

## **SOCIAL MEDIA UTILISATION AMONG YOUTH**

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**Abstract.** Social media are tools of communication and collaboration through the exchange of text, images, video, live streaming and presentation. It has become the most common activity of today's youth. Websites that allow people to communicate with others is considered as social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WeChat, Snapchat, telegram etc. and also video sites such as YouTube; and blogs. Currently, social media has become the gate of entertainment and communication for the youth. With the spread of dozens of social interacting applications, the way and nature of human communication has changed today compared to the past. The study found that the teenagers no longer feel loneliness as they are in touch with their friends through social media. In addition of positive utilization of social media, it bears adverse effects as well viz: social activity of youth is reduced as they rely most of the time on social media; medical conditions such as eye-sight issues and gastric conditions; a decrease in intelligence quotient etc. This paper lists the social media utilization on youth through a survey among youth in Shivamogga.

**Key Words: Social Media, Youth.**

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## Introduction

Social media refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. They are internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundation of web and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Furthermore, social media depend on mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platform through which individuals and communities share co-create, discuss and modify user-generated content (Kietzmann et.al, 2011). It introduces substantial and pervasive changes to communication between organizations, communities, and individuals (Dixit, 2014).

The term 'media' referred to print media, photography, advertising, cinema, radio and television, and folk media. A revolution in the information technology (IT) has changed the media environment. For example, in the past news channels were constructed and determined by their output mechanism but with the advent of internet or services related to IT, it is not only the output and speed, but also the production process and formats (Knight, 2013).

Social media are tools of communication and collaboration through the exchange of text, images, video, live streaming, and presentation. They are characterized by the huge changes in media production; it's very easy to access, with the digital, interactive, virtual, networked, and simulated technologies. (Farhan & Varghese 2018).

Interactivity of new media provides a faster and powerful feedback system. To make new media interactive a unique coding language -- hypertext mark-up language (html) -- has been developed. The main feature of using hypertext is hyperlinks that allow user to navigate, enter or exit through any document easily and swiftly (Hassouna, 2014). Further, new media provides virtual multi-sensory experience to people, though in reality they do not experience them, they feel that they had undergone the experience.

Social media allow users to create their own blogs, and it allow them to chat, send messages, share photos, videos and files, also discuss about specific topics that can be shared by others, it allows them to comment on their friend's posts and give their opinions.

## **Review of literature**

Many studies are done on the impact of social media on nations, youth, children and families, as utilization of these services have tremendously increased among these groups. According to a survey, 22 percent of teenagers are using social media more than 10 times a day, and more than half percentage of adolescents use more than once a day (Steyer, 2009).

Keeffe (2012) noted that most of the social media websites were not good and suitable for adolescent and children.

Social media sites allow many tasks that were not possible earlier as making new friends, staying connected with friends and family, exchanging ideas and sharing pictures. Participation in social media offers adolescents deeper benefits that extend into their view of community, self, and the world (Boyd, 2007).

Today many parents are educated and know how to deal with the technology very well, that they feel happy and comfortable when they see their children and adolescents using social media. But some parents find it a problem and they don't allow their children to use social media because they may use it in a wrong way (Palfrey & Gasser, 2010). Out of 75 percent of teenagers owning cell phones, 25 percent use them for social media, 24 percent use them for instant messaging and 54 percent use them for texting (Hinduja & Patchin, 2007). It's a risk for the youth and adolescents to use a social media without parental control.

## **Advantages of social media on youth**

It helps students and teachers to find the information easily. Interactions in virtual groups will complement face-to-face discussion in classrooms; also, it is the fastest way to get news and information, updated time to time. Most of the time, Television and print media currently are biased and does not convey the reality. With the help of social media, people can get the facts and true information by doing some browsing. It also helps students and researchers to find jobs and funding. Further, social media offers them a place for discussions and sharing views and information among each other; e-marketing, and helps them find new friends from all over the world (Collin et. al, 2011).

## Disadvantages of Social Media on Youth

Social media has many negative effects on youth. For instance, it distracts them from studies; and makes them waste time. Many students are spending more time on using social media rather than doing their homework. Education and communication skills are affected, as they stop extra reading and non-curricular learning. It lowers their writing skills, expertise in spelling and grammar. These behavioral changes affect their academic performance (Siddiqui and Singh, 2016).

## The objectives of the study

The objective of the present study was to assess the impact of social media on youth. Specifically;

1. To study the social media utilization among youth
2. To assess the perceived benefits of social media use.

## Methodology

Data was gathered through a pre-tested questionnaire, administered to a randomly selected 100 youth from Shankaraghatta, Shivamogga district in Karnataka who are pursuing various levels of academic programmes. All the respondents were 20-35 years old. The questions ranged from the patterns of accessing and utilizing social media to their perceptions and practices. The data was analyzed using SPSS.

**Table 1. Respondent Profile**

Academic level	No of respondents		
	Male	Female	Total
Masters	24	59	83
PhD	6	11	17
Total	30	70	100

As table 1 shows, 83 percent of the respondents were pursuing master degree, and 17 percent of them doctoral students. 70 percent of the respondents were female while 30 percent of them were male.

## **Results**

### **Youth dependence on social media**

The study found that all the respondents selected at random were heavily depending on internet based services for information and entertainment (Table 2).

<b>Table 2. Comparative media dependence of youth</b>				
<b>Source</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>Total</b>
Newspaper	3	53	44	100
Television	11	70	19	100
Radio	56	37	7	100
Internet	-	37	63	100

When a question has been asked to the respondents about which media they were using for the general information, with options as rarely, sometimes and always; 63% of them stated that they always depended on internet. Radio was least (7%), followed by television (19%) and newspaper (44%). Clearly youth were preferring new media than other traditional media including television.

### **Social media utilization among youth**

The study found that youth preferred to access social media on their mobile phones (60%), than a personal computer, or computers available at educational institutions (30%) or at home (10%).

Table 3 shows the duration of their social media accessing. Majority of the respondents were spending approximately 30-60 minutes a day with social media, and majority accessing it multiple times a day. Out of 100 respondents, only 17 were accessing it upto 30 minutes. It clearly shows that social media addiction is growing among youth.

<b>Table3. Time spent on social media per day</b>		
<b>Duration</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percent</b>

Upto30mts	17	17%
31mts to 1hr	40	40%
1hr to 2 hrs.	27	27%
More than 2 hrs.	6	6%

Most of the respondents (73%) were accessing the sites during break times in the educational institutions, as in most of the institutions wi-fi access was given freely (Table 4). Most of them made it a point to check it before sleeping, and all the respondents had the habit of accessing it during travelling.

<b>Table 4. Place of accessing social media</b>				
<b>Duration of usage</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Some times</b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>Total</b>
During school/college	-	27	73	100
Traveling	29	40	31	100
Before sleeping	-	46	54	100

WhatsApp was the most preferred social media among youth (98%), followed by Facebook (81%) and Instagram (69%). Twitter and Google+ users were found to be lagging (Table 5).

<b>Table 5. Favorite social media among youth</b>				
<b>Social media</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Some times</b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>Total</b>
Facebook	-	19	81	100
Twitter	30	40	30	100
Google+	37	54	9	100
WhatsApp	-	2	98	100
Instagram	-	29	69	100

### **Perceived benefits of social media use**

As table 6 shows, youth were found to be using social media to get the updates and maintaining friendship through chatting and sharing (71%). While watching movies, listening to music, shopping, academic purpose and gaming were highly found to be guiding reasons, gaming (24% rarely encouraged) and information searching (45% rarely encouraged) was lagging.

<b>Table 6. Reasons for internet and social media access</b>				
<b>Reasons</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Some times</b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>Total</b>
Music and movies	15	55	30	100
News and current issues	45	30	25	100
Social media updates	-	29	71	100
Gaming	24	69	5	100
Shopping	-	57	43	100
Educational/career	-	66	34	100

When further probed into what actually happens during social media utilisation, maintaining friendship was the main reason, as chatting (82%) and keep touch with friends (78%) was stated as very important. Work related reasons and academic reasons were lagging behind entertainment and socialisation (Table 7).

<b>Table 7. Reason of Using Social Media</b>				
<b>Reason of usage</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>Total</b>
Work related	45	55	-	100
Chatting with friends	-	18	82	100
To keep in touch	-	22	78	100
For entertainment	-	60	40	100

All these perceived benefits were attained through activities like uploading and downloading videos (almost everyone). The youth were partaking online campaign and petitions rarely (88%). Writing, reading and commenting on blogs was very common (Table 8).

<b>Table 8. Purpose of Usage Social Media</b>				
<b>Purpose of usage</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Some times</b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>Total</b>
Upload pictures/videos	-	30	70	100
Download pictures/videos	-	41	59	100
Blogging activities	33	49	18	100
Online petitions/campaign	88	12	-	100

## Conclusion

This survey-based research among postgraduate and doctoral students regarding social media utilization showed that social media dependence is on the rise among them. WhatsApp was the main attraction among social media. Enormous time was being spent on social media by the respondents. The addiction tendency was very high that majority of them were accessing it even during break-times, just before going to sleep and during travelling. The perceived benefits were maintaining friendship and keeping in touch with friends. Academic and career related purpose was lagging as encouraging reason for social media activities of the youth.

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