

## Impact of Social Media Addiction on Mental Wellbeing Among Youth of India

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### Abstract

Social media refers to online platforms and websites that allow individuals to create, share, and interact with others in a virtual environment. These platforms enable users to communicate, share photos and videos, post updates, and engage in online social interactions like Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, Telegram, and Snapchat. Mental health for youth is a critical aspect of overall well-being, encompassing emotional, psychological, and social dimensions, and different types of problems arise in a person such as depression, stress, anxiety, food disorder, addictive disorder, and personality disorder. Today Youth spending many hours on social networking sites eventually results in poor mental health conditions in them. The present research attempts to collect and summarize the available literature on the impact of social media addiction on the mental health of youth.

**Keywords:** Social media, Mental health, Youth, Depression, Addiction

### Introduction

The impact of social media on young people's mental health is influenced by a variety of intricate factors, such as how much time kids and teenagers spend on platforms, the kind of content they consume or are otherwise exposed to, the activities and interactions social media allows, and how much it interferes with healthy behaviours like sleep and exercise. (APA, 2023)

Social media addiction is also defined as “a subtype of internet addiction, including the behaviour of checking and updating” (Saygili,2020). The well-being and general quality of life of young people may be impacted by compulsive activity that eventually becomes a habit. (Savci & Aysan, 2017)

Teenagers and young adults around the world are the target audience for social media, which is a platform established by and for them. It is a technique to link millions of people worldwide by giving them access to a public platform where they may post their individually designed profiles. Through this forum, users can blog, chat, live stream, video chat, message (both publicly and privately), post, call, etc. They can also download images and videos and browse the web. The use of social media as a platform for enjoyment, downloading photos and videos, browsing and surfing, etc.(Vaidya & Vaidya,2020)

People now spend a lot of hours on Messenger, Instagram, Facebook, and other well-known social media platforms as part of their daily routines. Consequently, a large number of scholars and investigators explore the effects of social media and related apps on various facets of people's lives. (Bartosik-Purgat ,2017)

The psychological well-being threshold or absence of mental illness is known as mental health. It is a condition of being for someone who exhibits reasonable emotional and behavioural adjustment. The ability to enjoy life and keep a balance between activities might be a sign of mental wellbeing. psychological resiliency initiatives from a positive psychology or holistic perspective. (Kaur & Kaur, 2021)

It may be said that social media is fast changing before our very eyes and that it is nearly impossible to reject and hide our youth from this most recent technology. Media coverage is generally on a large scale. According to a survey, 73% of Indian youngsters own a cell phone, and the number of kids who use the internet and play online games regularly has been rising. In 2017, the annual rate of growth of smartphone users in India was around 129%, even more than that of China (109%).

Internet deaddiction centers are started in various cities of our country. Technology and social media have both positive and negative impacts on the mental wellbeing of youth. It is high time to comprehend the benefits and negative effects of technology and media to utilize it effectively for the optimal growth and development of the future generation (Flinsi, 2018).

### **Review of Literature**

People using social media might encounter emotions such as loneliness depression, lack of confidence envy, and diminished self-worth. Some individuals also tend to adopt distorted ways of thinking when comparing their own lives with the content posted by others on social media. This distorted thinking can contribute to feelings of unhappiness and depressive tendencies (Ashford,2017)

### **Global and Local statistics of mental health and social media**

**According to the 2018** report by Mental Health America, more than 44 million adults in the United States are affected by mental health issues. The prevalence of mental health conditions among young individuals, including major depressive disorder, is consistently increasing at significant rates each year.

In 2018, the global internet user count reached 4.021 billion, showing a 7 percent increase compared to the previous year. Concurrently, the worldwide social media user base expanded to 3.196 billion, marking a 13 percent annual growth. Moreover, the count of mobile phone users worldwide rose to 5.135 billion, reflecting a 4 percent rise year-on-year. **(Panigrahi, 2019)**

After 2018, the approximate count of smartphone users in India reached 337million. looking ahead to 2022, this figure was expected to escalate significantly to 490.9 million, reflecting a growth rate exceeding 60 percent. In 2017, around 320.57 million individuals used their mobile phones to access the internet. As we project into 2021, the anticipated surge in mobile internet users is forecasted to reach 462.26 million. **(Singh,2019)**

In India, around 20-30% of the populace can connect to the internet, and out of these users, roughly 70% fall within the young demographic. Studies have pointed out that there's been a notable 14% upswing in the count of internet users in India. Within the overall user, base of approximately 375 million, a staggering 120 million constitute the youth category, with a median age below 28 years. **(The Statistics Portal,2017)**

Online social networking platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have rapidly become the swiftest channels of communication, achieving widespread acclaim for their capacity to transform interpersonal interactions. These platforms have ushered in a revolutionary era of global communication, enabling individuals to articulate their thoughts and sentiments beyond the confines of their local surroundings. **(Purva et.al.2015)**

The survey indicates that a significant portion, around 74 percent, of the participants are accustomed to downloading a substantial amount of music, videos, and movies from the internet. A majority, specifically 70 percent, of the respondents enjoy viewing videos whenever they have an internet connection closely followed by 68 percent who confess to having a strong inclination toward online gaming. A substantial 60 percent of the surveyed individuals expressed their preference for utilizing social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp to share the upload videos as well as photographs. **(Dhara, 2019)**

The expansion of social media usage among American adults has exhibited signs of deceleration in recent years. The percentages of individuals who report utilizing platforms such as Facebook, Pinterest, LinkedIn, and Twitter have remained relatively consistent since 2016, indicating a plateau in their adoption rates. However, the exception to this trend is Instagram, which has experienced a noticeable increase in its user base during this period. **(Andrew & Monica, 2019)**

In a study conducted among high school students in Jakarta, it was discovered that there is a correlation between addiction to the Instagram social media platform and self-esteem. This connection was observed when students engaged with Instagram for 3 to 6 hours daily. **(Ardiana & Tumanggor,2020)**

A study conducted by **Pandey et al. (2020)** highlighted the potential of social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram to serve as significant real-world distractions. The research indicated that a majority of students are dedicating a considerable amount of their time to these social networking sites consistently.

### **Positive impact of social media addiction**

The majority of teenagers express that using social media makes them feel more included (58%), provides them with a support network during challenging moments (67%), offers a platform for showcasing their creative abilities (71%), and enhances their sense of connection with their friend's experiences (80%). (**Vogels, & Gelles-Watnick,2023**)

The protective influence that receiving online emotional assistance from peers can have against the impact of stress is particularly crucial for young individuals who are frequently pushed to the outskirts of society, such as those from racial, ethnic, and sexual and gender minority backgrounds. To illustrate, research has indicated that platforms like social media can contribute to the emotional wellness and general health of young people identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and others. This is achieved by facilitating connections with peers, aiding in the exploration and acceptance of one's identity, and fostering a sense of belonging and solidarity. (**Berger, et. al.2022**)

Social media can offer advantages to certain young individuals by offering a favorable sense of community and establishing connections with peers who have similar characteristics, skills, and passions. It can grant access to crucial information and establish an avenue for personal expression. (**Uhls, Ellison & Subrahmanyam,2017**)

Due to technological progress and the affordability of smartphones, accessing social media through mobile apps has become incredibly easy. Smartphones have personalized and made social media more private. The continuous stream of mobile notifications keeps users engaged more effectively compared to desktop computers. According to CNET, users spend an average of 7 hours on Facebook's mobile applications. The availability of inexpensive data plans, particularly from Reliance Jio, resulted in an overwhelming increase in an Indian user on Social Media platforms. As per Statista, the number of social media users in India is projected to exceed 370 million by 2022, nearly one-third of the country's population. A significant portion of these users comprises Indian teenagers. Adolescence is a crucial developmental phase requiring guidance, care, parental support, and understanding. (**Dilci & Erani,2018**)

### **Negative impact of social media addiction**

These students perceive various negative consequences associated with their social media usage. These include time wastage due to engaging in non-productive activities, potential health-related challenges, concern about security and privacy, and a perceived lack of originality in their actions. **Pandey et al. (2020)**

Furthermore, with the ongoing advancements in technology, it is conceivable that social media channels such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and YouTube could effectively disseminate agricultural information in various engaging formats. This potential integration underscores these platforms' evolving role in delivering educational content, including agriculture knowledge. (**Singh et al., 2021**)

Rising engagement with social media platforms has been associated with a range of concerning outcomes, including instances of online harassment, disrupted sleep patterns, diminished self-esteem, heightened body scrutiny, experience of rejection, feelings of isolation, depressive tendencies, heightened anxiety, and a sense of hopelessness. This pattern is particularly evident among individuals in their late teens and early adulthood, where extended periods spent on social media platforms appear to correlate with mental health challenges.

Moreover, the adverse impacts of social media become more apparent when its usage crosses into the realm of excess. Instances of accessing multiple accounts, sharing irrelevant or inconsequential photos and videos, experiencing unauthorized access to one's account, and grappling with a lack of privacy during online transactions have emerged as prominent concerns among internet users. (**Coyne et al., 2019**)

The frequency of engagement with social media also emerges as a significant element, as underscored in a study involving individuals between 19 to 32 years old. The research revealed a connection between more frequent weekly interactions on social media platforms and a heightened presence of symptoms associated with depression. (**Lin et al. 2016**)

During the initial five-month period of the pandemic, there was a notable surge in the utilization of over-the-top (OTT) video platforms other than YouTube by young individuals. Concurrently, there was a substantial 70% increase in the usage of social media, accompanied by a 45% rise in the frequency of posts shared on platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. (Ahmed, 2019)

**Chauhan and Yachu (2022)** highlight the importance of effectively assessing the impact of social media on the mental health of young Indians. The concern arises from the substantial amount of time that young people aged 18 to 24 spend on social media platforms. Notably, Facebook and Instagram boast significant user bases within this age group, with 97.2 million and 69 million users respectively in India.

Prolonged usage of these platforms exposes individuals to potentially harmful content, triggers alterations in behaviour, fosters feelings of inadequacy, and contributes to the prevalence of cyberbullying. These negative consequences collectively contribute to deteriorating mental well-being and have the potential to give rise to more serious psychological issues. Addressing these challenges is of paramount importance in safeguarding the mental health of young Indians. (Chauhan and Yachu, 2022)

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