



Research Article

# Impact of Mobile Phone use on Marital Relationship and Family Life in a Selected Residential Area of Faridabad, Haryana

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## I N F O

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## A B S T R A C T

Mobile phone is the most dominant portal of information and communication technology. In the last few years, hand phones have become an integral part of our lives. The number of mobile cellular subscriptions is constantly increasing every year. Mobile phone addiction and withdrawal from mobile network may increase anger, tension, depression, irritability and restlessness which may alter psychological balance, interpersonal relationship and family life. Keeping this in mind a cross sectional study was conducted to assess the impact of mobile phone use on marital relationship and family life in a selected residential area of Faridabad. A quantitative research approach was adopted and the sample of the study comprises of 160 married persons from a selected residential area of Faridabad by non-probability convenience sampling technique. Smart phone addiction scale-small version (SAS-SV) was used to assess the mobile phone addiction among married couples and structured rating scales were used to assess the impact of mobile phone use on marital relationship and family life. The data gathered was analysed and interpreted using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings of the study revealed that a substantial number of married couples were addicted to mobile phone. It was found that there was significant relationship between the gender of the married couples and mobile phone addiction and mobile phone addiction and its impact on family life. Judicious use of mobile phone will help the couples to use their time and resources more productively.

**Keywords:** Married Couple, Mobile Phone use, Impact, Marital Relationship, Family Life

## Introduction

Mobile phones are powerful communication devices, first demonstrated by Motorola in 1973 and made commercially available from 1984.<sup>1</sup> In the last few years, mobile phones have become an integral part of our lives. People use their mobile phones for a wide variety of tasks ranging from

calling and texting to playing games, navigation and social networking. Online Social Networking Services (SNS) have gained rapid popularity in recent years. Social networking services are now more than mere websites. They provide their users with several ways to connect others including web, email and mobile applications. Many SNS vendors have introduced mobile applications that can be installed



on smartphones for fast and easy access to SNS. There are now over 3 billion people logging onto social media accounts around the world, mobile phone users make up a large chunk of the base, with 2.780 billion active users.<sup>2</sup>

In recent years, most of the global populations, use smartphones due to its wide range of applications. While beneficial in numerous ways, smartphones have disadvantages such as reduction in work efficacy, personal attention, social nuisance and psychological addiction. Physical and psychological problems have reportedly resulted from cell-phone overuse, including rigidity and muscle pain, computer vision syndrome, dry eyes and irritation, pain and weakness in the thumbs and wrists leading to an increased number of cases of de Quervain's tenosynovitis, auditory and tactile hallucinations-the sensation of having heard a ring or felt a vibration of a cell phone, sleep disturbances, insomnia, lower self-confidence, nomophobia (the fear of being without a cell phone) and mobile phone addiction disorders.<sup>3</sup> Kesari, et al. concluded that the mobile phone radiation may increase the reactive oxygen species, which plays an important role in the development of metabolic and neurodegenerative diseases.<sup>4</sup>

Addiction to smartphone usage is a common problem among adults worldwide. It manifests itself in the excessive usage of their phones, while engaged in other activities such as studying, driving, social gatherings and even sleeping.<sup>5</sup> However, many people fail to realize that addiction to smartphone usage is a serious issue that can have a negative effect on the person's thoughts, behaviour, tendencies, feelings and sense of well-being.<sup>6</sup> The signs of smartphone addiction are constantly checking the phone for no reason, feeling anxious or restless without the phone, waking up in the middle of the night to check the mobile and communication updates, delay in professional performance as a result of prolonged phone activities and distracted with smartphone applications.<sup>7</sup> In particular, it can be a risk factor for depression, loneliness, anxiety and sleep disturbances.<sup>8</sup>

Ignoring someone in favour of our mobile phone (phubbing) hurts our relationships. We may no longer even notice when we've been phubbed (or are phubbing), it has become such a normal part of life. We've all been there, as either victim or perpetrator. When we're staring at our phones, we're often connecting with someone on social media or through texting. Sometimes, we're flipping through our pictures the way we once turned the pages of photo albums, remembering moments with people we love. Unfortunately, however, this can severely disrupt our actual, present-moment, in-person relationships, which also tend to be our most important ones.<sup>9</sup>

British behavioural psychologist and relationship coach Jo Hemmings argues phubbing causes resentment between couples.<sup>10</sup> People report feeling neglected because of

their partner's phone or tablet obsession. She published in her 2017 report that these feelings of neglect often turn into a deeper-seated resentment, where arguments and a complete breakdown in communication becomes more likely.

In a study, titled, 'My life has become a major distraction from my cell phone', Roberts JA, David ME<sup>9</sup> suggest that phubbing can lead to a decline in one of the most important relationships we can have as an adult: the one with our life partner. According to their study of 145 adults, phubbing decreases marital satisfaction, in part because it leads to conflict over phone use. The scientists found that phubbing, by lowering marital satisfaction, affected a partner's depression and satisfaction with life.

A follow-up study by Chinese scientists assessed 243 married adults with similar results: Partner phubbing, because it was associated with lower marital satisfaction, contributed to greater feelings of depression.<sup>11</sup> When a conversation, meal or romantic moment is disrupted because of a text, email or any other task, the message is, "What I'm doing on my phone is more important than you right now," or "I'm more interested in my phone than in you," or in some cases, "you're not worthy of my attention." It is because the other person is likely to experience such moments as rejections that mobile phone addiction can literally impact their psychological health.<sup>12</sup>

It was evident that socio-psychological illness related to mobile phone addiction has already invaded in the population. There has been fewer awareness programs organized on mobile phone addiction and its related illness. There are number of studies focusing on impact of mobile phone addiction on physical health, psychological wellbeing and their manifestations on relationship, but the widespread effect of distorted family relationship due to mobile addiction make it necessary to study its impact on family relationships.

### Objectives of the Study

- To assess the occurrence of mobile phone addiction among married couples.
- To establish relationship between sex of the married couples and mobile phone addiction.
- To assess the impact of mobile phone use on marital relationship.
- To establish relationship between mobile phone addiction and impact on marital relationship.
- To assess the impact of mobile phone use on family life.
- To establish relationship between mobile phone addiction and impact on family life.

### Materials and Methods

A quantitative research approach and cross-sectional design was selected for the study. The setting for the study was Sector-29, Residential area, Faridabad. In the present study, 80 married couples (160 subjects), using mobile phones from

a selected residential area of Faridabad were selected by non-probability convenience sampling technique.

After obtaining ethical permission from the Institutional Ethical Committee of Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi to conduct the research study, a formal permission to conduct study was taken from the Secretary, RWA (Resident Welfare Association), Sector-29, Faridabad. A written informed consent was taken from each study subject. They were assured of anonymity and confidentiality of the information provided during the study. The final study was conducted in Sector-29, Residential area, Faridabad. The subjects comprised of 80 married couples (160 subjects) from selected study setting. The technique of data collection was Smart phone Addiction Scale-Small version (SAS-SV), a standardized tool to assess the mobile phone addiction among married couples and structured rating scales were used to assess the impact of mobile phone use on marital relationship and family life.

To ensure the validity of the rating scales, it was given to nine experts selected from the field of Nursing, Psychiatry, Psychology and Academics. The reliability of the rating scales to assess the impact of mobile phone use on marital relationship and family life was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha formula. The reliability was found to be 0.948 for rating scale to assess the impact of mobile use on marital relationship and for rating scale to assess the impact of mobile use on family life, the reliability was found to be 0.932.

The possible range of score for SAS-SV, was 60 and cut out point was 32/60. Interpretation of the Score was done as follows:

### Scores Category

- No mobile phone - Addiction 0-32
- Mild - Addiction 33-41
- Moderate - Addiction 42-50
- Severe - Addiction 51-60

The possible range of score for rating scale to assess the impact of mobile phone use on marital relationship was from 0-120. The interpretation of score was done as per the following as:

### Scores Category

- No impacts of mobile phone use on marital relationship: 91-120
- Mildly negative impacts of mobile phone use on marital relationship: 61-90
- Moderately negative impacts of mobile phone use on marital relationship: 31-60
- Severely negative impacts of mobile phone use on marital relationship: 0-30

The possible range of score for rating scale to assess the impact of mobile phone use on family life was from 0-120.

The interpretation of score was done as per the following as:

### Scores Category

- No impacts of mobile phone use on family life 91-120.
- Mild negative impacts of mobile phone use on family life 61-90
- Moderate Negative impacts of mobile phone use on family life 31-60
- Severe Negative impacts of mobile phone use on family life 0-30

Paper and pencil method were used to administer the tool. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis.

### Result

#### Section I: Findings Related to Background Data of Study Population

Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents by their demographic data were computed (Table 1).

**Table 1. Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents by their demographic characteristics**

(n=160)

Sample characteristics	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	80	50
Female	80	50
<b>Age (in years)</b>		
18-30	31	19.4
31-40	69	43.12
41-50	37	23.12
51-60	18	11.25
>60	5	3.13
<b>Religion</b>		
Hindu	68	42.5
Muslim	15	9.4
Christian	73	45.6
Sikh	4	2.5
Other	-	-
<b>Education</b>		
Undergraduate	33	20.6
Graduate	99	61.9
Post-graduate	28	17.5
Illiterate	-	-
<b>Type of family</b>		
Nuclear family	94	58.8
Joint family	66	41.3

Extended family	Nil	Nil
<b>Number of family members</b>		
1-3	34	21.3
4-6	117	73.1
7-9	7	4.4
10-12	2	1.3
<b>Number of children living in the house</b>		
None	22	13.8
One-Two	124	77.5
Three-four	14	8.8
Four and above	Nil	Nil
<b>Monthly family income (in Rupees)</b>		
<10000	2	1.3
10001- 25000	26	16.3
25001-40000	52	32.5
>40000	80	50.0
<b>Occupation</b>		
Working	121	75.63
Non-working	39	24.38
<b>Nature of job</b>		
Shift work	28	17.5
Regular day time	93	58.12
Non-working	39	24.38

The data presented in the Table 1, indicates that the study samples were equally distributed according to gender character as there were 80 male respondents and 80 female respondents and three fourth of samples, that is, 121 (75.63%) were working persons and 39 (24.38%) were non-working.

**Table 2. Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents by their mobile phone related data**

(n=160)

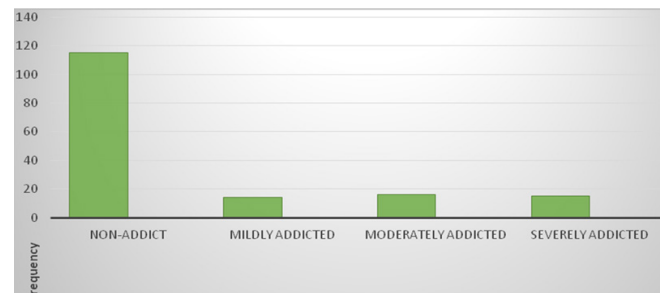
Variable	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Type of mobile phone</b>		
Simple feature phone	-	-
Android-Smart phone	160	100
<b>Main usage of mobile phone</b>		
Calling	103	64.4
Entertainment	17	10.63
Social media	40	25.0

The data presented in Table 2, describes, all subjects were using Android smart phone. And main usage of mobile phone was for calling for 103 (64.4%) subjects, for social

media for 40 (25%) subjects and for entertainment for 17 (10.63%) subjects.

## Section II: Findings Related to Occurrence of Smart Phone Addiction among the Married Couples

Frequency and percentage distribution of subjects according to their mobile phone addiction were computed (Figure 1).



**Figure 1. A bar-graph showing frequency distribution of subjects according to their mobile phone addiction**

**Table 3. Chi-square test to establish relationship between sex of the married couples and mobile phone addiction**

(n=160)

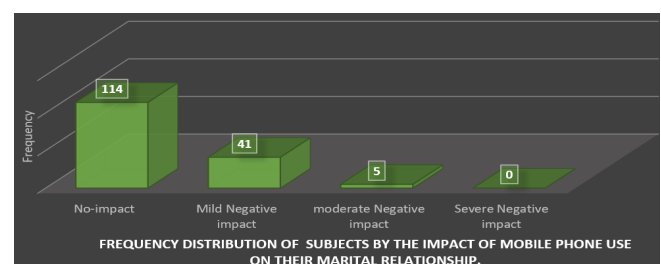
Sex	Mobile phone use		df	Chi-square value $\chi^2$	Table value $\chi^2 (1)$
	Non-addiction	Addiction			
Male	49	31	1	14.519*	6.635
Female	66	14			

\* $\chi^2 (1)$  at 0.01 level of significance = 6.635.

The data presented in Table 3, shows that there was statistically significant relationship between sex of the married couples and mobile phone addiction. It can be further inferred that male gender were found more addicted to mobile phone as compared to females.

## Section III: Findings Related to the Impact of Mobile Phone use on Marital Relationship

Frequency and percentage distribution of subjects by the impact of mobile phone use on their marital relationship were computed (Figure 2).



**Figure 2. A bar graph showing frequency distribution of subjects by the impact of mobile phone use on their marital relationship**

**Table 4. Chi-square test to establish relationship between mobile phone addiction and impact on marital relationship**

(n=160)

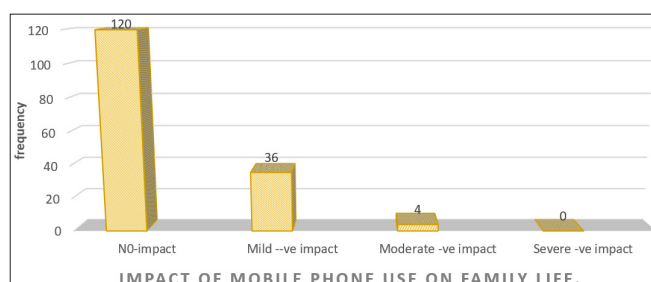
Mobile phone use	Impact on marital relationship		df	Chi-square value $\chi^2$	Table value $\chi^2(1)$
	No-impact	Negative impact			
Mobile phone addiction	31	18	1	2.198*	3.841
Non-addiction	83	28			

\*  $\chi^2(1)$  at 0.05 level of significance = 3.841.

The data presented in Table 4 indicated that there was no statistically significant relationship between mobile phone addiction and its impact on marital relationship.

#### Section IV: Findings Related to the Impact of Mobile Phone use on Family Life

Frequency and percentage distribution of subjects by the impact of mobile phone use on their family were computed (Figure 3).



**Figure 3. A bar diagram showing frequency distribution of subjects by the impact of mobile phone use on their family life**

**Table 5. Chi-square test to establish relationship between mobile phone addiction and its impact on family life**

(n=160)

Mobile phone use	Impact on marital relationship		df	Chi-square value $\chi^2$	Table value $\chi^2(1)$
	No-impact	Negative impact			
Mobile phone addiction	18	23	1	28.432*	6.635
Non-addiction	102	17			

\*  $\chi^2(1)$  at 0.01 level of significance = 6.635.

The data presented in Table 5, indicated that there was statistically significant relationship between mobile phone addiction and its impact on family life. So, it can be further inferred that mobile phone addiction was negatively affecting the family life of the couples.

#### Discussion

With the advantages offered by mobile technologies, smartphone use today may have a significant impact on all aspects of human life and recent technologies lead to the proliferation of smart phones. The present study revealed that a notable number of samples were addicted to mobile phone. The findings were similar to the findings of the study by Kuss D<sup>13</sup> which suggests that problematic mobile phone use is prevalent across all ages and both genders and calls per day, time spent on the phone and using social media significantly predicted, prohibited and dependent mobile phone use.

The present study revealed that there was significant relationship between mobile phone use and its impact on family life. The present study is supported by the result of another study conducted by Lee H et al.<sup>14</sup> on 'Relationship among family environment, self-control, friendship quality and adolescents' smartphone addiction in South Korea: Findings from nationwide data'. The study reported that family dysfunction was significantly associated with smartphone addiction. Another report of a study conducted by McDaniel BT, Coyne SM<sup>15</sup> reported that phones, computers and other technology devices were significantly disruptive in relationships, couple hood and family lives.

During the data collection time the researcher noticed that the majority of the people in the particular community was aware about the increasing influence of mobile phone. However, many of them said, this realization and awareness about the impact got more established in their mind.

#### Implications

Several implications can be drawn from the study. The community people should be educated and made aware of wise use of mobile phone and technological advancements, so that the mobile phone can prove to be a boon rather than a bane. Campaign and awareness classes ought to be conducted to spread awareness about mobile phone and internet addiction and possible negative impact of it on their family life, marital relationship and social relationship. People in the community have to be empowered with knowledge and education so that they make informed choices for themselves and understand that curtailing the excessive use of mobile phone is going to be beneficial for them.

#### Recommendation

Based on the findings, following recommendations are offered for the future research:

- A similar study can be replicated on a larger sample to help validate and generalize the findings to the entire population of a region or a part of the country.
- A comparative study between male and female of a particular age group can be done to assess the impact of mobile phone addiction.
- A comparative study between adolescent children and parents can be done to assess the impact of mobile phone on them.

## Conclusion

The major conclusions drawn on the basis of the findings of the study were a notable number of married couples were found to be addicted to mobile phone. It was found that there was a significant relationship between sex of the married couples and mobile phone addiction. Approximately three fourth of the samples had no impact of mobile phone on their marital relationship, but the rest of the samples had some negative impact on their marital relationship. There was no significant relationship between mobile phone use and its impact on marital relationship. About three fourth of the samples had no impact of mobile phone on their family life, but others had some negative impact on their family life. The study revealed that there was significant relationship between mobile phone use and its impact on family life.

**Conflict of Interest:** None

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