

Review Article

Social Media and Adolescent Psyche

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A B S T R A C T

Social media has become a very influential medium for information and marketing activities. It transcended the spatial boundaries throwing the limits and constraints into bits and has trapped the whole world into its web through the lucrative and prolific functions, it offers to its users. Interacting with people and posting limitless new ideas and opinions on social media has increased creativity and social responsibility but has also hurled users into a life of mental fury, restlessness, and social isolation. The speed of providing information at the earliest, and providing a bunch of entertainment through various platforms has affected the mental health of teenagers badly. Dissemination of knowledge, information, and entertainment, in the blink of time, has posed a big threat to adolescent psychology. This approach of intercultural adaptation, not as per the level of citizens but its easy access has speeded up the process of isolation and has increased various health issues in our present Generation Z who are easy prey to this technological growth. Kids tend to think that it's their way of living. Mixing reels with real, cyberbullying, MMS, online abuse, nudity, adult content, crime, and drugs, are now very easily accessible to children, and the increasing data confirms it as the outcome of internet culture hurling them in deteriorated mental health, making teenagers suffer from school anxiety, depression, panic attack sleeplessness, childhood fears, persistent sadness and above all the overpowering feeling of loneliness.

This paper states how the excessive use of the internet and social media badly damages the mental health of a teenager whose brain is passing through a highly sensitive period between the ages of 10 to 19, a perfect time when identities and feelings of self-worth are forming.

Keywords: Bedroom Culture, Adolescent Psychiatry, Cyberbullying, Isolation, Technological Growth, Panic Attacks

Introduction

Internet culture, no doubt has extended with us a huge horizon to fly and find out the different ways of awareness, creativity, sharing ideas and opinions, enhancing cultural adaptations with different people, crossing all the boundaries of time and space, and its offsprings - social

media and other social sites, no doubt has provided all groups with a platform, where they can grow up a virtual world. It enables teens particularly, to communicate with their friends, family, and peers in other parts of the world. They are making a network that can provide peers with a sense of community and belonging, thus effectively addressing feelings of loneliness and isolation.

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They also have great ways in which they provide a variety of information dealing with education, entertainment, news, and current events. Credible sources, educational resources, online tutorials, and such kinds of documents are accessed easily by teens under the education platform. Learning is more engaging and accessible.

Social media is an avenue for these teens to offer what they think, share themselves, and show their creative side. Be it through photography, writing, or art, social media provides an avenue through which an individual can reach out and share their idiosyncratic views and talents with the whole wide world.

Networking for this age group has given a teenager a sizeable resource base that involves a host of connections to professionals in their area of interest. Social media has been a medium through which many companies and organisations reach out to acquire talented personnel, thereby easing the effort of locating job opportunities or internships for teenagers.

It enabled teens to bring awareness of social and environmental issues, organise support to advocate for the causes they believe in, and join other people with whom they share the same passions. It assists in raising empathy and compassion.

It has provided us with a chance to meet the world, to mix reel with the real, which works as an imagination booster to such a height that sometimes the lines of right and wrong become very thin, which a result bruises adolescents' minds very badly. Most prominently, teenagers have multifarious things that confuse them and knowingly or unknowingly step out in the way of darkness and obscenity. The rude and horrible material is so easily accessible to all young minds that hurls them into an unending journey of darkness.

Keeping in mind the tenderness or the different crucial mental stages adolescents or teenagers sometimes are lost in the labyrinths of moral and immoral or right and wrong. The positive impact of social media and the internet culture outweighs the negative impacts, but we all know that just a drop of lemon can curdle litres and litres of milk. So, through this paper, we'd like to discuss how social media, is ruining the mental health of our teenagers in general and what the different precautions a parent has to keep in mind to address them from internet addiction or help them dilute the negative impressions from their tender minds.

The harms of social media on children's brains are posing an alarm with the pedagogical hackers and internet trolls, identity theft, various scams, and various viruses and worms that are disguised by different hackers and different scammers, and types of virtual kidnappers, a term elaborating – cyber hacking of minds, feelings, thoughts or the reasoning, both the qualitative and quantitative

capabilities. This sequestration of intellect or brain hacking is becoming not only very dangerous but also poisonous for the present-generation children who are going to inherit the legacy of our future.¹⁻⁴

It is very disheartening that the inheritance of our rich culture from our forefathers is now there in the background and the present social media or the internet culture is in the foreground, which social media is diminishing due to its negative impacts. The excessive use of the internet is responsible for various problems not only physical but mainly mental which is an alarming sign for the generations to come.

The increasing number of children suffering from mental illness or diseases or the different psychiatric problems that teenagers are facing engulfing them rapidly, keeping aside all the several positive aspects of social media.

Easy Access to an Endless Stuff

These social media platforms - YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and many more are used by a giant community of people who easily use and access them through the internet without much effort. People are sharing whatever they want, without considering the feelings of others or hurting them even without realising it. Sometimes things turn intolerable, sometimes things are very nasty, and sometimes just hurt the sentiments and emotions of lots of people by sharing their perspectives and ideas about politics, religion, social rights, culture, etc. However, the truth about humans is that, we believe in empathy, we believe in love, we believe in peace, we believe in togetherness, we believe in sharing, we believe in caring, and we believe in the whole universe. So these humanitarian qualities or feelings of love, empathy, and togetherness are being challenged in the name of expression through social platforms, hurting the sentiments of people, openly sharing their opinions and all. Maybe, the intentions are fair, the intentions are just using their rights of expression but sometimes the words, despite creating the magic, create a hell or open a hell.

Many social networking sites are just working as a sort of poison and people are just getting virtual friends and relationships, and they are giving importance to virtual relations over real relations and they prefer to sit all day on the phones and computers and just chat and sharing even the very vulgar and obscene pictures. The unnecessary information shared by people fake news, or sexting to their friends that have flooded to market, and the brutal and negative comments that are posted on the sites every day, keep aside all the social and sentimental aspects of the people all over the world. This is now known that the children are throwing away all the sanctity of the family prestige and just misusing the internet culture or the social

platform for ulterior motives, making their parents worried about the hurling on the verge of panic.

We all know that there's no doubt that the internet and social media are very powerful instruments for the mobilisation of a rich universal culture rather, but keeping aside all the technological imperatives, it is giving birth to new problems every day instead of giving relief through communication. The technology of gaming applications provides different challenges in present society. Traditional media is overtaken by social media and its tsunami is engulfing the innocent lives of millions. Many examples appeared in dailies where adolescents from India fell prey to these cybercrimes, lost all their money, and sometimes committed suicide.^{5,6}

Ancient scholars like Socrates warned years ago about the risks posed by the written text as a danger to relevant thinking and this transition this change from print media to digital media and its impact is very negative and deadly on the soft and tender minds of children once again quoting the perspective of Socrates this imposed infotainment is inhuman and is weakening the mind and is a big threat. A complete analysis based on various surveys searched from different resources shows how in this age of the internet adolescents are subjugated by time consumed on social media as well as its problematic use.

The internet has become a sort of virtual kidnappers using this term for capturing feelings and emotions, responsible for the mental fog, every second child is suffering from and is killing the curiosity – the intellect appetite by providing ready-made solutions to every work, even their home-assignments of schools too.

The Present: A Four-Walled Culture

The present world culture is known as Technology culture. This technology-prone culture is powerful enough to shape the actions and behaviour of teenagers specifically, which can lead to behavioural disorders if not monitored or controlled timely.

Internet culture is casting a drastic effect, transforming the life of the adolescent from physical to virtual, and in a way forcing our younger generations to confine themselves to their private room, thus promoting the four-walled culture, which means keeping the self in their bedrooms gaining information or being in touch with the outside world through the web. Through their devices, even small children are easily accessing the stuff they should be aware of after attaining maturity. In the name of knowledge and information, a huge world of harmful content is easily provided. Now a drastic change is noticeable in the supply of information which is now provided in the form of infotainment harmful than ever, like sugar-coated pills, which is deeply affecting tender minds. This confinement

into their narrow cell is keeping them away from all physical outdoor activities, they should do rather than sitting all alone which in turn leads to the problem of loneliness, aloofness resulting in isolation which has overpowered their soft minds and mental fog, and vagueness in perceptions which sometimes making them lost and oblivious.

Online communication has changed including slang language, new absurd rituals, and different obscene symbols overruling the old sacred rituals, displaying our rich cultural heritage.

The influence of social media or the digital world on our adolescents is highly significant in the way that it is even converting the lives of teenagers from physical to virtual. This bedroom culture represents the antithesis or the opposition to family togetherness, for example, family-centred television, has now been replaced by the aloofness of enjoying alone without the intervention of the family members is challenging the rich cultural heritage of bonding and togetherness. The growing percentage of children confining themselves to their own devices browsing online love is distorting and poisoning the whole atmosphere and even going out of parental control, giving impetus to children's diseases- anxiety, self-harm fits, traumatic expression, and even suicides are reported. Continuous indulgence in the internet world is promoting a feelingless, robotic society with a dead brain, lost independence, and a paralysed thought process, a psychically disordered persona.

Now teenagers have adopted new rituals and symbols which in turn are badly influencing their outer and inner identity. Mediated or formed through media, blind following results in distorted identity, which is the aftermath of communicating online, based on perception, no matter, whether the people they are interacting with are harmful or not, they are just crossing the boundaries defiantly making them move from originality to spurious life ultimately leading to mental health deterioration.

Sometimes due to the lack of time or undue work pressure or business and for earning a living, the parents overlook that their children are getting enough space to be alone in their room, gradually this space is filled with unknown interactions, freedom is misused, by spending hours and hours in chatting and texting, browsing the reels, obnoxious content, adult stuff, various other contents too lucrative to ignore, without even realising the wastage of their precious study time on the technological devices have been given to them for enhancing their knowledge and strengthening their mental capability. This independence is misused to such an extent that they become easy prey for scammers and malcontent/ deceivers, which consequently affects their inner psyche resulting in diseases. The increasing number of traumatic parents, in constant unknown fear

of losing their family's dignity, are helpless against the increasing screen time as well as online chatting, and sexting of their wards.

Digital transformation is responsible for their deteriorated mental health, and split and bruised psyche, symptomatic of increasing graph of patients of depression like impatience, quivering hands, palpitation, impatience, changing reels within seconds, presenting zero tolerance, in children from 13 to 18 years of age.

Some cases have shown even deaths linked to suicide and self-harm displaying "cutting," partially losing consciousness or asphyxiation, easily getting addicted to the internet, gradually change subsequently suffering from abnormal behaviour.⁵ A very alarming issue is cyberbullying which is the root cause of the distressed psyche of teenagers responsible for their poor mental health. Distorted images, edited figures, nude photos, vulgar statements, obnoxious stuff, and obscene language are the multiple responsible factors. This cyberbullying turning into emotional bullying-obscenity is rapidly cropping up is, definitely the outcome of this social media which in turn makes our younger generation mentally bruised.^{7,8}

Eating disorders are common findings in teenagers. They are commonly found having their foods continuously browsing on their devices, which leads to different physical disorders. They become lost in a virtual world without even realising harmful results. This excessive use is making them disconnected from this world even from the food, which is a very alarming issue for adolescent health.

This exposure to social media sometimes over-stimulates their brain power to focus or centralise and sometimes this overstimulation is so high that triggers some sort of addiction may be drugs, mean language, obscenity, abnormal behaviour, sleep disorder even insomnia leading to a distorted sense of self, exclusion, and lost attention. Social media overpowering the minds of teenagers - the Pew Research Center has reported up to an increase of 95% in teenagers surveyed (ages 13 to 17) lost in the virtual world of social media, nearly all of them use it "almost constantly." It has also been reported by the PEW Research Centre that the most common users of social media platforms (or "apps") are teenagers, almost —9 out of 10 between the ages of 13 to 17—are lost in the fancies of YouTube, TikTok, Snapchat, and Instagram, separating them from human touch.⁹

Social Media's Impact on Mental Health and Other Health Effects

Preliminary findings suggest a significant correlation between high social media usage and increased levels of anxiety and depression. The increasing numbers of Teenagers, with persistent complaints of feelings of Fear

of Missing Out (FOMO) and inadequacy stemming from social media comparisons. Keeping aside its benefits, the internet also poses risks to adolescent mental health.¹⁰⁻¹³

Generally, children and adolescents spend much of their lifetime online, at the distance of apps and gadgets, especially in educational settings such as at times in schools. But when compared to beneficial social media use, relatives, or family members might be at risk from this excessive use. Some issues related to uses at different hours: it is now becoming too dependent on technology outside its utility use.

Further, constant interaction on social media is quite a known mark or an early sign of stress, bad experiences, and negative feelings at school and even in life at large. However, excess intrusion may jeopardise research into and availability of possible outcomes from the use of social media. Brashness or unyielding use by many access portals in real-life affairs usually could translate dramatically into obtrusions-like phenomena in real life without loss of meaning to geographical space or time.

Those teens and tweens spend a higher percentage of their time using digital multimedia. Unfortunately, social media was found to have numerous effects, including weight problems ranging from overweightness and becoming obese later in life, and bad oral health, including an increase in dental caries and poor eating habits. Picture links between photography and learning characteristics pose immediate dangers to physical health through symptoms of developing obesity and other kinds of diseases associated with poor posture and a sedentary lifestyle.

They are likely to have problems connected with body image distortion and acceptance by other people, particularly in a growing number of adolescent girls with poorer self-esteem. They may seek the contents for rapid weight loss, and this may further extend anorexia disorders. The most familiar form of entertainment would be that offered through services such as ICT (Information, Communications Technology). Such popular media present significant risk factors to children and adolescents.

Time spent by children and teenagers using social media, which is mainly the activity or practice of using social media, puts them at risk for behavioural problems, cyberbullying, online grooming, sleep-related issues, vision problems (myopia, eye fatigue, blurriness-focused vision, dry eyes, irritation, burning, redness-associated conjunctival injection, and dry eye syndrome), and headaches. Several reports signal any kind of use that is not meant to be, which includes exchanges of sexually provoked messages, exposure to pornographic material, exposure to undesirable sexual material online, and early initiation of sexual experiences. Online, users of social media encounter more online risks

than peers do, with an increased risk for those more digitally competent.

Of course, even awareness about the issue at the public and medical levels must rise and new prevention measures have to be thought of, starting with health practitioners, caregivers, and, certainly, application developers. Families should educate themselves as to the dangers and the concerns surrounding having children and youth.

Conclusion

Social media dramatically influences adolescents' social interactions, self-viewing, and mental outlook. Although these platforms have many advantages, such as allowing them to interact with more people, bringing out more creativity, and getting an education, they are not without disadvantages, such as mental concerns, body image issues, and poor academic focus.

For social media not to turn out to be a negative influence on the lives of teenagers, then it is very important to equip them with proper knowledge and skills that will enable them to use the sites responsibly. The responsibility falls on the parents, teachers, and mental care professionals to encourage such behaviour in adolescents that discourages excessive social media use and digital substance abuse and focuses on emotional health. By making efforts in advance, we can strengthen the positive effects of social media on teenagers and lessen its negative effects.

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