

Impact of Social Networking on Youth's Dynamism

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Abstract

Objective: To study the impact of rapidly growing use of Social Networking Sites (SNS) on youngsters. **Method:** We are going to investigate the effects of SNS on youth dynamism. A methodology, known as Descriptive method, has been followed during this process. Descriptive method is a method of investigation which refers to studying, investigating and describing what exists in the present. The study of various books and research papers, personal observation, analysis of present scenario by interviewing students and teachers from various institutes are some of the methods followed during this research. **Findings:** The number of users of social networking sites and applications like Facebook, WhatsApp is increasing rapidly day by day. These sites and apps are turning out to be increasingly famous and an indispensable part of our daily life. The attractive features provided by these sites have made them popular among people especially youngsters. These sites have opened doors for trading, learning and social interactions especially on social issues but there is another side of the coin. Society has also been facing problems due to overexposure of social media. Privacy of users of these sites has become vulnerable. Precious time of youth is being wasted as they are participating in useless discussions on these sites. Various side effects of SNS observed in youngster are physiological and psychological disorders, loss of concentration, unethical behaviour etc. **Improvement:** Keeping in mind the disastrous effect of social networking sites on youth, the parents, teachers and administration should take steps to ensure restricted and ethical use of these sites by youngsters.

Keywords: Education, Social Networking, Social Networking Sites, Youth

1. Introduction

People are actually exceptionally social creatures and communication is crucial part of their lives. Once long distance communications seemed to be an impossible thing however due to technological innovations, it has become quite simple. Imagine the times when pigeons were used as carriers of messages. 1800s are considered a golden period for inventions in long distance communications. It was the period when revolutionary changes took place in the field of long distance communications. Invention of radio and phones had a sensational effect on the way people used to communicate. The non-stop hunt for the creative methods for correspondence resulted in

improvement of various social media. Recent years have seen further upliftment in the field of communication. New innovations have led to instant communications across the globe.

Social media provides the platform to individuals where they can exchange ideas, opinions and information with each other¹. This highly interactive media is based on mobile or internet based technology which is used by people for communication. Social media has brought significant change to correspondence between people, groups, and communities². The invention of internet and its use in communication has brought significant change in communication methods. Due to the initiatives taken by Government and educational institutes, the level of

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computer literacy and IT infrastructure has touched new horizons, producing more than 100 million internet users³. A combination of internet and social media apps has given rise to a new mean of communication that is online communication.

2. Characteristics of Social Networking Sites

Some characteristics of Social Networking Sites which have made them extremely popular among youth are stated below:

2.1 Presentation of Oneself

The entry on an SNS is not possible without setting up a 'profile'. A profile is a page created by the user. The user uses this page to exhibit him/herself to other SNS users with help of audios, videos, pictures and textual data. SNS gives flexibility to users to arrange their profiles and contacts in a manner they want to show themselves to other users of the SNS.

2.2 New Methods for Community Formation

In spite of the fact that idea of virtual groups existed right from the start of online communication, SNS has bolstered new methods for individuals to interact with each other. SNS users may exchange their messages via different in-built objects in the SNS, such as Create Group in WhatsApp. Users can also join community of their interest to exchange views, ideas and feelings.

2.3 Ease of Use

A significant factor behind the success of SNS is their ease of use. Anybody with fundamental internet knowledge can use and deal with SNS. Before SNS, homepages were the only mean to gain an online presence. But it was difficult to create a personal homepage and also hosting the site brought about expenses. Conversely, most of the SNS make their services available free of cost requiring only registration while others offer membership via an invitation from the existing member of the SNS.

3. Social Influence Theory

Social impact theory states that social influence brings changes in our attitude and activities at various levels⁴. The ability of a person to accept the influence determines

the level of change. Compliance, Internalization and Identification are the three distinct processes of influence⁵.

- Compliance: If someone sees that a particular conduct is expected of him by social actor and that actor is in capacity of rewarding the conduct or to punish the non-conduct then compliance takes place⁶.
- Internalization: It means adjusting basic self-guides in order to meet ideal objectives shared with others⁷.
- Identification: Identification takes place if a person acknowledges influence due to his desire of building or keeping up a self-defining relationship.

4. Impact of Facebook on Youth

The primary reason behind using social networking sites is to stay in touch always. Youngsters are particularly very keen in sharing different encounters. Another thing, in which the youngsters have much interest in, is developing contact with individuals they meet here and there. Sharing substance like photos and videos and building up various methods of learning are other activities which attract the youth to SNS⁸. Figure 1 demonstrates the purpose of extensive use of social networking by youth. Among various SNS sites, facebook is one of the most popular social networking site among teenagers and young adults. Various positive and negative impacts of facebook on younger generation are being discussed in this section:

4.1 Positive Impacts

Facebook gives a chance to every youngster to stay in touch with his/her friends. Another advantage of using Facebook is that one can develop relationship not only with known people but unknown as well. Due to the busy schedules, most of the people do not get time to meet their friends. Facebook is a useful medium using which they keep up their relations with old friends and also make new friends.

Our society consists of different religions, cultures and additionally diverse groups. Facebook provides an opportunity to enhance knowledge by helping one communicate with people having diverse perspective towards religion, politics, social issues and other phases of life. Subsequently, location based services are also provided by Facebook.

Facebook also adds to creativity of its users in light of the fact that the creative work of users in form of pictures, comments etc. is frequently posted here. The instant feedback from other users in form of appreciation or criticism helps them in developing their potential and boosts their confidence.

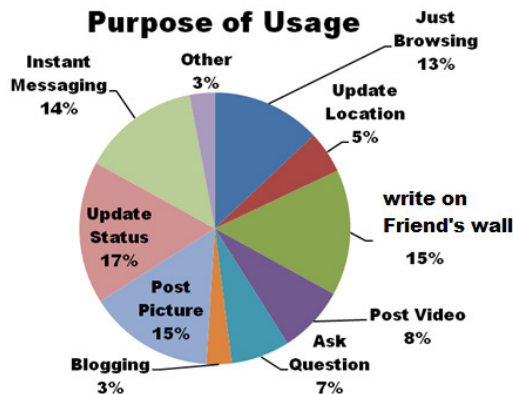


Figure 1. Purpose of use of Social Networking Sites.

4.2 Negative Impacts

Some negative effects of Facebook which called attention during this study are given below:

- The main purposes of frequent access of Facebook by users is to check new updates on their walls, checking the profile in routine and chatting with friend. These activities generally do not produce any positive output and waste a lot of user's time as well as energy.
- Using these SNS, people share pictures, videos and have discussion on various political issues which may redirect their attention towards other things instead of their career. The time and energy is wasted in other things so less time is time available for studying.
- Writing letters and eye to eye human contact are rapidly diminishing in light of the fact that most of the individuals invest most of their time in chatting with friends via Facebook. Thus they don't feel like meeting their friends personally. So, we can say that Facebook is creating distances among people.
- Youngsters have become self-centered and conservative in nature by spending most of their time with Facebook as they have keen interest in communicating with and reading about non-friend users now.

- Facebook also acts as an easy medium for spreading rumors, wrong information etc. It also gives rise to different types of cybercrimes and sexual as well as mental harassment of people. It also affects the working capacity of individuals as even amid the bustling schedules, individuals are busy checking their profiles. Various instances of identity theft and frauds have occurred due to people throwing tons of information on Facebook. Table 1 demonstrates the most well-known SNS in use among youngsters belonging to different age groups¹⁰.

5. Impact of Social Networking on Social Issues

Use of Social Networking Site not only has physiological and psychological impacts on youth but it is also having positive impact on society which is discussed below:

5.1 Corruption

Corruption is the biggest challenge in today's world. It is causing harm to moral values and ethics in individuals. The data provided by 'The 2010 statistics of Transparency International' demonstrates that approximately 54% of Indians have paid bribe to get their work done indifferent divisions during the last one year. Thus, corruption is becoming an epidemic for the society which is getting worse day by day. Every second person is either a culprit or a victim of corruption. One of the SNS 'Paid a Bribe' (ipaidabribe.com) took an initiative by starting a Janaagraha which provided a platform to individuals to share their encounters with corruption.

5.2 Connotation of Blogs

One of the latest trends initiated by online communication is blog writing. It permits individuals as well as groups to share their opinions, view and ideas with others. Presently, celebrities run their blogs and update it regularly. It adds to their popularity and creates a communication channel between them and the people following them.

5.3 Integrating Communities

Another advantage of SNS is that it integrates several parts of the nation including various cultures which generally do not get to share space and not have any physical

Table 1. Popular SNS among various youth age groups

Name of SNS → Age groups ↓	Facebook	WhatsApp	Twitter	Orkut	Linkedin	Youtube	Flickr	Myspace
Teenagers (12-17)	49	22	12	0	3	9	5	0
Young Adults (18-21)	44	42	3	0	5	3	3	0
Adults (22+)	30	45	8	0	3	8	4	2
Working Adults (22+)	21	51	6	3	4	5	9	1
Frequency	144	160	29	3	15	25	21	3
%	36	40	7.25	0.75	3.75	6.25	5.25	0.75
Cumulative %	36	76	83.25	84	87.75	94	99.25	100

means to exchange their beliefs, customs and traditions. SNS provides an opportunity to people to stay in touch with each other without meeting physically. These sites give people knowledge about the things they are not aware of. They can also raise their voices and participate in various discussions using SNS. As some critical social issues need consistent discourse, people can utilize these sites to communicate intermittently or routinely according to their own and others' prerequisites. In short, SNS acts as a bridge that connects people with social issues like female foeticide, corruption, domestic violence etc.

5.4 In Touch with the World

Social networking sites not only help us to stay in touch with family and friends, in fact they open up the world for us. The technology has made the world smaller through the social networking sites as physical location doesn't matter while using social networks and everyone is treated equally. The distance between family members increased by brain drain has been covered by online communication. The friends of school times, which are not in touch with us for a long time, can be found and contacted. In this way, SNS have made the world a smaller place.

6. Conclusion

Social Networking Sites are turning out to be increasingly famous and an indispensable part of our daily life. In this paper, we have attempted to review the positive as well as negative effects of social networking on youth dynamism. SNS, being an important part of young generation's life, have attracted the attention of researchers. Social networking tools incorporate web sites, Wikipedia, IMs, blogs, chat rooms and so on. It is certain that social networking has significant effect on the Indian youngsters,

which we need to confront. At the same time, it is also true that restricted and correct use of such sites can also prove to be beneficial for them.

The numerous questions about SNS, which still need to be addressed, are: How can we manage SNS in ethical way while maintaining online privacy? Should restrictions be imposed on sharing personal information online? How can we nullify the effect of SNS on studies and careers of youth? Who is to be considered guilty if an unwanted audience comes to read anybody's personal information? The conclusion is that SNS has its own pros and cons but ethical use of SNS can serve the society in a right way.

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