

## **Impact of social media on student life: A blessings or curse**

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### **Abstract**

Social media has now been established itself as a powerful communication tool catering to more than two billion users worldwide. It is now considered as a mass media through which anyone can create or share his or her ideas, views, information, messages, etc. to any individual or a group via wire or wireless medium. Examples of social media are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Google Hangouts, and Skype etc. These social media sites are very popular among students and they construct their knowledge and shape their worldviews according to their social media interactions with each other. These sites create a virtual world and give the students utmost freedom to indulge in any kind of activity, as they like by creating an online identity. Through social media, any student can connect or meet with anyone irrespective of his or her geographical location, diverse cultural, social and religious background thus allowing them to be more aware and knowledgeable about the world. Despite the positive effects of social media, students are also victims of its darker side. Students are now getting more and more addicted to this virtual world and neglecting their academic studies. They also prefer online interactions against face-to-face communication with their friends and other family members. They are also avoiding other recreational activities. Therefore, students have to be made aware of the ill effects of social media. In this investigation, we are to explore the positive and negative effects of social media on the student life and some precautionary measures in order to minimize the negative effects of social media.

**Keywords:** social media, virtual world, wireless medium, student life, mass communication media

### **Introduction**

In the last decade internet has gone through a tremendous growth and at the same time, social media sites have established themselves as a pioneer in mass media communication. Technological advancement, cheaper data connection coupled with increasing access of different gadgets like smart phone, tablet, laptop etc is the main reason behind this superb expansion of social media. Now anybody can access any website within internet on anytime from any geographical location. Men are social being who need somebody to communicate and share their thoughts, experiences, views on different subjects or phenomena. Now-a-days social media sites are catering to this need for more than two billion users around the globe. Therefore, it can be said that one in every three person now uses at least one social media sites. Social media now have created a platform for young men & women to exchange ideas, views, feelings, personal information, pictures and videos at a truly astonishing rate. The worldwide occurrence of Social Media has influenced the world in various ways. One of the most crucial areas in which it has made an impact is the world of education. Though it is a nascent stage, yet the results are already showing fascinating changes. However, there has been very little research on the impact of these sites on the student in the Indian context. In this study, we focused on the impact of these social networking sites on the youth of India in both positive as well as negative phase.

### **Social Media: At a Glance**

Social media are a form of electronic communication through which user can interact with an individual or a group of people

to share or create information, knowledge, ideas, and views on different subjects as well as different types of contents (like audio, video etc). Some examples of social media are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Myspace, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Pinterest, YouTube, Google+, Tumblr, Vine, and Reddit etc. Studies conducted by the Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (IPTS) suggest that, the high take up of social media applications outside of formal educational settings provides new opportunities for innovating and modernizing Education and Training institutions and for preparing learners for the 21st century as it opens the entire world of information because of which it has a great relevance in educational field. Social media networks are considered crucial for educational and professional skill development now-a-days as it eliminates geographical and time barriers providing scope for wide connectivity to vast community sharing information and interests. It also provides speedy dissemination of information and ideas. Within the social media Facebook, Twitter and others are now gaining more and more patronage. These websites and social forums are way of communicating directly with other people socially. Hence, Social media has the potentials of influencing decision-making in a very short time regardless of the distance.

### **History of Social Media**

- In 1995, first social media site emerged named Classmates which enabled its user to find & form ties with former school mates.
- Six Degrees, created in 1997, enabled users to upload a profile, organize groups and make friends with other users.
- In 1999, the first blogging sites like Blogger, Live Journal,

Xanga became popular, creating a social media sensation that's still popular today.

- The first mass social media site was the South Korean service, Cyworld, launched as a blog-based site in 1999 and social networking features added in 2001.
- Friendster was founded in 2002. It was the first of social media sites to attain over 1 million members.
- LinkedIn, a business and employment-oriented social networking service was launched in 2003. It is meant for professional businesspeople to connect with each other to network, find jobs and socialize.
- Myspace, which was the largest social media site in the world during the period of 2005-2009, was also launched in 2003.
- Orkut, launched by Google, was commenced its operation in 2004. Orkut was one of the most visited websites in India in 2008.
- Facebook launched on Feb. 4, 2004, as a site specifically for Harvard University students. In September 2006, the site opened itself to any user with a registered email address. Currently, it has more than 1.86 billion monthly active users, making it the world's largest social media site. Flickr, a photo-uploading platform also emerged in this year.
- YouTube is a leading video-sharing website, which was created in 2005. Users could quickly and easily upload or share video content with friends. As of 2016, the site hosts over a billion users in 88 different countries across the globe covering 95% of total internet population. Reddit is a news aggregation, web content rating, and discussion website which was also founded in the same year.
- In 2006, Twitter is appeared. It is a text based social media having the unique distinction of allowing users to send "tweets" of 140 characters or less. Today, Twitter has over 500 million users.
- Tumblr, which launched in February 2007, gets widespread credit as the first mainstream platform explicitly designed for short form content like photos, video, quotes, text, and other short story types.
- Instagram, a popular image-sharing app, launched in October 2010, allows the users upload, edit, filter, and share photos, videos, hashtags, web feed, inline advertising, comment filtering, zoom etc.
- Pinterest, a photo-sharing web site began its work in 2010. The evolution of Pinterest is based on the shared interest of its users and relies on its members to produce the content.
- In 2011, Google started its own social media site naming it Google+. India is the second biggest market in terms of its user base & popularity.

### Social Media Vs. Social Networking:

- Social networking and social media - both have the world "social" in them, but they should not be confused as the same thing. In simplest terms, social networking is the "what," and social media is the "how."
- First there is difference between definitions. Social media is used to share any kind of information widely and every user has the equal opportunity to access and share the information. Social networking mostly exists between those individuals and organization have common interests or goals.

- Social media is wholly a virtual form of communication and can be carry out if one has an Internet connection. Social networking is possible through both social media and by developing a physical community.
- Social networks are made up of peers seeking and giving advice to make better decisions. Advanced social networking science can even tell us which people give out the most advice in the network and have the most influence. Social networks can connect through blogs, syndicated videos, social bookmarks, and more, which we call social media. Social media pertains to how this information can be shared online.
- Social media allows its user to propagate his/her message or idea to a large public while message in social networking can be conveyed to only number of people in the group.
- Social media is a best place for marketing while social networking is best for discussion and building relationship.
- Social media news are mostly rumor and have no reliable source while in social networking everyone try his/her best to convey authentic and reliable news.

### Features of Social Media

Social media is best understood as a group of new kinds of online media, which share most or all of the following characteristics:

- **Participation:** Social media encourages contributions and feedback from everyone who is interested. It blurs the line between media and audience.
- **Openness:** Most social media services are open to feedback and participation. They encourage voting, comments and the sharing of information. There are rarely any barriers to accessing and making use of content – password-protected content is frowned on.
- **Conversation:** Whereas traditional media is about "broadcast" (content transmitted or distributed to an audience) social media is better seen as a two-way conversation.
- **Community:** Social media allows communities to form quickly and communicate effectively. Communities share common interests, such as a love of photography, a political issue or a favourite TV show.
- **Connectedness:** Most kinds of social media thrive on their connectedness, making use of links to other sites, resources and people.

### Forms of Social Media

The most common forms of social media are,

- **Social networks:** These sites allow people to build personal web pages and then connect with friends to share content and communication. The biggest social networks are My Space, Facebook and Bebo.
- **Blogs:** Perhaps the best known form of social media, blogs are online journals, with entries appearing with the most recent first.
- **Forums:** Areas for online discussion, often around specific topics and interests. Forums came about before the term "social media" and are a powerful and popular element of online communities.
- **Content communities:** Communities which organise and share particular kinds of content. The most popular content

communities tend to form around photos (Flickr), bookmarked links (del.icio.us) and videos (YouTube).

- **Microblogging:** Social networking combined with bite-sized blogging, where small amounts of content “updates” are distributed online and through the mobile phone network. Twitter is the clear leader in this field.

**Some Facts of Social Media in India**

Some facts of Social Media are given here under. Most of these facts are given based on facts of 2016 data collected through various agencies.

- In India, there are over 462 Million internet users and 200 Million are active social media users.



Fig 1: Sources UN, Internet Worldstats, ITU, CSMA Intelligence etc.

- Internet usage is male dominated in India with 71% to 29% female.
- Activities on social media sites are high between 6pm to 10pm.

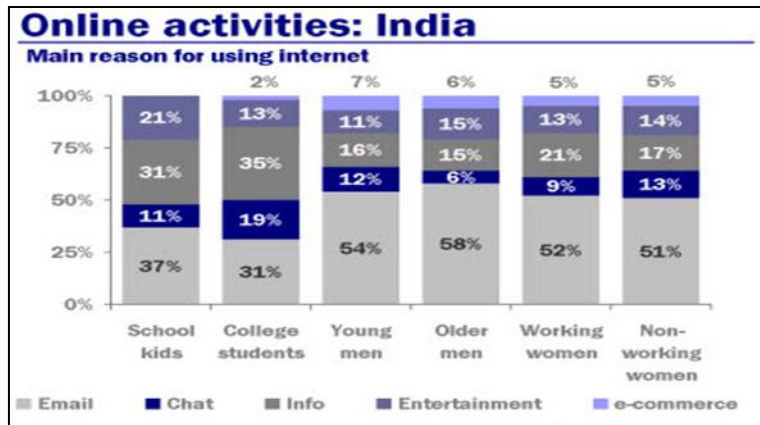


Fig 2: IMRB International, Source IAMAI

- Most of the traffic of social media come from Mumbai and New Delhi.

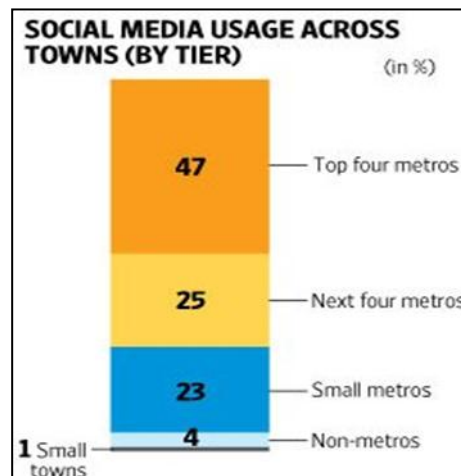


Fig 3: Source IAMAI

- Over 60% of active social network users are college going students and school going students form 12% of social user base.

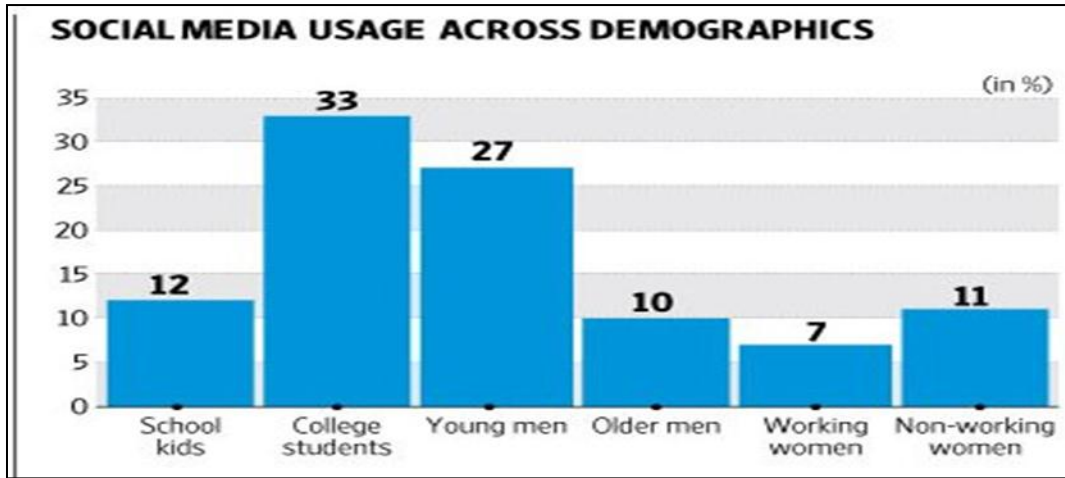


Fig 4: Source IAMAI

- In India, Facebook is the only social network to cross 150 Million Users.
- Top 5 countries accessing Facebook are India, USA, Brazil, UK and Germany.
- India's active social media users are up by 23 percent since March 2015, compared to 26 percent global rise.

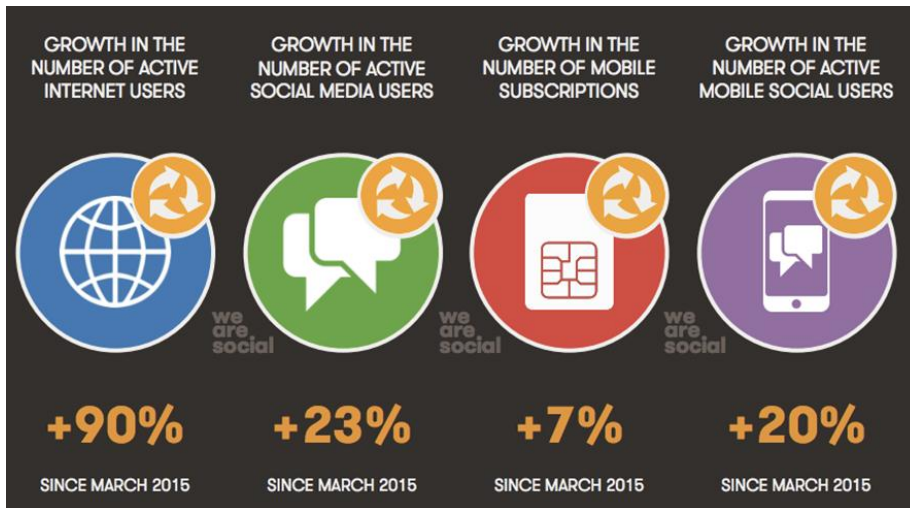


Fig 5: Sources UN, Internet Worldstats, ITU, CSMA Intelligence etc.

- Key Facebook Users from India are aged 17-24. This means most of them are higher secondary level students and college going students.

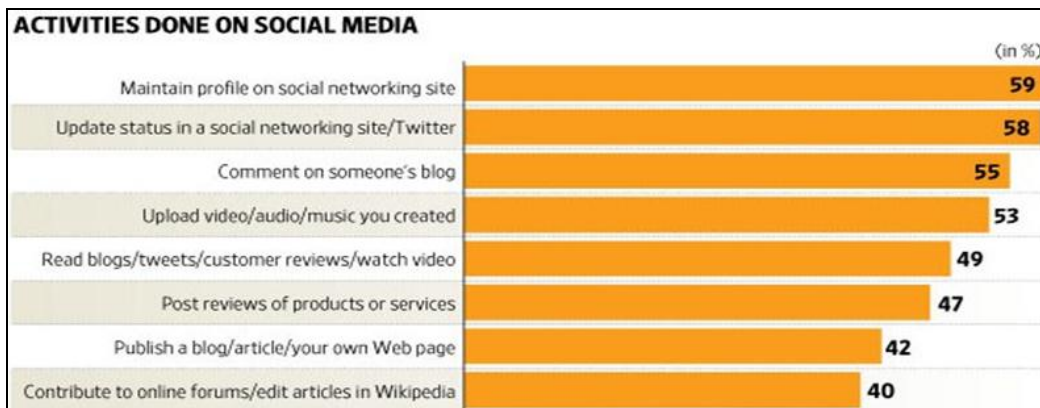


Fig 6: Source IAMAI

- Active users revisits Facebook more than 3 times in a day.

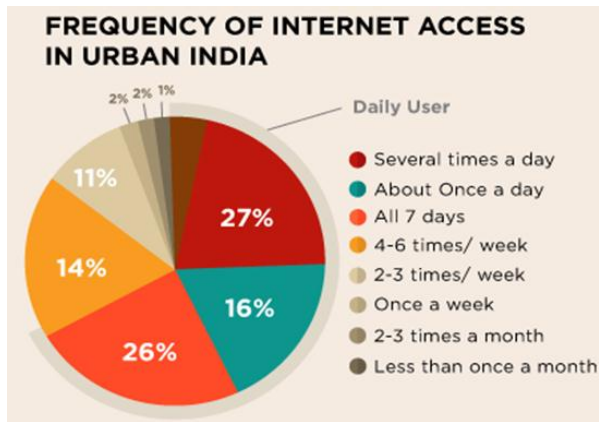


Fig 7: IMRB International, IAMAI

- Over all, Twitter accounts for only 17% of Indian Social Network users.
- Most active users on LinkedIn India are of age group 24-35, which means that only some students of higher education like to use LinkedIn.
- Top 5 countries posting on LinkedIn are USA, India, Japan, UK & Brazil.
- Every second 2 members join LinkedIn.
- After Facebook and Twitter, Pinterest is 3rd most popular social network in India.
- 52% of Indian instant messaging users are on WhatsApps, 5<sup>th</sup> most downloaded application in the world.

### Impact of Social Network on Student Education

- **Positive Effects:** Consider the following positive influences of social networking technologies on Indian education:
- **Socializing:** An important part of growing up, is to socialize and make friends. Why this is important? It is because, it allows the children to exchange ideas and learn new things. The more they interact, the more they learn. This will invariably result in them becoming more confident in life.
- **Sharing knowledge:** It provides an easy and an effective way in which students can share knowledge. Online data is available to all (unless the restrictions are put against them from the ones who share). Students can easily access the data, learn, modify (if needed) and share. Hence, the flow of knowledge becomes smooth.
- **Updating oneself:** What better way can students know about what is happening around the world if not for social networking technologies? They will be able to know new things as and when it happens. This helps them update their own knowledge base.
- **Learning from various sources:** The social networking technologies are built in such a manner that students will be able to choose the group, activity or the person they would want to follow for daily updates. If students were to follow an education site, or an educator, or an institute they may want to go to for higher studies, or a technology they want to keep a tab on; all these and more can be done via social networking technologies. The ways of learning is plenty.
- **Being prepared:** The social networking technologies are

all about showcasing the trends that run around the world. Students can get an idea of what might be expected out of them in the future by observing the changes that are being updated, shared, discussed or spoken about on the social networking sites.

- **Sharing what they feel or think:** Students often don't get the right platform to share their thoughts or their feeling. Through social networking technologies they are given an option to sound their thoughts. If students are allowed to share what they think and feel, it becomes easy for them to decide what is good and what is bad. They tend to become better at judging things.
- **Development of creativity:** The ease and speed with which users can upload pictures, videos or stories has resulted in a greater amount of sharing creative works. Being able to get instant feedback from friends and family on their creative outlets helps students refine and develop their artistic abilities and can provide much needed confidence and help them decide what career path they may pursue.
- **College Admission:** Students get updated information about the admission process, date, time, and other requirements from different social media sites.

### Negative Effects

- **Distraction:** The first concern about the negative effect comes to mind is the kind of distraction to the students present in the class. As teachers were not able to recognize who is paying attention in the classroom.
- **Inappropriate information:** In some of the scenario there were many in appropriate information posted which may lead the students to the wrong side.
- **Reduced focus:** Many students rely on the accessibility of information on social media specifically and the web in general to provide answers. That means a reduced focus on learning and retaining information.
- **Poor academic performance:** Students who attempt to multi-task, checking social media sites while studying, show reduced academic performance. Their ability to concentrate on the task at hand is significantly reduced by the distractions that are brought about by YouTube, Facebook or Twitter, etc.
- **Lack of use of proper spelling and grammar:** The popularity of social media, and the speed at which information is published, has created a lax attitude towards proper spelling and grammar. It reduces student's ability to effectively write without relying on a computer's spell check feature.

### Impact of Social Media in Other Spheres

#### Positive Effects

- **Business:** Social networking teaches students skills they'll need to survive in the business world. Being able to create and maintain connections to many people in many industries is an integral part of developing a career or building a business.
- **Familiarity with the Electronic Devices:** By spending so much time working with new technologies, students develop more familiarity with computers and other electronic devices. With the increased focus on technology in education and business, this will help students build skills that will aid them throughout their lives.

- **Connectivity:** The first and main advantage of the social media is connectivity. People from anywhere can connect with anyone. Regardless of the location and religion. The beauty of social media is that you can connect with anyone to learn and share your thoughts.
- **Help:** You can share your issues with the community to get help and guidance. Whether it is helping in term of money or in term of advice, you can get it from the community you are connected with.
- **Information and Updates**– The main advantage of the social media is that you update yourself from the latest happenings around in the world. Most of the time, Television and print media these days are biased and does not convey the true message. With the help of social media you can get the facts and true information by doing some research.
- **Noble Cause:** Social media can also be used for the noble causes. For example, to promote an NGO, social welfare activities and donations for the needy people. People are using social media for donation for needy people and it can be a quick way to help such people.
- **Awareness:** Social media also create awareness and innovate the way people live. It is the social media which has helped people discover new and innovative stuffs that can enhance personal lives. From farmers to teachers, students to lawyers every individual of the society can benefit from the social media and its awareness factor.
- **Seeking Job:** Students get updated information about the different jobs. They get information about the recruitment process, date, time, and other requirements of both Government and private jobs from different social media sites.

### Negative Effects

- **Lack of face-to-face communication:** Because of social media students lose their ability to engage themselves for face to face communication.
- **Time Wastage:** Students, while searching and studying online, get attracted to using social media sites and sometimes they forget why they are using internet. This wastes their time and sometimes students are not able to deliver their work in the specified time frame.
- **Loss of Motivation:** The student's motivational level reduces due to the use of these social networking sites. They rely on the virtual environment instead of gaining practical knowledge from the real world.
- **Cyberbullying:** According to a report published by PewCenter.org most of the children have become victims of the cyber bullying over the past. Since anyone can create a fake account and do anything without being traced, it has become quite easy for anyone to bully on the Internet. Threats, intimidation messages and rumors can be sent to the masses to create discomfort and chaos in the society.
- **Hacking:** Personal data and privacy can easily be hacked and shared on the Internet. Which can make financial losses and loss to personal life. Similarly, identity theft is another issue that can give financial losses to anyone by hacking their personal accounts. Several personal twitter and Facebook accounts have been hacked in the past and the hacker had posted materials that have affected the individuals' personal lives. This is one of the dangerous disadvantages of the social media and every user is advised

to keep their personal data and accounts safe to avoid such accidents.

- **Addiction:** The addictive part of the social media is very bad and can disturb personal lives as well. The teenagers are the most affected by the addiction of the social media. They get involved very extensively and are eventually cut off from the society. It can also waste individual time that could have been utilized by productive tasks and activities.
- **Fraud and Scams:** Several examples are available where individuals have scammed and commit fraud through the social media. For example, this list contains the 5 social media scams that are done all the time.
- **Security Issues:** Now a day's security agencies have access to people personal accounts. Which makes the privacy almost compromised. You never know when you are visited by any investigation officer regarding any issue that you mistakenly or unknowingly discussed over the internet.
- **Reputation:** Social media can easily ruin someone's reputation just by creating a false story and spreading across the social media. Similarly businesses can also suffer losses due to bad reputation being conveyed over the social media.
- **Health Issues:** The excess usage of social media can also have a negative impact on the health. Since exercise is the key to lose weight, most of the people get lazy because of the excessive use of social networking sites which in result brings disorder in the routine life. This research by discovery will shock you by showing how bad your health can be affected by the use of the social media.
- **Glamorizes Bad Habits:** One of the disadvantages of the social media is that people start to follow others who are wealthy or drug addicted and share their views and videos on the web, which eventually inspires others to follow the same and get addicted to the drugs and alcohol.
- **Virtual World:** Using many social media sites, most of students waste their time and they remain in the virtual world. It is seen that a student may have thousand number of friends in the social media, but in reality, he/she has only his/her parents to help him/her in any difficult situation.

### Conclusion

From this study it is evident that social media has both good and bad effects in student life. It is our responsibility to aware our students about the negative impacts of social media. This is a challenging task. How can parents mitigate the negative aspects of social media while improving upon the positive results? Moderating their access to social media is one excellent method. Most of the negative aspects can be overcome by reducing the amount of time spent on social network sites. Provide ample time for face-to-face social interaction, like having some family leisure time in which you discuss their studies in a relaxed atmosphere or inviting friends and family over for cookouts or go for a family trip, where all the family members including the children can spend some quality time with each other. Paying attention to their academic progress and addressing any issues will go a long way towards keeping the negative aspects of social media from influencing their studies. So, too, will providing fun, face-to-face social interaction with loved ones.

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