

SOCIAL MEDIA USE AND ITS CONNECTION TO MENTAL HEALTH OF YOUNGSTERS- A REVIEW PAPER

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ABSTRACT

As the access of social media platforms have been increased in recent years, a significant effect of these platforms has been seen on the mental health. Although it has connected the people throughout the world but the real-life communications have been affected negatively. The emergence of internet de-addiction centres is alarming. The change in real life communications, depression among the youngsters, poor work-life balance and poor real-life relations are resulted due to virtual world connections. As per the requirement of the present study, the researcher focused on the social and psychological determinants only.

KEYWORDS- Virtual World, Social Media, Real Life Connections, Psychopathy.

INTRODUCTION

Different social media platforms are accessed by people of almost every age groups. It is changing the behaviour of people, both at the social and psychological level. Although the social media platforms have connected the people of every age group but disconnected the real-life communications. The impact of social media can be studied from various perspectives like academic perspective, impact on health, change in social relations or social interactions or it could be studied from the psychological perspective. As per the requirement of the present study, the researcher focused on the social and psychological determinants only. These days it is not very uncommon to see people publicising their private information through social media platforms loudly in public. These platforms have empowered people by providing 24-hour connectivity to the entire world. There are indications that excessive use of social media leads to increase in individual level psychopathology (loneliness, attention-deficits, and poor interpersonal relationship), disruptions in family functioning, and poor work-life balance. All these indicators impact the social life or social structure of the individuals involved in it, be it parents, children or teachers. Social media platforms attract the youngsters as it maximizes freedom through mobility and also benefits from immediate accessibility to the fullest extent and virtual world connections help the youngsters to do the things secretly.

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Social media refers to a wide range of applications and platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube, that let users share content, communicate online, and create communities. It is a method of communication where individuals produce, share, and exchange knowledge and concepts in online groups and networks. Social media makes it easier for people to communicate with one another online. Prominent social media platforms are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube and whatsapp.

People access different social media platforms via smartphones and are used to comment, criticize, approve and admire the different activities of people, government and community. Social media platforms broke the physical barriers or boundaries and made the long distance

or virtual world communication possible. Although it is a good phenomenon that people are uniting on one platform but it is impacting the real-world communication.

The emergence of internet de-addiction centres in India further explains the ease of mobile phone addiction or e-addiction. At present India has five internet de-addiction centers situated in Delhi, Bangluru, Pune, Kolkata and Amritsar. The SHUT (Service for Healthy Use of Technology) clinic was initiated by the Department of Clinical Psychology, NIMHANS (National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences) Bangluru on April 14, 2014. As per the data released by the NIMHANS (National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences) website, they receive at least 15 complaints related to internet addiction every week and most of the users are in the age group of 14-19 years. They are not only receiving the cases related to social media addiction, texting, calling or gaming only, but there are a number of cases where the teenagers are addicted to watch pornography. Every week SHUT clinic is receiving 6 cases of gaming addiction. This becomes more alarming as WHO (World Health Organisation) has announced gaming addiction as a mental disorder. They have also launched an app named as Digital Detox App or SHUT App, which help the users to identify the symptoms of e-addiction. Centre for Children in Internet and Technology Distress was started by Uday Foundation, a non-profit organisation in Delhi. It was initiated in July 2014 and was the second internet de-addiction centre in the country. It aims at addressing the increasing problem of internet-overuse among the children. In Kolkata, an internet de-addiction centre was opened in 2015 by a NGO (non-government organization) named as Turnstone Global. The fourth internet de-addiction centre was established in Pune in November 2018 named as Manovikas Manasoprachar Kendra. Punjab got its first internet de-addiction centre in Amritsar on September 5, 2015 and was opened by Amritsar-based psychiatrist Dr JPS Bhatia

THE CONCEPT OF MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health is characterised as a state of well-being in which individuals are aware of their capacities, successfully navigate through daily challenges, perform effectively at work, and significantly improve the quality of life in their communities. Our emotional, psychological, and social well-being are all parts of our mental health. It influences our thoughts, emotions, and behaviours. Additionally, it influences how we respond to stress, interact with others and make healthy decisions.

Social Media is changing the behaviour of people, both at the social and communication level. Now, it has become an essential communication device. Social media users are increasing tremendously and Smartphone is playing very prominent role in modern society. Many things are changing rapidly, especially the change in the way of communication. Today Social media platforms are not just a platform to socialise with friends, but it has become a reason for e-addiction among the youngsters.

Social Media usage and its impact can be studied from various perspectives like academic perspective, impact on health, change in social relations or social interactions or it could be studied from the psychological perspective. As per the requirement of the present study, the researcher focused on the social and psychological determinants only. The sociological perspective of social media platforms usage includes the effects on social behaviour. According to Wikipedia, "social behaviour is the behaviour directed towards society or taking place between members of the same species". Impact of social media usage on social behaviour can be studied from two main perspectives: how social norms of interaction in public spaces change or remain the same and how social media platforms make the youngsters stick to their smartphones. Social media platforms have changed the ways people

communicate, socialise and make friends. Public places now contain private conversations (Peters, 2007). These days it is not very uncommon to see people publicising their private information in public through social media platforms. It has enhanced the performance of people in every aspect of life, be it social, academic, health, economic and political. Although the positive effects are countless but problems are also there. There are indications that excessive use of social media platforms leads to increase in individual level psychopathology (loneliness, attention-deficits, and poor interpersonal relationship), disruptions in family functioning, and poor work-life balance (Gupta & Kumar, 2016). All these indicators impact the social life or social structure of the individuals involved in it, be it teenagers, youngsters or old aged.

To study the psychological perspective of mobile phone usage, it is important to examine the social media usage behaviour of the youngsters, i.e. their perceptions, their attitudes and their expectations. Apart from these it is also very important to understand the motivations behind social media usage. Social media platforms maximizes freedom through mobility and also benefits from immediate accessibility to the fullest extent (Leung & Wei, 2000). Along with other factors, it is also important to understand the time spent by the youngsters on social media platforms and how frequently do they access it.

In contemporary digital and virtual society, Anxiety is the affliction of life. A new addition to the stress list is "Nomophobia" (Pavithra et. al., 2015). Nomophobia is a situational phobia related to agoraphobia and includes the fear of becoming ill and not receiving immediate assistance. With phobia and addictive use of social media features, nomophobia may contribute to poor sleep. This phenomenon tried to explain that how do people get anxious in the absence of the network or social media access. Addiction to social media platforms may lead to some new psychological phenomenon. One among them is FoMO- Fear of missing out is the fear of being without a cell phone, disconnected or off the internet (Trnkova, 2015). A few researches show that the high engagement of youngsters with social media or addictive nature is due to FoMO (Oberst et al., 2017). There are researches which shows that the anxiety to miss important events is associated with the excessive use of new technologies (Durak, 2018; Tomczyk & Selmanagic-Lizde, 2018). "Textaphrenia" and "Ringxiety" – the false sensation of having received a text message or call that leads to constantly check the device, and "Textiety" – the anxiety of receiving and responding immediately to text messages (De-Sola Gutierrez, 2016).

The dependence of people on their smartphone, its impact on social and psychological behaviour and motivations behind usage of this device can be studied in the context of different communication theories and models.

METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

For the present review paper, the researcher has reviewed various researches, research papers, thesis and books related to the impact of social media platforms on the mental health of youngsters. The researcher considered only those research papers, studies, review papers and thesis which are relevant in contemporary situation. The virtually connected youth and especially the teenagers are addicted to social media platforms and this addiction is as dangerous as drug addiction. Apart from all these it has impacted the mental health of youngsters.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Rosen (2012), in his book titled as iDisorder: Understanding Our Obsession with Technology and Overcoming Its hold on us, written about the various types of disorders which have been

emerged from the overuse of mobile phones. The author is a psychologist who have been working to examine the reactions to new technology since 1980's when computer was emerged. As per the author, it is almost impossible to stay away from the cyberspace but overreliance on these gadgets and websites have impacted our health, behaviour and mind set in negative ways. Addiction to internet and mobile phones have not only affected our social life but killed the creativity inside us. The author with a reference to some researches and examples explained that we all are suffering from a number of mental disorders but we are not aware of it. The present book has been divided into twelve chapters and in each chapter the author tried to focus on different disorders. The first chapter explained the idea and concept of the book while in the last chapter the different strategies to reduce and eliminate the symptoms have been explained. As per the author, i-disorder is a new disorder that combines elements of many psychiatric maladies and is centered on the way we all relate to technology and media. The author written that people totally ignore their surroundings, like it has become very common for people to look at the screen of their mobile phones frequently while travelling, attending meeting, during classes, watching movies, having meal with family or attending some function. But this kind of behavior is termed as communication disorder, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, personality disorder, hypochondriasis, body dysmorphia, anti-social personality disorder, depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder or many more. In the second chapter of the book the author explained that media starts with "me" and people are becoming "I" centric. They keep on uploading their pictures and whereabouts on social media accounts and eagerly wait for likes or comments. It makes them tense if they did not get comments. Such kind of disorder is termed as narcissistic personality disorder (NPD). More virtual friends than the real ones is again an alarming thing. The book not only explains the psychological factors of behaviour but explained the different kind of i-disorders which helped the researcher to identify the various elements of psychological behaviour.

Ruddock (2013), focused on the positive and negative impacts of mobile phone usage in the book titled as Youth and Media. In the first chapter of the book the author explained how media is raising awareness among the people and it has become a platform for the public to raise their voice against any kind of violence. A number of case studies have been discussed by the author to support the comment. Among them one is the example of a documentary named as Kony 2012 which raised the voice against the human rights crimes in several African countries. When it was released on YouTube, it was viewed by 50 million people with in four days of its release. It was able to attract the attention of Obama government as well. The author mentioned that social media has a great influence on people and these days it is making people to think. Media has a great role in the development of any society and it is very important to work according to the expectations of the public. In the second chapter of the book, the author raised his concern over the studies/researches which shows that only media is responsible for any kind of negative behaviour of youth. The author mentioned a number of prior researches and methodology of the researches to support his comment. There are a number of researches which showed that the aggressive behaviour of the youth is the result of exposure to that kind of media content but the author argued that there might be a number of other social or cultural factors as well. The next chapter includes the information regarding the influence of media on youth. The author took examples all over the world where social media was used by the youngsters to unite the people or communities towards common goals. Expansion of media industry especially mobile phone industry in the developing countries, use of social media by the politicians for political campaigns, advertisement over social media and impact of social media on youngsters are a few other concepts which have been raised by the author in this book.

Rosen, Cheever & Carrier (2015) edited a book titled as 'The Wiley Handbook of Psychology, Technology and Society', which included thirty research papers from different authors. Each research paper is focused on a different kind of issue or effect which has been caused due to the mobile phone usage and internet. As the title of the book indicates that the content of this book is based on the impact of new digital technology on the behaviour of people and how the social media platforms have changed the process of socialisation. The most interesting part of the book is that the research papers were written by the authors from different countries and similarly the researches were also conducted in respective countries. So the researcher got the vast information on almost each aspect and effect of mobile phone usage from different regions, countries and societies all over the world from this book. The content of the book is divided into five parts as per its nature and effect. The first part of the book is titled as Psychology of Technology. This part is basically focused on the attitude of different age group people towards digital technology. The other research paper in the same part is based on the effects of this new technology on the personal, family, social and work life of people. The mobile phone usage is not limited to developed countries only but its penetration has been increased in developing countries also. A number of scholars all over the world are emphasizing on the requirement of digital media literacy. Although the developing countries are leading in the telecom sector but gender digital divide is there. The same issue has been raised in one of the research papers of this book. The second part of the book titled as Children, Teens and Technology is most important part for the researcher, as the present research is based on the effects of mobile phones on teenagers and school going children. A number of issues have been raised in this part like cyber bullying, risky online behaviour by adolescents and young adults, sexual communication through exchanging sexual content in the digital age, pornography, online verbal abuse, threatening messages, racial content by the teenagers and most probably by the children of age group from 10-17 years. All these types of activities and experiences lead them towards depression, anxiety and sometimes towards suicide. How mobile phones have given rise to multitasking is also explained in one of its parts. In fifth part of the book, the author tried to focus on the impact only. Apart from all these effects, the author tried to identify the age group which is affected the most by the usage of mobile phones. As per the data shared by the author, teenagers have more positive attitude towards technology and the reason behind their attachment is that they have not experienced a world without the internet.

In the book From Smartphones to Social Media: How Technology Affects Our Brains and Behaviour, the author Carrier (2018) focussed on almost every aspect of our life being affected by mobile phone use. As the book is published in 2018, so it contains the information related to contemporary problems and threats caused due to mobile phones. The book includes ten chapters and a different issue related to mobile phone usage is explained in each chapter. The thing which makes the content more important is the case study and an expert interview which comprised each issue or chapter. It helps the researcher to understand the major problems and its existing challenges. The researcher mentioned only that part of the book which is relevant to the present study. The first chapter is related to the social relationship. In this chapter the author tried to compare the present situation of social relationship to the time when internet was introduced. How the behaviour of the people with in the family and with the friends or relatives has been changed in the era of digital age is explained from their social relationship perspective. The author explained the reasons behind the popularity of texting among the teens. Cheap mobile phones and network, the privacy as message is sent to one individual who keep the content private, easy to type, helps the person to give true opinion because the non-verbal expressions of the receiver are not visible and the emojis make the message stronger. The social media helps the users to connect and react on

the various situations and things are happening on various places through virtual empathy. The second chapter focussed on the physical aggression caused by mobile phones. The author explained the various aspects of violent content in the form of mobile phone games and various websites which are easily accessible by the children. The controversy over the violent content was also explained.

The chapter entitled as Information and Attention contain the various challenges and altered behaviour brought in the information age. Distracted driving was one of the issues raised in this chapter. Multitasking has been emerged tremendously in this mobile phone era. Ignoring the one sitting in front of you and to remain busy on various social media platforms or attending phone calls is becoming acceptable social behaviour. The author discussed the challenges of classroom texting and the allocation of attention which is responsible for altered socio-psychological behaviour. The way we express our emotions have been changed also. Real life friends and relations have been replaced with the virtual ones. The book provides insights how social media provided us with a platform to express or share our views and connect to the world. But the tragedy is that more people are suffering from depression and anxiety in this digital age. All this has been discussed in the ninth chapter of the book titled as Emotions. In the last chapter of the book, the author explained the effects of mobile phone usage on our mental health and how it has given rise to sedentary life style. How it interferes with our sleeping patterns and given rise to sedentary lifestyle. A number of mental health issues have been also discussed in the chapter.

Xu (2014) edited the book entitled as Interdisciplinary Mobile Media and Communications: Social, Political and Economic Implications. It is clear from the title of the book that a variety of issues have been covered and the research papers of different authors are published in this book, which are further divided into six sections as per the nature of the content. The researcher reviewed the relevant papers only. Among them one was Mobile Communication and Children, which explains the impact of mobile phones on the children. The author written that the device has provided a number of opportunities but the behaviour and health of children are at risk, which are the major challenges faced by the parents and the teachers. The author expressed his concern over the private information shared by the users on their social media accounts. He wrote that the notions like personal, public and common have blurred their meaning. The users are remixed and have blended identities with in the common communication space.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The researcher reviewed various research books and studies related to the present study both from foreign and Indian authors or researchers. The major findings are mentioned in detail.

REAL SPACE VS VIRTUAL SPACE COMMUNICATION

It would not be wrong to describe communication as a basic human need. People always want to share their ideas and thoughts with someone. With the passage of time, the means of communication have been changed and it provided countless opportunities of communication to the people. With the advent of the internet and social media platforms, the process of communication became faster and helped the people all over the world to connect by sharing information and thoughts. This new media technology has its own challenges which brought changes in the behaviour of people. With the advancement of smartphones and access to the internet, people remain connected to the entire world through social media platforms. It is more popular among the youngsters and they spend significant hours in a day on social media platforms. Youngsters remain connected to their friends and family through social media, which clearly indicates that their real space social interactions are replaced with the virtual

space interactions. With the replacement of real space communication with the virtual space communication, the real-life relations are also replaced with the virtual world relations. Face to face communication is very important for emotional bonding but the things have been changed in this digital era. Youngsters find it more comfortable to get connected through social media platforms. 'The youngsters are hooked to the virtual world' is an article published in The Statesman on July 1, 2018 provides insights to the decreased social activity among the teenagers caused due to internet and smartphones. As per this article, the teenagers these days have set up their social world to be tied to this little box in their pockets, which resulted in the reduction of real space communication. They preferred to communicate with the people those who are not physically present over there and ignore the one who is sitting right before them. This recent trend is quite disturbing and it is all normal for the teenagers. Gone are the days when all the members of family discuss the incidents of the day while having their dinner or in the evening after work or school. Now, the real space communication within the family during the dinner time has been replaced with silent conversations with the virtual friends.

In real space communication, immediate reply is expected because people at both ends met with a purpose of discussion, but in case of machine assisted communication, this could not be expected as the person on the other end might be busy with some urgent work. It is a matter of concern when teenagers themselves accepted that they have a stronger relationship with the virtual friends than the real-life friends.

PUBLIC VS PERSONAL LIFE

Personal information is no longer personal in the era of social media. People share their pictures, their visits, locations and the information related to their moods on social media platforms as it has become a new way to socialise. On one side the users are always under the threat of misuse of their personal information and on the other side, they keep on sharing their personal information on various social media platforms. Youngsters chat with the people they found on social media platforms and do not know each other personally. These chats are not limited to calls and texts rather they share photographs and personal information with those unknown virtual friends. Although they share such information under the tag of socialisation, but it expresses the mental status of the teenagers who are not able to differentiate what to share and what not to share on social media platforms.

MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY

Media Information Literacy is a global concern these days and not much people are aware of it. Anyone having a mobile phone in the pocket has become a journalist and the activity of sharing unfiltered information is taken as normal by most of the people. For the iGens it is a normal routine activity. In this Digital era, the information is just a click away from us. Various Media forms help us to access, analyse, evaluate and create information in a variety of forms. Apart from getting information with the help of various digital devices, the tendency of spreading fake information/news is increasing. As the usage of Smartphone is increasing the tendency of sharing information is also increasing among the people of almost every age group but even the well-educated people lack at using the information ethically. Although the development of media and Information infrastructure is essential for the development of any nation but the sustainable development will be possible only when the people especially the youngsters would be using media responsibly. The virtual world connections made them do the things secretly and sometimes, the lack of media literacy made the things worse. These days people are not living in one world, but they are living in two, three or may be in more virtual worlds. The availability of cheap mobile phones and data

packs has made it easier for the people to access any information at any time. Different social media platforms and websites are providing the entire information related to any issue. The users are not only getting the information, but they keep on spreading that information by sharing with their friends on various social media accounts without verifying it. The situation is that the users are getting different versions of the same information from different websites. The basic challenge these days is to check the authenticity of that information which is provided by various online sources and social media platforms. This entire process is creating dissonance among the users. The best example which could be quoted in this context is the information related to various political parties and politicians before the elections.

Endless opportunities and functions of smartphones motivate the youngsters to share information on their social media accounts which they receive from any random source and they never try to check the facts, because, for the youngsters sharing any information is a way of socialisation or a way to stay in touch. Sometimes, they are unable to understand the sensitivity of the issue or information they share. It is very common to see people gathered at some accident spot and clicking the photographs of the accident victims instead of helping them. As per an article published in the India Today on March 2, 2018, the youngsters are getting trapped in the digital world.

INTERNET ADDICTION

Internet addiction is characterised as an unhealthy behaviour that disrupts and stresses out a person's personal, academic, and/or professional life. Compulsive Internet use entirely controls a person's life, just like other addictions do. Addicts experience desperation as a result of their struggles with self-control, which pushes them deeper into their addictive patterns. Addicts eventually rely on the internet to make them feel normal. It is the smartphone which is pushing the teenagers to internet and social media addiction, as per an article published in The Tribune on March 7, 2017. The article is focussed on the mobile phone addiction, its symptoms and the other types of addiction the youth in Punjab is facing these days. The author has given reference to the various researches conducted in the other countries and shown his concern over it. As per the author, these days every message on WhatsApp or Facebook is so important for the young boys and girls that they can miss everything but not this. Studies have been conducted the world over on the phenomenon of 'phubbing', wherein a person snubs another person/s in a social setting by concentrating on a smart phone, thus blocking all communication with people around.

participants had at least one mobile phone behavioural addiction to internet on smartphones and behavioural problems like lack of sleep, stress, anxiety and depression are becoming common. All these results show that the mobile phone usage has affected the mental state of the teenagers and they feel trapped

Now-a-days, the youngsters prefer to communicate through the mobile phones which replaced the real space communication with the virtual communication. Attractive features of social media platforms have become a priority and the attractive features lead the youngsters towards addiction. As this device is uniting the teenagers on single platforms with its various social media applications and encouraging them to raise their voice, but it is creating a gap between the social relationships in real life.

CONCLUSION

The present research resulted that the device has deeply penetrated into the lives of youngsters which has not only affected their physical health, but their social lives and mental health have also been affected. Now-a-days, the youngsters prefer to communicate through

the mobile phones which replaced the real space communication with the virtual communication. Mobile phones have become a priority and the attractive features lead the youngsters towards addiction. As this device is uniting the youngsters on single platforms with its various social media applications and encouraging them to raise their voice, but it is creating a gap between the parent-children relationship.

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