy	44%	31%	12%	11%	2%
Leads to fear of missing out	39%	28%	26%	3%	4%
Multitasking, loss of concentration	32%	34%	11%	18%	5%
Leads to increased peer pressure	23%	48%	18%	8%	3%

- Hence the students access the various social networking sites through their mobile phones, it is advisable that university enacts laws, making students' use of phones during lectures an offence which shall attract drastic punitive measures for the culprits.
- Organize a seminar to enlighten students on the not too-good aspects of using social networking sites as media of interaction. This can be done by exposing students to the importance of face to face communication in the creation of real communication or message sharing. Seminars would be helpful here.
- Provision of laws on the content of social media: There has to be laws guiding the students' use of the social networking sites and what they disseminate through the media.
- Recommendations to the Ministry of Information Technology:

Since social networking sites fall within the ambit of the Ministry of Communications Technology, it is the duty or responsibility of initiating and coordinating all the policies and programs towards the use and development of information and communication Technologies (ICTs). Social networking is part and parcel of the ICTs, as such from the findings. From this work; these recommendations are made to the ministry:

- The ministry has to mandate all the social service providers to make it mandatory that the condition for one to open an account on any of the social networking sites is having a duly registered GSM SIM card.
- The service providers have to keep the personal details of each of their account owners including their GSM phone numbers; and make the information available to an appropriate government agency if the need arises.
- Enactment of Social Media Use Act: The ministry has to propose to enact a new law that would guide the users of the social network sites with the do's and don'ts. This is quite necessary now, as one of the findings of this study shows that some of the students use the social networking sites to engage in cyber-crimes. Such act shall provide the legal framework that would help Law courts to adjudicate on cyber-crime cases.

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Biography

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