

A Study of the Impact of Social Media on the Social Awareness of Higher Secondary School Students

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Abstract

A socially aware individual can easily accept social efforts and norms and can successfully achieve good social adjustment. Social awareness is regarded as the pinnacle and the highest goal of social development; however, individuals may differ from one another in this regard. Compared to introverted individuals, extroverted individuals are found to possess a higher level of social awareness. Consequently, such individuals have more developed social traits and are therefore considered socially aware.

An individual's social awareness enhances adaptive capacity (Tibbles, 1962). Instability in social awareness leads to poor adjustment in various fields (Hartup, Coats, & Ekstein, 1967). The accuracy of an individual's social awareness significantly influences adjustment across different areas of life.

On the basis of social awareness, while living in society an individual understands social values, norms, and rules properly and behaves in a balanced manner. This quality is known as social maturity. A child's development depends on the kind of education and experiences he or she receives in the family, community, and school. In the present research work, the problem has been selected to study the social awareness of secondary school students.

Introduction

Social media has brought about a significant change in our society, and its impact is clearly visible on the younger generation, especially on students at the higher secondary level. Nowadays, the use of social media for forming opinions on various issues, engaging in discussions, increasing awareness, and raising one's voice in society has become increasingly common among students. Through the use of social media, students can develop social awareness; moreover, social media provides social awareness to students through various social challenges, trends, and viral content.

At the same time, it encourages excessive exposure to technology from an early age, which may have an impact on both their education and social life.

For students to use social media in an appropriate manner and to enhance their social awareness, it is important that they remain capable and conscious, so that they can protect themselves from its negative effects. In the present time, the use of social media has become an important tool for the younger generation, and it has a significant impact on the social awareness of higher secondary level students.



Impact of Social Media on the Social Awareness of Higher Secondary Level Students

Social media has become an important part of contemporary life, and it has emerged as a significant resource especially for students at the higher secondary level. The growing prevalence of social media also influences awareness related to social reform, politics, literature, and various social issues. Through social media, students connect with different social issues, express their views, and actively participate in discussions. As a result, social media has a significant impact on the social awareness of higher secondary students. Through this medium, students engage with various social issues and present their opinions on them.

Some of the important factors influencing the impact of social media on the social awareness of higher secondary students are as follows:

Medium of Communication:

Social media provides students with a platform to participate in discussions in society and to share their ideas and perspectives. It makes students aware of social issues and gives them opportunities to express their thoughts.

Education and Awareness:

Through various information sources available on social media, students can enhance their awareness. They can obtain information related to social issues, science, literature, and other fields through social media.

Literacy and Knowledge:

Social media provides students with a means to improve literacy across multiple subjects. Through blogs, articles, and other resources, students can acquire knowledge and share it in the context of social awareness.

Social Interaction:

Through social media, students can discuss various social issues and, by sharing their views with others, become active participants in bringing about positive change in society.

Due to the benefits of becoming aware through social media, it has emerged as a source of inspiration for social change in contemporary society. People are now increasingly directing their attention towards social service, justice, social reform, and awareness. Owing to the positive impact of social media, society is witnessing improvement, and people are collectively spreading social awareness for the betterment of society.

Significance of the Study:

Social media has become an important part of students' lives today, and it has a profound influence on the relevance and necessity of academic study as well. For higher secondary level students, this topic holds special importance because it directly affects their social awareness.

Through social media, students obtain various kinds of information and news, and it has also become a source of entertainment. Through this medium, they can share their thoughts and emotions and remain connected with global news.

This has a direct impact on their social awareness, as students learn how to express their ideas and develop the ability to coexist with diverse viewpoints. The use of social media also promotes social awareness. Through social media, students gain information about social issues, which enhances their awareness. They develop the ability to understand different perspectives and beliefs and become more capable of raising their voices for positive social change.

Therefore, it can be said that social media influences secondary school students in many ways, primarily affecting their personality and adaptive capacity. This forms the background of the problem and the foundation of the present study.

Review of Literature

Rajesh Kumar (2016), in *“Social Networking: Yesterday and Today,”* discusses crimes that occur knowingly and unknowingly through social media in the present time, along with the various legal provisions related to them. The study also takes into account the laws enacted for such offenses and the provisions of punishment. While explaining Section 66A of the Information Technology Act in detail, the author clarifies the distinction between freedom of expression and misuse of liberty on social media in relation to these crimes. The research also provides detailed information about major social networking sites across the world up to the year 2012. In addition, it sheds light on social networking, the internet, and e-Interpol, as well as the types of crimes committed through these platforms and their methods. The study concludes that social media has played a significant role in connecting people through expression and has also contributed to the development of the common individual.

Vijay Prakash Upadhyay (2016), in his study titled *“A Study on the Impact of Social Media on Youth,”* states that at present social media is the easiest medium for individuals to express their views. Information technology has brought about a revolution in the field of communication. Today, almost everyone—especially the youth—is actively engaged on social media. Since the present era is largely online, people use social media to communicate, expand contacts, and exchange preferred content and information. The study adopted a quantitative research approach, using survey and observation methods, with a questionnaire as the research tool. To examine the impact of social media on youth, intermediate, undergraduate, and postgraduate students from Delhi and Noida were selected. The study included 35 respondents and used 14 questionnaire items with multiple-choice questions. The questionnaire covered issues related to social media usage, youth development, the role of social media in youth development and social change, enhancement of knowledge through social media, and measures to regulate its use. The findings revealed that the present era is the era of youth power, and social media plays an active role in connecting young people. Due to this strong engagement, social media has become the number one activity on the internet worldwide. While it serves as an ocean of information containing positive content for youth development, it also includes various other types of information and fake links that may mislead users. Nevertheless, youth are becoming more aware through social media, and it can be concluded that social media has provided a new and improved platform for youth development.

Brijesh Kumar Yadav (2019) conducted a study titled *“The Role of Social Media in Social Changes.”* In the summary of his research, he noted that new media is a rapidly expanding medium. The use of social media has increased rapidly across almost all types of activities,

from social issues to everyday engagements. Social media has not only saved time but has also contributed to raising social awareness. It has helped strengthen social bonds and has also worked to eliminate social evils such as superstition. Both positive and negative outcomes of social media are evident; however, among students, negative consequences are more prominent. Excessive use of social media has affected students' academic performance, as they spend a significant amount of time on these platforms. As a result, students are becoming physically, mentally, and academically weaker, and many are also experiencing depression.

Hemlata Kumari (2019) conducted a study on "*The Impact of Social Communication Media on Children.*" In the summary of her research, she reported that the selected children use the internet for one to two hours daily. Among the children included in the study, approximately 87.9 percent were active on Facebook, and these children used Facebook at least once a day for chatting. They considered Facebook to be the cheapest, simplest, and most accessible medium for expressing their thoughts. Further, 70 percent of the selected children reported that the use of Facebook had not brought any change in their social behavior with their parents. In the present study, parents were also included along with students. Among the parents, 60 percent stated that social communication media had increased mutual understanding and trust among children. Some parents acknowledged that the use of Facebook had influenced their children's habits and behavior.

Gupta, S. C. (2020), in his research paper "*The Impact of Social Media on Social Awareness,*" examined the influence of social media on society. The paper is divided into five sections, on the basis of which conclusions were drawn. The author first emphasized that knowledge is power and that social media plays a significant role in shaping culture, the economy, and overall perspectives in contemporary times. It provides a platform that allows free exchange of ideas. However, the author also highlighted the negative impacts of social media. The study pointed out that students spend excessive time on Facebook, which yields little benefit. According to the researcher, a study was conducted on 700 respondents. The conclusion noted that while social media has become a rapid source of information, it is also a platform where people create fake identities and interact with unknown individuals without reliable measures of verification. At the same time, people are suffering from mental disorders and stress. Thus, while social media strengthens social relationships on one hand, it also contributes to the breakdown of primary relationships on the other.

Rai, Deepak (2021) conducted a study titled "*The Impact of Social Media on Youth.*" In the summary of his research, he stated that the use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Messenger, and WhatsApp is increasing day by day. The impact of these platforms is clearly visible from cities to villages. Whether children, youth, adults, or the elderly, no group remains untouched. Thus, it can be said that almost every section of society is actively engaged with social media today. Political parties are using social media as part of propaganda strategies to run their promotional campaigns. Through social media, fake news circulated by political parties is not easily recognized by the public, leading to misinformation and confusion, which also affects elections. In the present era, political parties have adopted social media as a major medium for publicity. The study also revealed that if social media is used positively, it can benefit not only political parties but also the general public. Moreover, social media contributes to greater integrity and transparency in politics.

Research Gap

In the present technological era, social media has expanded its influence across various fields worldwide, and it has also had a profound impact on education. The purpose of summarizing research on the impact of social media in the lives of higher secondary level students is that, along with technological advancement, social media has transformed our society over time. For higher secondary level students, its impact is particularly significant because it directly affects their social awareness.

Social media has provided students with a platform to connect with one another and engage in communication. In terms of social awareness, social media has linked students with various social issues and transformed them into socially conscious individuals. Within this research gap, an effort can be made to comprehensively understand this impact and to consider measures that can guide higher secondary level students toward the appropriate and constructive use of social media.

Objectives of the Study

To study the impact of social media on the social awareness of higher secondary level students.

Research Hypothesis

(H0): There is no significant difference in the impact of social media on the social awareness of higher secondary level students.

Research Methodology

Variables in the Study

In the present research, the variables are defined as follows:

- **Independent Variable:** Social Media
- **Dependent Variable:** Social Awareness

Operational Definitions of Terms Used in the Study

- **Social Awareness:** Social awareness refers to being in a conscious and alert state.
- **Higher Secondary School:** Under this curriculum, individuals who have passed the secondary level (i.e., Class 10) and are continuing their studies at the higher secondary level are included. This comprises students of Classes 11 and 12.
- **Impact:** The act of influencing or affecting, or the effect of one factor being visible on another.
- **Study:** A thorough and in-depth examination of a subject.
- **Social Media:** Social media, also known as social services, refers to the use of the internet to connect with friends and relatives, as well as to exchange academic content in the field of education.

The present research is descriptive in nature and follows a survey method. In this study, a sample of 250 students from Classes 11 and 12, aged between 16 and 19 years, was included.

Sample

A total of 220 students (boys and girls) from government and non-government higher secondary schools were selected for the sample using the random cluster sampling technique.

Primary Data:

Using the sampling method, higher secondary level students were selected, and information was collected through a questionnaire to analyze their responses.

Secondary Data:

For secondary sources, published information was collected from reference books, international, national, and regional research journals related to the topic, internet websites, short research monographs, and other relevant sources. This information was used for analytical study and to draw conclusions.

Primary Sample

| Group | Number |
|---|--------|
| Female students of government and non-government higher secondary schools | 125 |
| Male students of government and non-government higher secondary schools | 125 |

Testing of the Hypothesis

(H₀): There is no significant difference in the impact of social media on the social awareness of students at the government and non-government higher secondary level.

Table No. 1: Impact of Social Media on Social Awareness

| Variable | Group | Number (N) | Mean | Standard Deviation | t-value | Significance Level (0.05) |
|--|---------------------------------------|------------|-------|--------------------|---------|---------------------------|
| Impact of Social Media on Social Awareness | Government Higher Secondary Level | 125 | 2.232 | 1.239 | 2.364 | 0.018 |
| | Non-Government Higher Secondary Level | 125 | 2.58 | 1.102 | | |

Interpretation of Table No. 1

Table No. 1 presents data related to the impact of social media on the academic achievement of students at the government and non-government higher secondary level. Observation of the table reveals that at 248 degrees of freedom, the obtained t-value is 2.364, which is higher than the critical t-value at the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Conclusion

The study of the impact of social media on the social awareness of higher secondary level students reveals that the use of social media influences students' psychological and social development in various ways. In this study, the social awareness of higher secondary students undergoes change because, through social media, they are exposed to diverse social issues and modern ideologies. They also receive information about political and cultural debates through social media, which contributes to an improvement in their social understanding.

Suggestions

Time Management of Social Media:

Students should be taught the concept of controlling the time spent on social media. They should be motivated to devote more time to academic activities.

Assessment of the Impact of Social Media:

Educational institutions should seek the support of experts to monitor the effects of social media usage on students. This would help in making students aware of the potential drawbacks of social media use.

Recognizing the Importance of Self-Study:

To make students understand the negative effects of excessive social media use, they should be guided to realize the importance of allocating personal time for academic success.

Role of the Family:

Families should also make children aware of the influence of social media and support them in using it in a proper and balanced manner.

Improvement in Educational Policies:

Schools and educational institutions should revise educational policies by considering the impact of social media on students. This can provide guidance for the appropriate use of social media.

Suggestions on the Impact of Social Media on the Social Awareness of Higher Secondary Students

To strengthen the social awareness of higher secondary level students while using social media, the following suggestions are proposed:

- It is essential to increase students' awareness regarding the use of social media. They can be taught how to use social media positively, such as engaging in discussions on legitimate and shared social issues.
- Students should be informed about social responsibility and how they can fulfill their responsibilities on social media. This can help them use social media appropriately and encourage constructive participation in society.
- The use of social media should be utilized to enhance students' digital literacy. This can help them develop the ability to understand and share online content responsibly, thereby increasing their knowledge and understanding.
- Students should be made aware of issues related to bullying and cyber safety on social media. They should be taught methods to avoid inappropriate or illegal cyber behavior and how to respond appropriately if they encounter such situations.

By following these suggestions, students can bring about positive changes in social awareness through the use of social media and utilize it effectively for their personal and social development.

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