

SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION AND ITS MANIFOLD CONSEQUENCES ON YOUNGER GENERATION

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ABSTRACT

Social Networking Sites have today become an integral part of our lives. There has been an exponential increase in the usage of Social media by the youth. The ease of use, its availability and instant gratification has pulled people towards it. Young adults are getting allured by social media and are spending long hours over it. This has pushed them to an extent of being an addict. The behavioural changes that the youth shows express the negative impact of social networking sites in our daily lives.

There are many incidences to show that the youth of today have surely understood the power of social networking sites and in the bargain have become slaves to it instead of becoming masters. A large percentage of the youth falls under the category of being a social media addict. This addiction is very similar to any other addiction which definitely is harmful for the physical and mental health of the individuals.

Present paper discuss about the Social Media Addiction and its Manifold Consequences on Younger Generation. There is definitely no issue and nothing wrong with utilizing social media. Few people utilize it to check updates from their acquainted and to keep in touch with them. Few people utilize it for entertainment purpose and to kill free time. The main issue comes when someone becomes addicted to social media and overspends their time on those platforms; as a result, their bad habit serious affected their lives in a negative way; and this is obviously something that everyone needs to avoid.

KEYWORDS: Social Networking Sites, Social Media, Social Media Addiction, Cyberbullying,

INTRODUCTION

With the triggering of technical advancement, human beings have laid hands on the processes beyond the understanding of a common man. Man is indomitably advancing with every single day. In a pool of advances, social media tops the

list in its enormous growth and has reached to every person. Social media is an internet based technology that facilitates easy communication by forming virtual networks and communities.

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Today Social media has gone beyond just being a global sensation to a very routine part of day to day lives. Human beings are getting influenced by social media with or without their direct knowledge. Social media websites are web based services that give an opportunity to people to create their profile with the choice of their own circle of users or friends and thereby connect with them in an altogether public forum that provides services like chatting, blogging, video calling, mobile connectivity and video/photo sharing etc.

We can go to some definitions to get a clear understanding of this concept of Social media:

- According to Lisa Buyer, "Social media is today's most transparent, engaging and interactive form of public relations. It combines the true grit of real time content with the beauty of authentic peer-to-peer communication."
- Kaplan & Haenlein Opined, "Social Media is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content."
- Michelle Chmielewski defines, "Social media is not about what each one of us does or says, but about what we do and say together, worldwide, to communicate in all directions at any time, by any possible (digital) means."

Social Media has picked up pace across the globe over the last decade with networks like Orkut, Hi5, Myspace, Facebook starting the trend. While the first three aren't relevant anymore, Facebook managed to become the global leader in the segment, owing to the fact that it was by far the most superior product of the lot. Acquisitions of ultra popular image sharing platform Instagram and messaging giant WhatsApp has helped Facebook amass a mammoth 2.13 billion users as of 2018. In a country like India, where only 10.1%

of the population had access to internet in 2011 (census) now boasts of around 35% of the population having internet access. This number is expected to be boosted even further with the data rates down to an all-time low. Ages 25-34 is the most active on Social Media accounting for 30% of the global user base. At present, 300 million images are uploaded every day on a platform like Facebook.

Today Social media is a central part of the experience of using the internet, and it became an inseparable part of human social life. Social media is capable enough to decide the way of life for human beings, it can provoke political orientations, it affects social life of human beings etc. So in a way Social media elevated itself to the level to introduce so called social contract to the men and women living in state of nature!

Almost everyone in our social circle is apparent on one social media platform or other. This internet enthusiasm is more among youngsters. They fanatically engage themselves on social media and operate mobile phones even during their class-room hours. The impact of social networking is immense on the all-round development of young generation in contemporary times. They unknowingly compromise their education with social media. Spending many hours on internet has resulted in less productivity among youngsters. Except sleep, brain never gets rest and it affects their thinking ability. Dedicating more time to social media and less time to studies has become a common phenomenon among the present generation. Excessive use of social media hampers the critical thinking and slowly takes the shape of addiction. If one decides to use social media for five minutes, he/she gets enchanted by alluring advertisements and unintentionally spends another twenty minutes and this goes on. This virtual world attracts and bounds, and youth spend their career making years online fetching nothing out of it. Earlier few people showed symptoms of any kind of addiction, but with the

growth of social networking, almost every youngster has fallen prey of internet addiction. This addiction, so far, has become much dangerous that the updates on social media hold more credibility than anything real outside of it. Every piece of information is perceived as reliable to an extent that there is no scope left for self-reasoning. The power of media on the other hand, can't be denied. A single sensitive or provoking content and the youngsters are swayed to indulge in trouble-making and rioting, no matter what the reality is. This stoic behaviour is a result of blind persuasion where empiricism does not work out for them.

ADVANTAGES OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

Social networking sites enable users to connect with others, and help to create a community. Advantages of social networking sites are written below:

- **TIME SAVING:** People use social networking sites to send and receive messages; they share their thoughts, views and pictures through social media. For example, if a person has to send an important message to ten persons and he doesn't have social networking account then he has to inform each person individually or send message one by one. But by posting on his profile, every active user can read that message. So social media saves a lot of time of its users.
- **BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN RELATIONSHIPS:** Two persons who live far away from each other can stay connected with the help of social networking sites, so it is useful medium to bridge the gap between relationships.
- **CONNECTIVITY:** Connectivity is also the main advantage of social media, because people living in any location or country can connect with anyone.
- **PROVIDE NEWS, INFORMATION AND UPDATES:** Social media is helpful you to stay updated with world. News pages daily post the latest news and they provide you the true information by doing researches.
- **HELPFUL TO BECOME FAMOUS:** Some youngsters have the talent but they don't get the opportunity to show that talent to the world, social networking sites provide them the opportunity. They can make their videos and share it on YouTube or Facebook. As much as people see their videos, user got popularity.
- **HELPFUL TO PROMOTE BUSINESS:** For the successful business, businessman has to promote it on a large scale with a lot of advertising. But if he is a user of social networking site, then he can advertise and promote his business by just sharing about it on his profile.
- **HELPFUL IN LEARNING:** Researches proved that human brain can easily learn the things by the visualization of the topic, so learning from the pictures and videos helpful to remember the things easily.
- **NOBLE CAUSE:** Social media also promote the activities related to social welfare, it motivate young blood to donate some money, clothes or anything else that can be useful for the needy people.
- **CREATE AWARENESS:** Social networking sites also aware the youth about their circumjacent environment. It helps to discover new and innovative stuff which can improve their standard of living.
- **HELP GOVERNMENT AND AGENCIES:** Social media help the government institutions and agencies by posting the news about their activities. Social welfare activities done by government raise the trust of youth for government.
- **ENVIRONMENTAL CAUSE:** Social media users also get knowledge about the environmental issues through the posts of others'. Environmental pages also aware people regarding the environmental issues, it

motivate people for afforestation and other environmental activities.

- **HELPFUL IN BUILDING COMMUNITIES:** Every student has its own interests and choices, some students have interest in playing online games, some in religious or political issues while some are interested in a particular subject. So social media helps in building and participating in the communities in which students are interested and learn about that.
- **ENTERTAINMENT:** The last but an important feature of social networking sites that it provide entertainment to the all ages of people. Old people can listen 'bhajans', watch old movies and young people can do a lot of activities with the help of social media.

DISADVANTAGES OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

Besides having a lot of pros, addiction of social networking sites also create some evils. The main disadvantages of these sites are written below:

- **WASTAGE OF TIME:** Social media can be a waste of time, depends upon how much students use it. Once students login their account, it distracts them from their work/study. If they spend a lot of time on social networking sites then they certainly waste their time.
- **HACKING:** Hacking is one of the major disadvantages of social media. If the profile is not protected properly then users' personal data and information shared on social site can easily be hacked, which can make personal and economic losses. So every student is advised to keep their personal data and accounts safe to avoid these incidents.
- **FALSE AND UNRELIABLE INFORMATION:** Another disadvantage of social media is that it can create something that does not exist. Some people spread false and unreliable information, rumors, which misdirect the others.
- **CYBER BULLING:** According to reports a large proportion of youngsters have become victims of cyber bullying, because anyone can create fake account and do anything without being traced, it has become quite easy for anyone to bully on the internet.
- **SECURITY ISSUES:** Some of the students do not aware about the proper security checks of their profiles, so hackers can stole their personal information or misuse that. So it is important to know about the proper security and privacy policy to protect the profile.
- **DANGEROUS FOR HEALTH:** Excessive use of social media may cause of various health problems, it may reduce the eye sight, weight gain and also the cause of cancer.
- **MISGUIDANCE:** Some notorious students make gangs and upload their strange videos and images on their profiles. These videos and images misguide others, and some innocent users also started to join their gang.
- **SOCIAL MEDIA CAUSE DEATH:** Sometimes by following the dangerous stunts and crazy activities may cause death. Blue whale game is the appropriate example of this, which cause the death of many children.
- **ENHANCE DRUG ADDICTION AND ALCOHOLISM:** Some foolish users started follow the life style of wealthy but drug addicted persons.
- **DEFAMATION:** By making a fake account and creating a false story anybody can ruin the reputation of their enemies or rivals. So whenever any student faces this type of problem he/she must inform the police about it.
- **SCAMS AND FRAUDS:** Some fake websites attracts users by alluring offers, once user enmeshed in their offers, he/she cannot easily get rid from this mesh. Several examples are available where individual have scammed and commit fraud through the social media.

COMMUNICATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA: AN EXAMPLE OF PASSIVE NATURE OF HUMAN BEINGS

Communication on social media is a good example of passive nature of human beings. They prefer meeting people online, fixing appointments over there and even getting to know them on social media and finally realizing that they are getting social enough. Events, media, news, information, notice, and everything else is a part of it making social media a microcosm of universe. So, the universe, technically, is squeezed to a phone which contains them and in that aspect, they have limited themselves to an unreal reality.

Youngsters today are bereft of hobbies because that is substituted by doing absolutely nothing with mere phones in hands that has in turn halted the growth of human thinking. Various studies have shown that the constant surfing on internet leads to have lower grey matter which can subsequently result in structural changes in brain. Taking help from social media for every menial job or even indulging into multi-tasking further hinders the caliber of youth to perform tasks physically and rationally. Communication fetish over and on internet has also increased drastically and the irony is that the interaction has increased only among people online even when they are sitting together and not communicating among themselves. This is how online communication has actually torn people apart from one another offline and its excessive and unimportant usage has led to social media addiction, which of any kind is dangerous. It has now become a way of the lives of youngsters.

ADDICTION TO SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

Most of the social media addicts still feel that their usage of social media is limited or that their peers are using it much more. A person spends a

lot of time planning on what to post on social networks and feels the anxiety to do it. The need to be available on social networking sites keeps on increasing. Even while a person is out he uses his smartphone to enjoy a few moments on the social networking sites. Using social networking sites to run away from real life and human interactions is another aspect of social networking sites' addiction.

Social Networking Sites (SNSs) have become the most utilized or the most favored tool for the ever increasing communication among friends and relatives however there is a flip side too. SNSs have shrunk the real-time communication to the bare minimum and this has impinged on the actual life relationship in an appalling manner. Such addictions to SNSs through Social Media are dangerous because virtual life has impacted real time communications and experiences, thereby leading to many relationship issues within the family unit.

SNSs like Facebook, Twitter etc. enable individuals to come across new people who are absolutely strangers, find and connect to long lost friends, they generate numerous virtual communities whose members have similar interests and thereby fashion affiliation, liaison and rapport. But virtual relationship can be full of falsity, deceit, and misleading information and dangerous too. Relationships generated out of SNSs cannot replace family ties and the bonding of actual relationship. Virtual relationships replace the socialization process with social awkwardness, no doubt life and some of its tasks are being made easy with the use of SNSs but again people lose out on facing real life situations and many life experiences.

In many cases it is found that people who are using social media and spend a major section of their waking hours are less productive than others and over time increasingly have less interaction with their family members. This may lead to a situation where people are cut off from

their families and they develop depression, loneliness, mental illness, sleep and eating disorder etc. In the past couple of decades, several studies have been undertaken on family communication from a range of theoretical perspectives. The current paper focus on issues that relate to the usage of SNSs and the extent of the impact on personal relationships within the family set up.

COMMON SIGNS YOU ARE ADDICTED TO SOCIAL MEDIA

A social networking addict would be identified as someone leaning into his phone as if under some obligation only to check other's profile or pages, stalking them for hours and ending up being an idle person. Such addiction and constant use of internet leads to insanity and anxiety, if the same is distanced for a short time. Internet addiction affects the working of unconscious mind. Those who are severely hit by this addiction, feel an urge to use social media even when they don't have any purpose there. Sometimes they operate mobile phones unconsciously while their conscious mind is not aware of the specific function.

Researchers have found that tweeting may be harder to resist than cigarettes and alcohol and many other researches and surveys have been conducted which have shocking results. There occurs a feeling of jealousy and envy among the users of social media which could result in less satisfaction and less happiness in their life. And there are as many as millions of tweets updated every day which covers a good part of world's population. People generally like to read those tweets which not even concern their lives. This intimate relationship of man with social media particularly the youth of any nation is surely not paving way to advancement but destruction.

There are a few key signs of behavior of obsessive compulsive disorders which can show whether a person falls in the category of a social networking

site addict or no. To find out whether you are a social networking sites addict or not, you can ask following questions to yourself. If you are repeating most of these signs below, there is a high chance that you are addicted to social media:

- Social Networking Sites is the first thing you see and you want to see in the morning because you feel you have missed out on important updates throughout the night?
- You check your social networks whenever you are free or even during the gaps of your interactions?
- You check notifications even when your phone does not buzz?
- You constantly monitor your likes and follows after an update?
- In places without internet connection you feel the anxiety to go back home and get a wi-fi connection?
- Social Networking sites have become an inseparable part of your life?
- You waste your time looking at the updates and procrastinate?
- You take photos of almost everything that you see?
- You want to check in (a term used for showing your location on social media) for everywhere you go?
- Your only way of contacting people is through social networking websites?

MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS FOR SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES ADDICTS

- **CYBERBULLYING:** Cyberbullying on social media is linked to depression in teenagers, according to new research that analyzed multiple studies of the online phenomenon. Victimization of young people online has received an increasing level of scrutiny, particularly after a series of high-profile suicides of teenagers who were reportedly bullied on various social networks.

- **DISTRACTIONS & DROP IN PRODUCTIVITY:** Many studies have found that the more people engage with social media, the less the person able to focus on his work. It leads to decrease productivity and increase in procrastination. If a lot of time is being spent on social networking sites the important tasks will take a back seat.
- **PEER PRESSURE AND COMPARISON WITH PEERS:** Social networking sites provide a great platform for people to compare their popularity. It is considered that the person with more number of likes is either more popular or better looking. It creates in a feeling of jealousy because it directly shows numbers.
- **FATIGUE AND STRESS:** The need to keep updating on social networking sites has become all time high with all these sites now having options of multiple uploads in real time it causes stress and fatigue in young minds when they need to plan their posts as regularly or more than their peers.

CYBER BULLYING

Cyber bullying is very much the case of wrong usage where people can say anything to anyone, cuss people or talk vulgar and still get away on the internet. This can be a serious problem where the juvenile victim has to undergo stress and fear leading to ill-health. There have been many cases of cyber bullying which have led to juvenile suicide cases and killings. Another way social media affects the youth is through peer pressure. Young people don't really like to miss out and start comparing themselves with their comrades and join the marathon of social run. Technological slave would be the right word to describe this situation of today's man drowned in the slough of internet. Ask a kid about ever being to a library to access books and information and he/she will show you his/her phone and everything available in it. These apps on social media and their rapid use is potentially harming

the teenagers. They tend to lurk in these apps without any preceding knowledge. Spending hours on internet and reacting emotionally and psychologically to it increases the anxiety level, stress, and brings about mood swings. Social media is used as a great platform to vent out frustration, anger or accusations and a good example of this is Twitter where politics of words has been played, leaders charge allegations on the opposition party and prove themselves with their oratory words and vice-versa, celebrities do the same for their competitors and anti-social and hawkish goons use it to spread unrest among masses. These online remarks have more impact on youngsters than any other thing. Moreover, its constant use produces anxiety characterized by restlessness and loss of concentration. This vogue has greatly influenced their habits, which includes eating, talking, thinking, and even sleeping habits.

Earlier, people used to say, the way one eat shows much about him but with media popping up, the way one shows off, says much about him and youngsters love to do that. They love to share the tables with their online friends before starting for it. Human biological clock is disturbed, and man doesn't pay heed to it, after all, he has chosen it for himself. It may sound harsh, but the fact is that human beings have become the nocturnal animals staying up all night and engaging in a show which is not even theirs. Gone are the times when children used to fall asleep at night without any internet barrier.

DEALING WITH SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION

Like any other addiction, social media addiction also comes with withdrawal symptoms. It is imperative for a person to feel that it can troublesome to completely go away from the reach of social networking sites. For the youth it is important to use their time and energy in a constructive way but no one has been able to track how slowly and stealthily social networking sites have grabbed a huge share of our mind and

time. The youth who wants to lessen the use of social networking sites can take the cues from the underlying options:

- **TURNING OFF THE NOTIFICATION SOUNDS :** As it suggests that a person would spontaneously open his smartphone or computer whenever he hears the notification sound, so the idea is to mute that and on muting if you are busy in something important chances are you will not get distracted.
- **LIMITING YOUR TIME ON SOCIAL MEDIA:** As difficult as it may sound it will be the most uphill task for a social networking sites addict. This can be done just by keeping the smartphone away from yourself. Monitoring time and restricting you to be available on social media. You could also make small rules in groups as to the person who touches the phone first pays the bill etc.
- **DELETING THE APPS:** It may seem like the last resort but it is there are many people who claim to have come out of social media addictions by deleting the apps from their phones, there will be days when you would want them back but you will be able to resist after a few days of practice.
- **MAKE YOUR OWN GOALS:** You should make your own goals and reward yourself on achieving them, it could start from limiting your time on social media to staying completely away from it for a few days. Choose according to your needs and wants.
- **SWITCHING OFF THE PHONE:** Most people lie on their beds and keep scrolling down on the websites for hours and complain of lack of sleep; you can either switch off your phone at the time you want to sleep or simply do not get the phone in your bedroom, it may seem harsh at first but you will grow it out.

CONCLUSION

Social media has had a strong position along with the developments in internet technology, and it

has opened up new horizons in the field of communication with its comprehensive and interactive structure. Computer systems and following developments in internet technology are the two major elements caused social media formation. Once the internet technology is advanced and social media is emerged, mass communication has begun to have new dimensions, and a new interaction field called the virtual world has begun to form.

Social media has caused human relationships to change. Virtual gifts, messages and games have brought an end to face-to-face (direct) communication. Individuals have begun to turn to social media once they have been able to communicate from wherever they are without facing any difficulty. Growing interest in social networking sites causes social media addiction. In general, it is the young people who become addicted to social media. Economic problems, psychological disorders and physical disabilities cause individuals to escape real world, and seek solace in virtual world. This situation, however, gives rise to poor social relationships and isolated individuals. Lack of knowledge and failure of parents to guide their children on proper use of social media are among the main reasons triggering social media addiction. Although social media addiction is defined as spending excessive time on social networking sites, and inability to control oneself to access these sites, there is no definite diagnosis of the disease. Therefore, it is highly difficult to diagnose a social media addiction in a person. For a social media addict the distinction between real and virtual life is blurred, and he/ she nearly breaks the real life.

The addiction of social media is not a disorder or disease but a state; there is no clinical treatment to it. Where everyone looks for a digitalised world that is faster, easier and fun to use, social media does not come with a safety manual or any precaution. Its addiction has a negative outcome but what has been disturbed can also be reconciled with effort and will power. There is, of

course, a possibility to get out of this mess only if people consider social media a tool that can be used rather than being used by it.

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