

UPBEAT AND DOWNBEAT EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN SOCIETY: A CRITICAL REVIEW

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Abstract *Social media facilitates a platform to share knowledge beyond geographical boundaries which update individuals with current trends and affairs as well as provides an opportunity to reconnect with old friends. Social media is of great use for job opportunities and growth. It also has the power to bring political transform and give acceleration to social movements and mobilise people. However technology is double-edged. Social media can be beneficial as well as harmful for the generation depending upon the way of using it. Along with creating slit in the family, addictedness to various social networking sites may negatively impact mind and also aggravate many health problems like problematic internet use (PIU) and depression. The prospect of social media appears very much promising but still there is a strong need to deal with the problems associated with it like data privacy, false information, cyber bullying, cyber stalking, sexting, hacking, and copyright issues.*

Keywords: *Social Media, Upbeat and Downbeat Effects, Society, Critical Review*

INTRODUCTION

Greatest invention like social media has been fueled by need of speedy communication through technology (Sinha et al., 2016). Social media was created by taking basic notion that how people can communicate with each other. It is making the world more open and also providing power to share and get connected with each other. It is almost impossible to reject and hide from this new form of media. Social media is termed as web based services that provides various ways by which a person can create personal profile with the freedom of selecting their followers and group members and thus join them on public platform that offers its users various services like blogging, chatting, sharing content, posting comments, video calling, sharing groups for discussions, and updating with latest news (Khurana, 2015). Tarek and Yasmin (2015) have classified social media users in two broad categories i.e. Digital natives and Digital immigrants. People born after the 1980s, the period when social media was in existence are called as Digital natives. Digital immigrants are those people who were born when the digital media do not exist i.e. before the 1980s and they have to adapt their lives with social media.

According to Jain (2013), during the 2008 young Indian people mostly visited the social network sites like MySpace and Facebook. At that time, there were about 800 million social networking sites' users in India. In the 2010, around 350 million people were found using Facebook. The number

of social network sites users is increasing day by day in India. In the 2012, users' number crossed 1800 million having their account in networking sites. Teenagers are the major parts of users in India. About 90 percent of teens access a social networking site on a regular basis. Facebook has nearly one billion users worldwide including more than 90 percent of college students (Smith, 2012; Junco, 2011).

Social networking websites like Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, Myspace, LinkedIn, Youtube, Hike, Viber, etc are becoming more trendy and has become part of daily life because of their effective, low cost and speedy features (Sinha et al., 2016).

Kettle et al. (2016) explored in their survey that about 60 percent of teens were spending their time on social networking sites for more than four hours per day. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Spotify were found most trendy as a frequently visited online platform. Students spend more time on social networking sites for social purpose rather than educational. However, students were less engaged on civic and political content through social media. Only 23 percent of students view the current affairs or news programme through social media on a regular basis. Majority of respondents (96 percent) were using social media for instant messaging and 76.15 percent of respondents were using social media to watch music videos/ films/YouTube videos.

Raymond (2019) surveyed 484 social media users and found that they use at least four social networking sites per day;

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including Messenger, Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube mostly. Majority of respondents (82.64 percent) like to share their own content on social platforms and 74.38 percent of users are fond of communicating with other persons by giving a like, subscribing, writing a comment on post, and chatting. However, habituation of social networking sites has both positive as well as negative effects on the individuals depending upon the conditions, as there are so many destructive ways which an individual can use to devalue a person, group or institution (Kulandairaj, 2014).

Due to the ease of internet access, the number of social media users in India stood at 518 million in 2020. Furthermore, the social network users in India are expected to be almost 1.5 billion in 2040. In 2020, out of the total population more than 50% of Indian people were having access to social networking sites. As of February, 2021, messaging app Whatsapp was having highest users (530 million) across the India. Second highest used social networking site was Youtube, and Facebook was ranking third (Keelery, 2021).

Jacinto et al. (2021) stated that it is in the hand of the students that they want to use social media platform in productive way or destructive way. Alam and Aktar (2021) highlighted the need to maintain balance between students' social networking usage and academic activities to prevent academic setback. Excessive use of social networking sites can become an unremitting cycle as showed in Fig. 1.

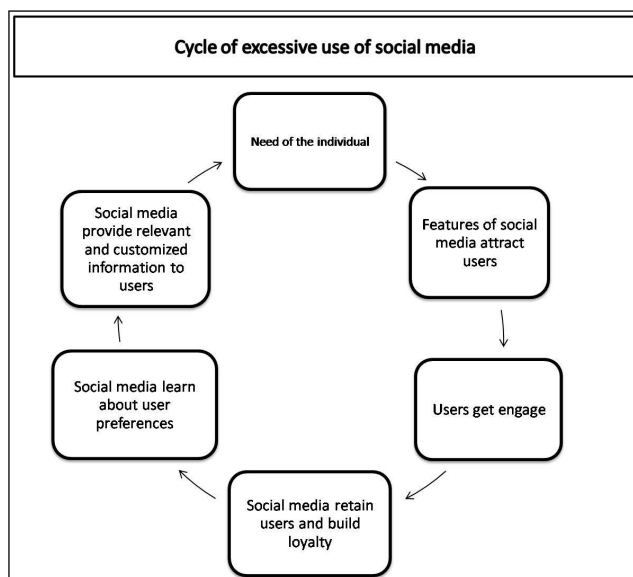


Fig. 1: Cycle of Excessive Use of Social Media

THEORETICAL ASPECT ON ADDICTION TO SOCIAL NETWORKS

According to dynamic psychology theory, social networking addiction is rooted in emotional deprivation in childhood, psychosocial status and personality traits. According to social control theory, addiction differs on the basis of age, gender,

economic status, and nationality. Certain groups show more addiction in comparison to other groups (Sadock & Sadock, 2011). Behavioral perspective believes that addiction to social networks increase for rewards such as entertainment and escaping from reality (Young & Rogers, 1998). According to the cognitive theoretical perspective, social networking addiction is due to the tendency to escape from internal and external problems (Alavi & Jannatifard, 2011).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Technology is always evolving and the social media has become a daily routine for most of the individuals as surveys depicted. People are becoming dependent upon social media for enormous educational, social, employment purposes. Although social media is of great use but overdose of anything can impose harmful effects upon the individuals. Specifically during COVID-19, use of social media has been increased among the non-users also as a compulsion of work from home. The entertainment as well as job obligations have been limited to various social networking websites during pandemic time. Therefore it becomes imperative to study the positive as well as negative effects of social media on individual as this is 'new normal' to use it for even long hours. Although there are researches on analyzing the effects of social media yet there is a gap in the knowledge regarding recent social media usage statistics and critical review of various researches conducted to compare upbeat and downbeat effects of social media in contemporary society. This study contributes to existing literature by adding some recent social media use statistics and critical review of various researches on effect of social media. It specifically adds insight about cycle of excessive use of social media.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aims to provide some recent social media usage statistics in India and conduct critical review of various researches regarding positive and negative effects of social media in contemporary society. This study also aims to represent cycle of excessive use of social media.

METHODS

In the present study, situational analysis was done to explore positive and negative sides of social media in contemporary society. Various researches on effects of social media were collected for this purpose. After that situational analysis was done on the basis of facts found in different researches. Situational analysis is the fundamental step in the process of social and behaviour change process. It is a systematic collection of data and findings of researches in order to understand the research problem to be addressed. This method is used to analyse the current status of the problem in different contexts and help in establishing a vision for

the problem. On the basis of this, recommendations and guidelines can be provided to individuals and stakeholders to look into situation and take necessary actions. In the present study a systematic situational analysis framework has been used as showed in Fig. 2.

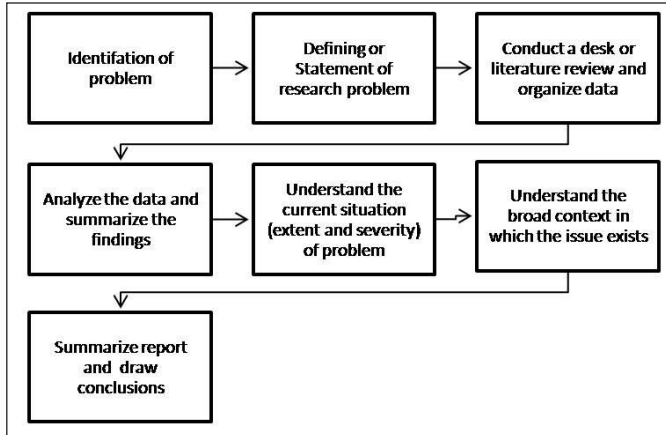


Fig. 2: Situational Analysis Framework Used in the Study

REVIEW OF RESEARCHES RELATED TO EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Positive Effects of Social Media

Various researches have highlighted that the social media usage produces constructive effects on society. Social media is believed to provide a platform that permits its users to share their views towards any issue and allow them to communicate together by making, editing and sharing the audio, text, and visual content. Social networking sites lay emphasis on forming online groups with reference to similar activities or interest (Raut & Patil, 2016; Pardo, 2013).

Useful in Education: From educational purpose social media has made the world within reach. A person can get knowledge about other regions, cultures and places at a faster pace due to social media. Nowadays people have more awareness, more information and have better ways to utilize it. Educators can easily coordinate and communicate with their students through social media (Bal & Bicen, 2017). Students nowadays have more easy and free access to online resources based on learning. According to Kirschner and Karpinski (2010), 46 percent of the adolescents having access to social media were more able to enrich and complete their class assignments. According to O'keeffe and Pearson (2011), using social media provides opportunities to students for enhancing their learning experiences. Social media facilitates a platform to share knowledge and creativity with each other as well as provides an opportunity to accomplish group projects (Ansari & Khan, 2020; Devi et al., 2019; Mardiana, 2016; Raut & Patil, 2016). Social networking is a

method to increase students' interest in learning (Jain, 2019; Rosen, 2011).

Closure of the educational institutions is a great challenge faced by the society due to the pandemic COVID-19. All the educational institutions ranging from schools and universities are making an effort to convert this threat into an opportunity by digitalizing the traditional teaching learning methods (Chaddha, 2020).

Social Benefits: Social networking sites give an opportunity to reconnect with old friends, distant relatives and colleagues. On the other side it also facilitates individuals to make new friends and get connected to them. One more strong point of using social media is that it also assists in sharing content and knowledge beyond geographical boundaries. Besides this, awareness among the communities can be spread on large level through advertisements, social media campaigns, online courses and training, webinars, and promotions which update the individuals with current trends and affairs (Siddiqui & Singh, 2016; Chau, 2010).

Speedy Communication: Beres and Strickland (2011) found in their research that social networking sites provide the opportunity to interact in a quick and structured way at a very reasonable cost. Even word media, voice media, and visual media take just 20 seconds to write an update on Twitter. Social media enables transfer of information at a faster speed as compared to any other type of media (Alam & Aktar, 2021; Jothi et al., 2011). About half of the population gets to know about breaking news through social networking sites.

In Touch with the World: Sinha et al. (2016) stated that social media permits everybody to interact in a simple and efficient way at anytime and from any place in the world. A person can assess and update any message and news within few seconds. By using social media it is very easy to be updated about what is happening in the world. Every individual is same apart from any demographic change in terms of social networks.

Beneficial in Politics: Beres and Strickland (2011) found that voting preference can be influenced by the social media. Nowadays there is a trend of virtual rally, advertisements, publicity stunts and election campaigns for voting that affects the decision of the voter. It is more likely to see that members belonging to a social media group are more likely to vote to the same candidate. Social media also has the power to bring political transform. Social media is a cheap and quick method of disseminating information, give acceleration to social movements and mobilise people (Calderaro, 2018; Baker, 2009).

Job Opportunities: Social media is of great use for unemployed persons to find job and for employers to recruit employee. It is widely used for connecting, advertising, and to start business. According to Beres and Strickland (2011),

89 percent of job recruiters have been employed through LinkedIn, 26 percent through Facebook, and 15 percent by Twitter. Social media sites have generated various work opportunities and new avenues of earnings (Amin et al., 2019; Rajeswari, 2017).

Growth in Business: Marketing is very essential to increase the popularity and sell of the product among target group. Nowadays social media has become a medium to target audience group online. Many organisations endorse their product by putting advertisement on the social media. Sites like LinkedIn assist in growth of trade through linking with the professionals who can suggest strategic plans. Social media is also used by the HRs to showcase their culture of company and workers' benefits to outer world. Furthermore, it is also useful in increasing brand awareness and product awareness and reaching customers with little to no cost (Ahmed & Saeed, 2021; Radhakrishnan, et al., 2019; Singh & Sinha, 2017; Siddiqui & Singh, 2016).

Negative Effects of Social Media

As the time passing some negative influences can also be seen due to widespread social media usage in contemporary society. Unfortunately people have become addicted to various social networking sites. The students spend long hours for visiting sites other than educational purpose which negatively impact their mind and also aggravate many health problems as well as creating slit in the family.

Detrimental to Health: The major negative influence of social media is addiction (Ostic et al., 2021). Social networking addiction is classified as a form of cyber-relationship addiction (Can & Kaya, 2016). Increasing case of problematic internet use (PIU) among adolescents and young adults is an emerging health issue for health experts. Multiple health issues like poor eyesight, back pain, neck pain, and headache may occur because of persistent use of social networking sites for long hours (Saini, 2019; Raut & Patil, 2016). Young and Kimberly (1998) found that overuse of the Internet can lead to a mental disorder called pathological Internet use - PIU. Besides this, most of the young generation is getting obsessed with social media and taking excessive interest in admiration of themselves. Parvathy and Suchithra (2015) revealed that the dependence on internet is reducing students' natural learning capabilities. The extreme use of social media is also harmfully impacting physical health due to lack of physical activeness. Online aggression and depression is also a major problem caused by social media (Karim et al., 2020; Pantic, 2014).

Security/Privacy Issues: Data privacy is a primary issue in contemporary digital information era. Due to the ignorance for privacy options available in setting like how to set a strong password, users are becoming more vulnerable to crime (Lad, 2017; Kumar et al., 2016; Sreeja & Jithin 2015).

Various sites store lots of users' information in database. Cyber criminal may steal this information for their use. Even social media permit groups to distribute propaganda among people. Unauthorised sharing and copyright violation intimidate intellectual property rights and can cause income loss for the original author of the content. O'Keeffe and Pearson (2011) believed that social media is misused for accessing inappropriate content, online harassment, cyber bullying, cyber stalking, cyber crimes, kidnapping, sexting (texting sexual content). Beres and Strickland (2011) found that 88 percent of "private" bold pictures posted by the individuals on social media are stolen and publicly posted on some sites without their consent. Social media is a medium through which various cyber criminals conducted security attacks like virus attack in the device and hacking personal information like login id and passwords for various financial apps. However, Alsharabi and Ghaleb (2013) stated that privacy granted by social networks is being negatively used by some people to tease others therefore, it should privacy granted should be limited and made public.

Unreal Friendship: Although social media helps in making lots of friends yet the quality and integrity of friendship cannot be authenticated. Moreover, information about individual shared on social media is not always real, valid and trustworthy, As social media do not verify such personal details like age, location etc (Cocking & Matthews, 2000; Lenhart, 2015).

Detrimental to Education: Addiction to social media can have an unconstructive effect on other valuable tasks such as focusing on studies, active participation in games, real-life communication and pay attention to realities. YouTube, Facebook and Twitter have significantly reduced the students' ability to focus on the task (Lad, 2017; Raut & Patil, 2016). Paul et al. (2012) found a significant negative relationship between academic performance and time spent on social networking by students. It enables unfair means of copying others' content while doing class assignments and assessments. However, grades of light users are improving by using social media but grades of heavy users are suffering due to the overdose of the social media. Many writers post wrong content on the social sites that guide the education system to letdown.

During pandemic period when educational institutes have adopted online education methods, there are some challenges which have been faced by educational sector personnel that needs to be addressed by the policy makers like developing e-course module, selecting online format for testing and evaluation and performing extra-curricular activities online (Chaddha, 2020).

Negative Impact on Employment/Business: Technology has become a prominent medium of communication in the workplace. People have been found lacking in soft skills

to communicate effectively with colleagues specifically difficult ones (Mohanty, 2019). Social networking sites may diminish workers' productivity as it can divert their attention. Beres and Strickland (2011) found that 51 percent of respondent between the age group of 25-34 reported that they usually check their social media profile at work. Social media can be risky for any business or organisation as people are allowed to post negative comments about organisation and it can lead the organisation to collapse. Sometimes hackers attack organisation through these social networking sites (Lad, 2017; Siddiqui & Singh, 2016).

Social Detriments: Some researchers are also of the view that besides connecting people, social media is also becoming a reason for social isolation. Nowadays people like to spend more time on social media rather than with family and neighborhood. Social media lack in features of face to face communication like body language and nonverbal cues, such as tone and inflection (Ostic et al., 2021). Yang et al. (2021) found in their research that intensity of social media usage had no significant influence on participants' personal relationship and job performance. However, extraversion and openness have a significant influence on personal relationship and job performance.

Beres and Strickland (2011) stated that people who are the victim of cyber bullying often get emotionally disturb and may hurt themselves. Excessive use of social media is correlated with psycho emotional problems like ADHD, depression, aggression, anxiety and loneliness and poor social skills. Today, some terrorist groups are using social media to influencing and utilizing youth into their purpose (Amer, 2018; Rosen, 2011).

Misinformation: Many rumors and false information is spread through social media network. Nowadays there is a recent trend of spreading advices regarding health issues, their treatment and management by many individuals without any sound medical ground and following these without diagnosis of specific cause and underlying condition may be injurious to health and even life threatening (Brown, 2020; Escalante, 2020; Kumar & Shah 2018; Ordway, 2017).

A Waste of Time: According to Beres and Strickland (2011), many pop up messages distract the users as it take about 20 to 25 minutes on an average to resume their work after reading a post or tweet (Park et al., 2017).

Reduces Command Over Language: Students' language and writing skills are getting poor day by day as they most of the times use jargon words or short forms of words and rely on the spelling and grammar check option. However, this practice decreases their command over the language and grammar (Jain, 2013).

CONCLUSION

Technology is double-edged. Social media can be beneficial as well as harmful on the generation depending upon the way of using it. Social media is rapid rising and prevailing way to share opinions, information, connect people across different regions and cultures. Although social media is giving voices to those who were unheard before yet the privilege of expressing opinion about anyone at any time can create lots of trouble for individuals. The power of social media can be imagined by its continuously increasing number of users. But the social media has a dark side as well. It would be correct to say "we expect more from technology and less from each other. Internet connects but it doesn't touch. We may be free to work from anywhere, but we are also prone to being lonely everywhere." One way of minimising the negative effects of social media can be lessen the hours spending on it.

Social media has been found very useful for spreading knowledge without geographical boundaries, to connect with distant friends and family members, speedy communication, and a medium for job opportunities and growth. However social media has been found detrimental to physical, psycho-emotional health, education, and business by providing misleading information. Therefore, the people must be aware about negative sides of the social media and corrective as well as preventive measures should be taken to avoid possible harms of social media. The prospect of social media appears very much promising but still there is a strong need to deal with the problems associated with it.

Implications of the Study: This study is useful for each and every social media user. This study is helpful in providing awareness about the positive and negative effects of the social media usage, so that one will be motivated to carry on with positive aspects as well as be aware about the negative aspects to avoid any pitfall. This study also highlights some privacy and security issue with which social media platforms need to deal with.

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