Social Media Usage in India and Its Impact on Indian Society

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Abstract : Internet accessibility as well as the speed of data transfer have increased exponentially in recent years. Also the use of internet in various routine activities has increased dramatically like in the area of shopping, digital financial transactions, paying bill and utilities etc. The people in general are now using internet for entertainment, chatting and many more and slowly and steadily getting addicted to these. The paper discuss about the usage of social media websites and their impact of Indian society.

Introduction

In last 10 years, Information and communication technology has deeply impacted the life style of Indian society residing at varied geographical, cultural and climatic conditions. According to market research agency Kantar IMRB, internet users in India will cross the figure of 630 millions (63 crores) by the end of 2019. In last 3 years, the growth of internet users is in double digit. Indian population is almost close to 1300 millions (130 crores). The statistics shows that approximately 50% of the populations have access to internet. Approximately 30 million internet users in India are residing in urban area while approximately 200 million users are the rural users. Introduction of internet access to Indian users at a very cheap price by Reliance Jio have actually revolutionized the internet usage and grown it exponentially to almost every second Indian. Also the technology advancement in mobile communications have added fuel into it. The introduction of smartphones at almost no cost has made the access of mobile very lucrative and cost effective. Also push by Indian government to go digital in financial transactions, rapid penetration of digital mobile payment wallets like Paytm, Google Pay, PhonePe and many more have intentionally or deliberately have forced the users to go digital, have smartphones and have access to internet. Indian population is a very young population.

Table 1.1 shows various vital statistics of Indian population [1], app. 370 million Indians are in the age group of 0-14 years while app. 420 million are in between the age group of 15-34, app. 210 million are in between the age group of 35-49. So in totality, app. 1000 millions of Indians are less than the age of 50 and app. 790 million are less than the age of 35 years. Approximately 60% population of Out of 1300 million, more than 80 million population will be less than an age of 35 years. It is expected that the average age of an Indian will be around 29 years by the end of 2020.

Age group	Male (in 10k)	Female (in 10k)	Total (in 10k)	Percentage (%)
0–4	5863.2	5417.5	11280.7	9.3
5–9	6630.0	6062.8	12692.8	10.5
10–14	6941.9	6329.0	13270.9	11.0
15–19	6398.2	5654.4	12052.6	10.0
20–24	5758.5	5384.0	11142.4	9.2
25–29	5134.4	5007.0	10141.4	8.4
30–34	4466.1	4393.4	8859.5	7.3
35–39	4291.9	4222.1	8514.1	7.0
40–44	3754.5	3489.3	7243.8	6.0
45–49	3213.8	3018.0	6231.8	5.2
50–54	2584.3	2322.6	4906.9	4.1
55–59	1945.6	1969.0	3914.6	3.2
60–64	1870.2	1896.2	3766.4	3.1
65–69	1294.4	1351.1	2645.5	2.2
70–74	965.1	955.7	1920.9	1.6
75–79	449.1	474.2	923.3	0.8
80–84	292.7	329.3	622.0	0.5
85–89	112.0	126.3	238.3	0.2
90–94	65.2	79.4	144.7	0.1
95–99	29.5	33.9	63.3	0.1
100+	28.9	31.6	60.6	0.1
Unknown	237.3	211.7	449.0	0.4
Total	62327.0	58758.5	121085.5	100.0

Table 1.1 : Population pyramid 2016 (estimates) [1]

Internet has leap and bound penetrated in the Indian society and as discussed above more than 60% population of India is young. Young people in India are now using internet and most of the time spent by them are on the social media in form of websites or mobile applications. Social networking websites or apps like Whatsapp, Facebook, MySpace and Twitter; also the online gaming websites or apps, virtual worlds such as Second Life, and the Sims, online multimedia contents such as YouTube, and blogs are becoming immensely popular among youth. Usage of such websites among youth for entertainment, information retrieval, current news, trends and for communication has grown exponentially [3].

Social Media	Active User	Daily Users	Leaders	15-34 Ages	Indian Uses
Facebook	171 billion	113 billion	169	91%	142 million
Twitter	320 million	4.5 million	139	79%	28.5 million
LinkedIn	450 million	100 million	930	56%	37 million
Google+	300 million	1.6 million	89	83%	10 million

Table 1.2 : Social networking statistics (Source: Brand Watch, October 2016) [2]

Table 1.2 shows very interesting information. Almost 220 million Indians are using only four most popular social networking websites which counts to app. 14% of the Indian population. According to CEO of NITI Aayog Mr Amitabh Kantthat the no. of whatsapp users in India have crossed the 400 million mark and is confirmed by whatsappp spokesperson. So the total no. of users of these five social networking websites has crossed the mark of 620 million users which is app. 50% of the Indian population [9].

As India is a young country so most of the users of these social networking websites is younger generation. It becomes evident from the statistics that it becomes very important for the parents to monitor and control the access of internet for the wards and educate the young kids in the right direction so that sea of information (good or bad, constructive or destructive) and so on can be used constructively for the uplift of self-moral, character and nation building. There are many advantages as well disadvantages of using these websites. The positive aspects are as follows :

- Timely and Good communication and a better support system in education between student and teacher as well as teacher and parents [4]
- 24 hrs availability of online resources at door step
- A healthy discussion and help using online platform
- Politically aware about the current situation in India
- Easy sharing of information and mobilizing the people
- Information or news transmission is faster than any other media like print media, TV, Radio etc.
- Helps in strengthening the relationship between friends, family and society as social networking websites provides a better and online real time communication. It is more effective when relatives or friends are geographically far off.
- Websites like linkedIn helps in making professional connects and provides better business opportunities [5].
- Social networking websites have opened new area of employment in the online world.
- Online shopping business and such websites have increased in large number in recent times and millions of Indians are shopping online especially the electronic gadgets such as mobile phones seating at home [8].

Although there are many advantages of these websites but at the same time, there are many disadvantages are also there listed below.

- Privacy of the users of these websites is always at risk. Most of the times the personal information becomes public and it may be misused by anyone.
- News feed, photos, videos, family and relationship information etc. are accessible and messages posted on wall are also accessible in public through chain of contacts.
- Students uses social media for copying and cheating during preparing class assignments, projects etc.

- Student's grades dropped who uses the social media heavily. It is observed that students scored 20% less in tests which require more attention and focus like mathematics 7].
- Grammar, poor spelling, sexism, racism, drugs, social abuse, distorted religious contents are increasing on social media and disturbing the social harmony. It also decreases the employment [6].
- The productivity decrease due to heavy usage of these social networking websites.
- The personal information like mobile nos. or emails are shared with companies like insurance companies, credit card companies etc. and these companies or online advertisers uses the personal information and advertises their products and disturbs the routines of the people.
- Cybercrime, cyber bullying, hacking are common problems faced by the people in general [10].
- Using social media just for entertainment is purely a waste of time.
- Youngsters who heavily used social media sometimes feel disconnected, losses self-confidence and cannot talk in public.
- False rumors, wrong or violent information are sometimes deliberately spread on these websites to polarize society sentiments and make use of that for personal gain.

Conclusion

It is evident that the usage of social media in India is increasing leap and bound. The usage of such websites has its own advantages and disadvantages. To control the heavy and unproductive usage of these social media websites, Government should come forward with some framework or guidelines especially at the workplaces so that the energy and potential of the youngsters can be channelized in right direction and can productively be utilized in the nation building.

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