



Impact of Social Networking Sites on the Youth of Assam

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ABSTRACT- Social media is a tool that is becoming quite popular these days because of its user-friendly features. Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and more are giving people a chance to connect with each other across distances. In other words, the whole world is at our fingertips all thanks to social media. The youth is especially one of the most dominant users of social media. All this makes us wonder that something so powerful and with such a massive reach cannot be all good. It has become so much intense now that the individuals get insensitive in social gatherings as they are mostly preoccupied with their mobiles that they are unable to look up as to where they are and which results in their inability to prioritize their urgent need. Attention therefore, has been shifted from real to virtual world and visible to invisible friends. The present study aim to focus on the influence of Social Media on the youth and attempt has been made to understand the impact of use of social media on the lifestyle, trends, educational and political awareness, physical activities, social life and learning among the youth.

Keywords: Social networking; Adolescents; Internet; Youth.

I. INTRODUCTION:

Social media refers to applications and websites or blogs that enable people around the globe to interconnect via the internet, chat, and share content, video call among the functionalities it offers to its users. For a person to be a member of any social media, he/she has to sign up and then sign in to access content in order to share and chat with other users of that social media platform. Some of the widely used social media platforms include Facebook, Twitter, Whats App, Snap-chat among others.

Over the past two decades, social media have grown so much fame worldwide that many researchers get interested in learning more about these subjects and to see their real effects on the community. Despite the fact that almost everyone is connected to at least one social media platform, the youth and teenagers are the leading and most fanatic of these social platforms to that extent that they even carry out social network while attending class or even in places of worship. Despite the fact that web-based social networking sites appear to associate more individuals and influence them to occupy most of their time in these activities, it also prompts disengagement socially as indicated by BBC News Report. Further, it reduces much of eye to eye communications among the youths as majority of them are busy in online activities. Recent researches have revealed that Social Media negatively affects a child's cognitive and social development as well as childhood development in particular because it limits their ability to understand social cues, to understand conversational tones, and to communicate face to face.

Furthermore, it affects youthful adolescents below eighteen years to online predators who get the opportunity to attract them into sexual acts as for e.g., lesbianism and other general sexual offences. Likewise, it opens these teenagers to explicit substance being spread in some of the social gatherings on the web. Thus, these types of activity prompts early pregnancies among the young ladies making them drop out of school. It additionally can prompt withdrawal of sexually transmitted ailments, for example, HIV and this can prompt early passing at a young age. The ethics of these adolescents is likewise altered as they now gain admittance to improper writing and recordings (Ahn, 2012).

Spending long periods of time talking online with networking sites additionally reduces efficiency of the young citizens. This causes the adolescents not to act naturally reliant, rather they rely more upon their peers and families for upkeep. The extend periods of time squandered online via web-based networking media can be diverted to gainful exercises that can empower one win a living or even procure an instruction for example through online instructional exercises and create great utilization of online research materials (Brenner, 2013).

It is, therefore, necessary to evaluate the studies about the usage of social networking sites in the education system in order to determine whether or not, these sites have led to any impact on the lifestyle

and/or any type of achievements of the students in their entire career. This paper will therefore be helpful in understanding the positive and negative impacts of online networking on the youth.

A social networking service (also social networking site, SNS or social media) is an online platform that people use to build social networks or social relations with other people who share similar personal or career interests, activities, backgrounds or real-life connections. Majority of youth is shifting promptly from electronic media like television viewers and radio listeners to social media among all the age group. People spend in general more hours on social networking sites to download pictures, browse through updates, seek entertainment and chat round with friends to keep themselves connected to one another. These sites have held an addiction to the youth wherein they find it difficult to concentrate on their work and prefer logging in and jumping across one site to another. Some have derived benefit out of these sites, whereas some have become addicted because of its excessive usage which has affected them emotionally and mentally. This craze of social media among the adolescents and youth has led to a host of questions regarding its impact on society, while it is agreed that Social Media affects the lifestyle of the people and it is an ongoing process to identify the nature of these influences in every society and country especially on teenagers' and youth. The present study aims at creating awareness among the youth of Assam by exposing them to social networking sites. The networking sites not only affected them adversely but on the contrary, the usage of these sites has somewhere been positive in helping the youths in understanding things more efficiently. Facebook, My Space, LinkedIn, Twitter, Skype all these are a few such sites that attract maximum of the youths and thereby embodies their own merits and demerits that desperately necessitate in creating an actual impact among the youth at large in Assam.

II. REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURES

The following literatures are reviewed related to the topic.

In the study entitled 'Impact of social networking websites on the education of the youth', the researchers have portrayed the various social networking sites like the Facebook, MySpace and Twitter which are gaining popularity these days due to their attractive features covering the subjects of youth in today's generation. The study argues against the notion of claiming of rapid popularity of social networking sites that the youth tends to imbibe such culture which alienate them from their studies and professions but, on the contrary, encourage them in developing friendly and social ties with the world that revolves around them (Kuppuswamy and Narayanan, 2011)

The article on 'Impact of Social Networking Sites in the Changing Mindsets of the Youths' under study on Social Issues written by Jain and Gupta in the year 2015, explains about active participation of the youths on social issues as activists by raising voices to express their opinions and views which are being discussed on these sites. The findings however state that even though the youth reciprocates to these events they still does not take up discussions beyond web and generally forget about them once they sign off. These sites thus, prove to be a boon to the youth in terms of spreading awareness about the issues that arise (Jain and Gupta, 2012:36-43).

Another study entitled 'Impact of Social Networking Sites on the Students under Study', written by Khan establishes that out of all the respondents nearly 55.4% of the total youth covered within the age group 15 to 25 use social networking sites regularly for entertainment only where male users are more as compared to female. Again, the male users generally derive knowledge based information from these sites. Most of these youths use these sites as influenced by their friends and they access the same way as their friends have been using. Further, the study also reflected about the academic performance of students where they scored only 3.0 to 3.5 GPA in examinations are mostly inclined towards these sites for entertainment (Khan, 2011:56-77).

On the 'Impact of Social Media on Youth', Anthony reflected various types of impact, sometime it is in favour of youth's social life and at times the impacts are negative. He opined that the media's broadcast material from the television straightway upon the growing up youths in an age is unsafe, but if it is transmitted for specific about interactivity, multimedia and multi-tasking purposes then it is justified. Further, it impacts upon those organizations who remain visible and relevant to a new generation, and who finds their own work and structures being changed by changing communication tools and patterns of communications. Hence, the importance lies in the purpose for which it is broadcasted (Anthony, 2009). There exists a lot of literature on the impact of Social Networking Sites which have been reviewed but it has been observed that very less number of studies is available during the last couple of years. Again it has been found that there is scarcity of studies conducted on the impact of social media on the adolescents

and youths in the North East region. The present study is an attempt to fulfill this gap by analysing the impact of social networking sites among the school students of Guwahati city.

III. METHODOLOGY

The methodology used for the present study has been discussed below.

Research Design

The research design adopted for the present study was descriptive in nature, which includes surveys and fact finding enquires of different kinds. The major purpose of descriptive research is to give a description of the state of affairs as it exists at present as the researcher has no control over the variables and can only report as to what had happened or what is happening. It also attempts to discover the causes even when they cannot control the variables. Therefore, for the present study descriptive research design is considered as the ideal design to examine the impact of social networking sites on youth.

Universe and Sampling

School students of various English and Vernacular medium of Kamrup Metro District were the population of this study. These schools are located in the urban vicinity of Kamrup Metro district of Assam. As the study is for the adolescence therefore, samples have been taken from the students belonging to age group of 12-19 years-and-above. Further, respondents' students of the study mostly belong to Above Poverty Line (APL) group this may be because the very locations of the sample schools are in the urban vicinity. 200 students from the population were chosen randomly as representative samples for conducting the study.

Objectives

The present study is conducted to fulfill the below mentioned objectives.

- To understand the role of social networking sites among the youth.
- To correlate the association between gender and use of social networking sites
- To correlate the association between gender and effect of social networking sites
- To correlate between age of respondents and use of social networking sites.

Framing of Hypothesis

For the purpose of testing the above stated objectives, the following Hypothesis were tested:

- **Use of Social Networking Sites and Gender**

Ho: There is no significant association between use of Social Networking Sites and Gender

H1: There is significant association between use of Social Networking Sites and Gender

- **Gender and effect of SNS use**

Ho: There is no significant association between the Gender and effect of SNS use

H1: There is significant association between the Gender and effect of SNS use

- **Gender and use of Media**

Ho: There is no significant association between the Gender and use of Media

H1: There is significant association between the Gender and use of Media.

- **Age of Respondents and SNS use**

Ho: There is no significant association between age of respondents and SNS use.

H1: There is significant association between age of respondents and SNS use.

Method of Data Collection

Simple random sampling technique has been used to select samples through lottery method. Prior to the selection of the students consent was taken from the respective parents of the students. After getting the consent a well structured questionnaire tool was used to collect the required data from the 200 students.

Of the total 200 respondent students, 2 students submitted incomplete responses, hence they got automatically deleted and two more student were included for the survey. Therefore, the final 200respondents were considered as the true representative samples and their responses were only considered for the analysis.

Tools of Data Collection

The socio demographic data sheet of the respondent students in terms of personal, family, economic status and impact of social media in academic performance have been enumerated by administering semi structured questionnaire. The checklist on study habits of the sample has been used. The checklist consists of twenty open ended questions.

Statistical Techniques used for data analysis:

- Chi Square
- Pearson Correlation
- T-Test
- Frequency and Percentage

Data presentation

The data have been presented in tabular form for better understanding.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION:

Background of the Respondents under Study

Table1.1: Background Data of the Respondents under Study

Variables	Subjects	Frequency	Percentage	Total respondents in fig and percentage
Gender	Male	70	35.0	200 (100)
	Female	130	65.0	
Age	12- 14	40	20.0	200 (100)
	15 - 19	115	57.5	
	>19	45	22.5	
APL / BPL	APL	125	62.5	200 (100)
	BPL	75	37.5	

Source: Primary data collected by the researcher.

In the above analysis, a number of variables are used like Gender, Age of Respondents, Number of Respondents who fall in Above Poverty Line /Below Poverty Line. From the above table, it is found that out of 200 respondents, 65% of the respondents are female, whereas the remaining 35% are male. This is so because the samples are selected at random fromco-educationschools. This implies that females use more social networking sites as compared to males as they possess mobile phones. The study has been conducted with the consent of the parents and it has been found that majority of the respondents using Social Networking Sites are females. This reflects that parents have more trust factor towards girls as compared to boys. So, girls are allowed more to use mobile devices compared to boys.

Again Age has been used to show the effect of Social Media Use on Age of the respondents. It is found that the maximum number of respondents using mobile phones is between the age group of 15-17 years. This is because they are more likely to use Social Networking Sites (SNS) compared to other age groups. Most of the students between age group 12-14 years are not using SNS. So, they did not show much interest to participate in the study. Whereas there are only 22.5% respondents whose age group is greater than 19 years and most of the respondents in this age groups are busy with their academics as responded.

Again, as the study is conducted to see the impact from two different sections of population i.e., APL and BPL. The number of respondents from APL is more (62.5%) than the BPL ones (37.5%). As the study is concentrated on the schools situated in the urban areas i.e. in Kamrup Metro, therefore which may be the reason of more number of respondents from APL students than the BPL.

Association between effect of Social Networking Sites and Gender

For analyzing the association between the use of SNS and gender Chi Square test has been conducted. Chi Square Test (χ^2) is conducted to examine the difference between categorical variables in the same population. Chi Square has been used for testing the framed Hypothesis and to determine association between use of Social Networking Sites and Gender

Table 1.2: Association between use of SNS and Gender

Use of SNS	Gender		Total	Pearson Chi-Square
	Male	Female		
12-14 Yrs Count(%within Gender)	10(14.3)	30(23.1)	40(20.0)	$\chi^2=.496$ df=2 P=.780
15-19 Yrs Count(%within Gender)	50(71.4)	80(61.5)	130(65.0)	
>19 Yrs Count(% within Gender)	10(14.3)	20(15.4)	30(15.0)	
Total Count(%within Gender)	70(100)	130(100)	200(100)	

Source: Generated data out of the field visit.

The results in the above table show that of the total male respondents the maximum users of SNS (71.4%) fall under the age group between 15-19 years. And among 130 Female respondents, the maximum users (61.5%) fall under age group 15-19 years. Hence, it is inferred that students between age group of 15-19 years irrespective of gender use social media more frequently. For the purpose of testing the Hypothesis 2

stating association between the Gender and effect of SNS use, inferential statistics of Chi Square (χ^2) was used.

Table 1.2 infers that there is no significant association between use of Social Networking Sites and Gender because the Pearson Chi-Square is .496, df=2 and P=.780. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant association between use of Social Networking Sites and Gender is accepted. Hence, it is proved that Use of Social Networking Sites and Gender are not significantly associated.

Association between effect of SNS and Gender

Table 1.3: Association between effect of SNS and Gender

Effect of SNS	Gender		Total	Pearson Chi-Square
	Male	Female		
Does not effect Count(%within Gender)	25(35.7)	85(65.4)	110(55.0)	$\chi^2=7.999$

Psychological complaints like headache Count(%within Gender)	40(57.1)	20(15.4)	60(30.0)	df=3 P=.046
Eye Irritation Count(% within Gender)	5(7.1)	15(11.5)	20(10.0)	
Sleeping disturbance Count(% within Gender)	0(.0)	10(7.7)	10(5.0)	
Total Count(%within Gender)	70(100)	130(100)	200(100)	

Source: Based on field work data.

From the above table 1.3, it is found that among the 200 respondents 65.4% of the female respondents and 35.7 % of the Male respondents are not affected by the use of Social Networking Sites. It is found that mostly the Male respondents are affected by Psychological complaints like headache, eye irritation and sleeping disturbance as compared to the female respondents.

Table 1.3 infers that the association between the Gender and effect of SNS after using these social networking sites is significant at 5% level because the Pearson Chi-Square is .7999, df=3 and P=.046. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant association between the Gender and effect of SNS use is rejected. Hence, it is proved that effect of the use of Social Networking Sites and Gender are significantly associated.

Association between use of Media and Gender

Table 1.4: Association between use of Media and Gender

Use of Media	Gender		Total	Pearson Chi-Square
	Male	Female		
Mobile Count(%within Gender)	20(28.6)	60(46.2)	80(40.0)	$\chi^2=1.180$ df=2 P=.554
Mobile and Desktop Count(%within Gender)	40(57.1)	55(42.3)	95(47.5)	
Mobile and Laptop Count(%within Gender)	10(14.3)	15(11.5)	25(12.5)	
Total Count(%within Gender)	70(100)	130(100)	200(100)	

Source: Primary data generated through field work.

From the above Table, it is seen that both Male and Female respondents use all types of Media for accessing Social Networking Sites.

From the Table 1.4 it can be inferred that the association between the Gender and use of Media are not significantly associated because the Pearson Chi-Square is 1.180, df=2 and P=.554. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant association between the Gender and use of media is not rejected. Hence, it is proved that the respondents can access SNS by using any type of Media.

Association between Age of Respondents and Use of SNS

Table 1.5: Association between Age of Respondents and Use of SNS

Use of SNS	Gender		Age			Total	Pearson Chi-Square
	Male	Female	12-14.	15-19	>19		
Relaxation Count(% within Gender)	10(14.3)	30(23.1)	10(25.0)	17(13.0)	10(33.3)	37(20.0)	$X^2=6.134$ df=4 P=.189
Information Count(%within Gender)	50(71.4)	80(61.5)	25(62.15)	102(78.30)	10(33.3)	137(65.0)	

Accessibility Count(% within Gender)	10(14.3)	20(15.4)	5(12.5)	11(8.70)	10(33.3)	26(15.0)	
Total Count(%within Gender)	70(100)	130(100)	40(100)	130(100)	30(100)	200(100)	

Source; Primary data generated through field visit.

From Table 1.5, it is seen that maximum 78.3% of the respondents aged between 15-19 years use SNS for acquiring information, whereas only 8.70 of the youth between age group of 15-19 years use SNS for accessibility. This infers that most of the respondents use Social Media for accessing information.

From Table 1.5 it is found that the association between the age of respondents and SNS use are not significantly associated because the Pearson Chi-Square is 6.0134, $df=4$ and $P=.189$. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant association age of respondents and duration of SNS use is not rejected. Hence, it is proved that the respondents of any age group can access SNS for any purpose.

Association between effect of SNS and Age

Table 1.6: Association between effect of SNS and Age

Effect of SNS	Gender		Age			Total	Pearson Chi-Square
	Male	Female	12-14	15-19	>19		
Does not affect Count(% within Gender)	25(35.7)	90(69.4)	20(50.0)	79(60.9)	13(44.4)	112(55.0)	$X^2=5.648$ $df=6$ $P=.464$
Psychological complaints like headache Count(%within Gender)	40(57.10)	20(15.1)	20(50.0)	29(22.1)	10(33.3)	59(30.0)	
Eye Irritation Count(% within Gender)	5(7.1)	10(7.70)	0(0.00)	11(8.70)	7(22.2)	18(10.0)	
Sleeping Disturbance Count(% within Gender)	0(0)	10(7.7)	0(0.00)	11(8.70)	0(0.00)	11(5.00)	
Total Count(%within Gender)	70(100)	130(100)	40(100)	130(100)	30(100)	200(100)	

Source: Primary data collected from the field survey.

From Table 1.6, it is found that 60.9% of the respondents between age group of 15-19 years are not affected by the use of Social Networking Sites, whereas 44.4% of the respondents whose age is more than 19 years are not affected by the use of Social Networking Sites. Again it is found that mostly the male respondents whose age group is more than 19 years are affected by Psychological complaints like headache, eye irritation and sleeping disturbance as compared to the female respondents.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The extended periods of time squandered online by the youth via web-based networking media can be diverted to gainful exercises that can empower them to procure better understanding and for carrying out academic pursuits.
- Use of social networking sites should be made to take the maximum utilization of online research materials available
- Social networking can serve as a great media of instruction for exercises and other fitness activities which can upgrade the lifestyle of the youths.
- Adopting a good study habit along with the social networking skills will make the use of social networking assets more valuable and useful.

VI. CONCLUSION:

The primary objective of the research undertaken was to shed light on the evolution of dominance of social networking sites among the adolescents. The majority of them have had access to the internet and computers for a large percentage of their lives. The research deals with a survey on the usage of the social media networking in the domain of youth. The most commonly used social media are Facebook, Skype, YouTube, Twitter and MySpace. It is very much evident that most of the youths and adolescents are widely using SNS sites which can be considered as an educational tool, if it is used wisely under the supervision of parents. However, Social Network Sites give them a platform to interact with friends. The SNS can be used as a weapon or as a stepping stone depending on how one views it. As we know our early adulthood is an important period. Focus should be on the ethical use of these SNS so that it can serve our society in a right way and youth can play an important role because SNS is a boon and curse both for the Indian society.

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