

International Journal of Humanities, Social Science, Business Management & Commerce (IJHSSBMC)

A Quarterly International Research Journal of Humanities, Social Science,
Business Management & Commerce

SRJIF Impact Factor (2024): 8.5

Volume 8, Issue 3 (September 2024)

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Infinity Academic & Research
Association, Chatrapati Sambhajinagar
(MS) INDIA

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Impact of Social Networking Sites on The Users: A Socio-Psychological Analysis

Dr Vijay K. Gheji,^{1*} and Ms. Priti B. Desai (Gheji)²

¹Assistant Professor, Dept of Sociology, Chandrabai-Shantappa Shendure College, Hupari Dist. Kolhapur
416203 Maharashtra, India

²Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Dr. Ghali College, Gadhinglaj Dist. Kolhapur 416526
Maharashtra, India

Corresponding author E-mail: vijay238433@yahoo.co.in

Received: 22 July, 2024 | Accepted: 04 September, 2024 | Published: 06 September, 2024

Abstract

This paper is focused to find out the answer whether the social networking sites are boon or bane for today's society. The growing popularity of social networking sites (SNS) among the Internet users demands an introspection of personal and social behaviour of human beings. Today 1.5 billion people across the world have their profiles in social networking sites. In today's world where Internet has experienced tremendous growth, social networking sites have become highly significant in peoples' lives. Social networking websites like WhatsApp, Twitter, Orkut, Facebook, Myspace and YouTube are becoming more and more popular and has become part of daily life for an increasing number of people. Because of their features, young people are attracted to social networking sites. No doubt these SNS provides employment, marketing, personal growth, sharing of information but the most prevalent danger through often involves online predators or individuals. These SNS has great impact on youth of India. In today's fast-moving world, everyone tries to be ahead of their competitors, friends and social circle

SNS becomes a reason for anxiety and addiction. It starts affecting personal relationship with spouse and family members. Such sites make private life and public life of an individual a digital document. How SNS affecting our social behaviour and relationships? Are we going towards a prosperous future or a darker world of SNS? This research study tries to explore all these positive and negative impacts of SNS on its users.

Keywords: Social networking, social media, Personal privacy, Cyber infidelity, Virtual life, cybercriminals, Facebook addiction

Introduction

Social Network Sites: A Definition

We define social network sites as web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site.

Social networks sites (SNSs) have changed today the way of human communications. From simple beginnings as a platform for sharing photos, discussing common interests, and supplementing traditional social interactions, they have become the source of change in different fields. They have revolutionized the way people interact, the way they communicate, and even the way they think

Social networking phenomenon has emerged over the past ten years. In that time, social networking sites (SNS) have grown from a niche to a mass online activity, in which tens of millions of internet users are engaged, both in their leisure time, and at work. However, there has been very little research on the socio-economic impact of these sites in the Indian context. In this paper we focused on the impact of these social networking sites on the youth of India in both positive as well as negative phase.

The term Social Networking Sites has been defined by different authors in several different ways. This leaves the reader with a feeling of being 'unsure' of its real meaning. Social Networking Sites can be broadly defined as internet-based social spaces designed to facilitate communication, collaboration, and content sharing across networks of contacts. Social Networking Sites allow users to manage, build and represent their social networks online. Social Networking Sites are usually made up of other individuals; they might also include profiles of events, companies, even political parties. People use Social Networking

Sites for countless activities. Among the most common uses are, connecting with existing networks, making and developing friendships/contacts, create an online presence for their users, viewing content/finding information, creating and customizing profiles and so on. Social Networking Sites have rapidly gained popularity. Globally the active memberships on SNS reached 500 million on 2014.

Social Networking sites provide a platform for discussion on such issues as it is this media which majority mass rely on and extend warm support. One such burning issue that has been overlooked in today's scenario is the impact of social networking sites in the changing mind-set of the youth. Our research is conducted on youths between age group of 18-30 years with a view to know the level of awareness on the social issues and how far social networking sites awakened the today's youth in expressing their views on current and burning issues like corruption, human rights, girl education etc.

Objectives

1. To understand the impact of social networking sites on students' health & mentality.
2. To know the Impact of social networking sites on youth on their social interaction and social behavior.

Research Methodology

The present research paper is based on the secondary data. The present study takes help of the different types of articles, books, magazines and internet.

Social impact of social networking sites

Social media are Internet sites where people interact freely, sharing and discussing information about each other and their lives, using a multimedia mix of personal words, pictures, videos and audio. At these Web sites, individuals and groups create and exchange content and engage in person-to-person conversations. They appear in many forms including blogs and micro blogs, forums and message boards, social networks, wikis, virtual worlds, social bookmarking, tagging and news, writing communities, digital storytelling and scrapbooking, and data, content, image and video sharing, podcast portals, and collective intelligence. There are lots of well-known sites such as WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, Instagram, Myspace, Flickr, Blogger, LiveJournal, Wikipedia, Second Life, and others.

Social networking users face severe health risk because they reduce face-to-face contact and become addicted in a virtual world of relationships. Instant gratification of needs become their goal. According to the

U.S. Internet activity (January 2010) Nielsen Online says, users spent an average of 7 hours a month on Facebook. This makes Facebook **Internet's maximum time waster**. In U.S. 53 percent of people check their Facebook profile before getting out of bed in the morning and 35 percent check their accounts several times in a day ("People's addiction to," 2010). Aric Sigman, fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine, says "social networking sites have played a significant role in making people become more isolated.

Psychological impact of social networking sites

After drugs and alcohol addiction, if the world is facing any new type of addiction disorder, then that is Facebook addiction. This is a kind of Internet addiction, but social networking site influences such that people goes mad behind it. It's like people being immersed in virtual life and forgetting about the physical world around them. Lack of face-to-face contact could alter the way genes work, upset immune responses, hormonal levels, function of arteries and influence mental performance.

A survey conducted among 1000 people across United States to find peoples addiction to social networking sites, finds 56 percent users check Facebook at least once a day. And 29 percent can stay only few hours without checking their account. Study says people under 25 years are more likely to lose sleep keeping an eye on their friends' post. Interestingly, 17 percent would read a message on Facebook during sex and 63 percent while in the toilet ("People's addiction to," 2010).

Psychologist Michael Fenichel describes FAD "it is a situation in which Facebook usage overtake daily activities like your normal function, eating, working, waking up, sleeping and many more" ("Facebook addiction disorder," 2010)

Dr. Joanna Lipari, a clinical psychologist at University of California says there are five clues that show you are addicted to Facebook ("Are you suffering," 2010).

- You start losing sleep over Facebook and that hampers your daily activity.
- *Spend more than an hour on Facebook.
- You become obsessed with your old loves and start visiting their profile. And gradually it starts to affect your current relationship status.
- You tend to ignore work and use Facebook in office hours.
- When you think of going a day without Facebook, it causes stress and anxiety to you.

Social networking sites should be limited for making friends and fun in the leisure. But don't substitute it with your real-life social contacts. Otherwise, you will be facing social isolation, high level of anxiety and other behavioural disorders.

Conclusion

It was found that these social networking sites are acting as great medium for view mobilization. The growth of social networking sites shows a significant change in the social and personal behavior of Internet users. SNS has become an essential medium of communication and entertainment among the young adults. Though it has started to affect the daily activities of normal human beings, the popularity of SNS is not going to reduce in near future. Everything in this world can be used for a bad purpose as well as for good. It's us who can make the difference and utilize social networking sites wisely for the benefit of developing social bonds across the geographical borders. However, nefarious act of cyber criminals discussed in the article has to be brought to the fore and stringent measures should be taken to curb the menace. These social networking sites are proving themselves a boon at least in bringing thoughts of people on these social issues. It is also being generated from the information so obtained that people are getting more aware about the social issues mainly from WhatsApp and Facebook.

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