

Social Media Impact on the Personality of People - A Study

**Upputuru Sreenivasulu,
Senior Journalist, Eenadu (A telugu daily)**

Abstract:

Social media changes our ways of truth seeking. Social media experts inform that the feelings we share or get when we talk to a person directly completely differ from when we talk to the same person through social media.

With the advent of Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat, the geographical boundaries lost relevance. In real life too, many are finding it difficult to communicate in person, as people preferring to share their feelings or talk openly with others in some corner of the globe through social media. At the same time they tend to treat their neighbours as aliens.

Technology is both boon and bane. It can make things simpler, easier and convenient but at the same it can create distances between two persons or two groups.

Introduction

Social media is connecting us. It is just connecting, but it is not integrating. We are sharing our messages and opinions but not writing and sharing on our own. In this process we all have a part but there is no bonding between us.

--PM Narendra Modi in Davos

An engineering student is very much active in relatives' WhatsApp group. The relatives recently met at a function. When he came across them he was not able to mingle with them. He could not speak a word other than a hello. He is uncomfortable to talk to them looking straight into their eyes, and impatient to listen and reply to their words. To escape from that situation he again looked at the smart phone.

What Einstein said 100 years back and what Prime Minister Modi is saying now is the same thing. "No words... no interactions" everything is with Smartphone only. Just sharing what they received on mobile. When a bunch of people gather at a place they just say hello to each other and then they will get busy with their smart phones. The smart phone is one of the major reason for marital discord, finds a study.

A recent survey shows that more than 90 percent of the youth aged between 13-17 years are using some kind of social media. Seventy five percent of them are having membership in some kind of social media. According to the survey 51 percent of the youth are simply spending their time on social media sharing WhatsApp and Facebook jokes, videos and other funny, viral issues.

Impact of social Media and its Consequences:

Till sometime back when friends and relatives meet they used to talk with affection and love. Whenever they meet in a function or party they used to spend their time in a sound way. Is it there now? Yes, it is there but not as good as used to be. Now interactions last only for few minutes of cursory greetings.

Threat to Social Skills says a University of Chicago's Booth School of Business

Time and again doctors, psychologists and experts have been warning on excess usage of social media and its consequences on the human relations and life.

A study by University of Chicago's Booth School of Business states the desire to frequently check your social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, among other social networking sites, can lead to a stronger addiction than those who are addicted to alcohol or cigarettes. The review of the available literature reveals that studies have included various aspects of Social Networking Addiction (majorly Facebook) including-symptoms of Facebook Addiction Disorder. In addition to the studies, also included are the professional opinions of the psychiatrists and psychologists regarding the explosion of social networking addiction cases.

According to network clinical psychologist Christin who was quoted as saying that with the regular usage of social sites people are lacking in social skills like conversations and respecting each other. Due to this emotional feelings are getting reduced. He further adds that children are lacking skills how to behave according to the situation.

With the culture of Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat the geographical limits between the countries are wiping out. In a recent survey conducted by commonsense.org, 35 percent of youth have agreed that, even though they are maintaining good relation in social media, they are unable to have face to face interaction while they meet.

Survey by the author

With the aim of finding social media usage habits in Hyderabad, the author conducted a survey between December 15, 2017 to January 15, 2018. The sample size of the study was 250. Respondents were selected from public and private organizations and NGOs using stratified convenience sampling. The respondents were aged between 23-28 years. A total of 152 filled questionnaires were received, out of which 48 were incomplete hence discarded. A total of 104 responses were analyzed for the study.

Diversified Arguments

Psychologists opine that the youths are busy in the world they have created. But the youth do not agree this argument. They say they know to what extent social media is to be used. Even teachers are also supporting their arguments.

Journalism department educator Blessy Thomas from villa Mary College says that “there are advantages and disadvantages with social media. Today’s generation knows how to use them. Students would know the information even if they didn’t come to college also. This is the advantage, but there is a scope that they might become lazy over a period of time. This is an obstacle. After some time, they tend to lose interest in social media, so I won’t accept with the argument that social media breaks the relations”

A Hundred Good Mornings

“You wish good morning in WhatsApp to all the people in world. But you don’t say do the same to the person who serves you morning coffee to dinner” a recent cartoon in which wife complains on her husband has put some smiles on many faces. But this is an apt reflection of real life. Millions of Indians are starting their day with the “good morning” message.

According to the Wall Street Journal the number of Indians searching for good morning messages on Google has been increased 10 times in the last 5 years. There are 200 millions of Indians who have account in WhatsApp. As everyone is sharing good morning messages which they receive from others the data limits are getting exhausted in no time. To overcome this, WhatsApp has introduced a new feature so that the user can convey good morning message to all the people at the same time.

“Luck may choose relations, but you must choose the friends” said Confucius. But after the introduction of Facebook the meaning of friendship has been changed. “Friendship is a promise; we can find friends who stand on that promise are found in real life only. He or she has to share our feelings, empathize with us but this is not possible with social media friends,” Says Vrithika from Saint Francis, Hyderabad.

Social media changes our ways of truth seeking. Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “If we want to get a good friend we have to be good also.” “But that may not possible on social media,” expresses

Prasuna, a mass communication student.

Analysis and Conclusion

The questionnaire administered was a detailed one. The important findings are mentioned below.

Browsing and Social Networking websites

The respondents were asked about how much time they spend on Social networking websites. About 34 per cent were well within the limits of using it for less than one hour a day. 27 percent used it for couple of hours. A small 7 per cent used for more than two hours and 5 per cent spent more than 3 hours. The rest browsed just to stay updated on different developments, especially political, share market oriented news and local aspects.

With many people using smart phones and tablets it was some task to calculate the time spent by individuals. It varied marginally from person to person and the accessibility to internet as well.

Getting habituated to social media

For many people, it has almost become a habit to browse social networking websites immediately after waking up. Others make it a point to check social media just before going to minutes before hitting the bed. Respondents were asked whether they have become addicted to the social media. Thirty nine percent respondents strongly disagreed while 23 per cent disagreed. A minority of five percent strongly agreed whereas 14 percent agreed. Nineteen per cent respondents remained neutral.

Impact on Family Time

The use of social media has any impact on the time spent with the family? Did it reduce the quality time with the family? A majority of 58 per cent of the respondents said 'Yes,' while 33 per cents said 'No.' Nine per cent of the respondents chose to answer 'Can't say.'

The most preferred social media app

Where do they spend their time mostly, to find out respondents were asked to list their most preferred social media app. WhatsApp is the most preferred app by respondents, a 53 per cent rated it as their number one choice followed by Facebook with 25 per cent. Twitter was chosen as their top social media app by 10 per cent respondents. Instagram had a miniscule following of 6 per cent while another six per cent chose 'Others' as their most liked app.

References:

1. Al-Deen, Hana S. Noor, and John Allen Hendricks. Social media: usage and impact. Lexington books, 2011
2. Einstein, Albert, Carl Seelig, Sonja Bargmann, Issachar Unna, and Barbara Wolff. Ideas and opinions. New York: Wings Books, 1954.
3. Hajli, M. Nick. "A study of the impact of social media on consumers." International Journal of Market Research 56, no. 3 (2014): 387-404.
4. Hallikainen, Petri. "Why People Use Social Media Platforms: Exploring the Motivations and Consequences of Use." In From Information to Smart Society, pp. 9-17. Springer, Cham, 2015.
5. Newson, Alex, Deryck Houghton, and Justin Patten. Blogging and other social media: Exploiting the technology and protecting the enterprise. Gower Publishing, Ltd., 2008.



6. Narendra Modi speech in Davos: Full text of PM's address at WEF 2018. <http://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/narendra-modi-in-davos-full-speech-at-wef-2018-fromtwitter-amazon-and-more-pm-highlights-how-tech-transformed-world/1026963/>
7. University of Chicago's Booth School of Business, (2012), Social technology addiction pushes real life to the back burner.
8. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America article "Integrating social networks and human social motives to achieve social influence at scale.
9. A report "Indian Society and Ways of living" published in Center for Global Education website (asiasociety.org)
10. Department of Media Sciences, Anna University study on "New media and society: A study on the impact of social networking sites on Indian youth".