# Impact of Social Networking Sites on the Mental Health of College and School Going Students- A Study of Kashmir Valley

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**Abstract**—*The advent of social networking sites like Facebook and WhatsApp has revolutionised the way people interact and communicate. Its usage has significantly increased all over the world, particularly among the students. Students access these sites to interact, play, discover and learn in significant ways. These sites have certainly profound impacts on the academic and the other activities of the students. In this study, an attempt is made to assess the usage of social networking sites and how it affects the mental health of college and school students. A preliminary survey was conducted for a sample of 80 students drawn from various colleges and schools in Kashmir Valley. Self- structured questionnaire was used to collect data. Data solicited was analysed with the help of Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test and ANOVA. The research observed that social networking sites impact the mental health of the students immensely. The study showed that both positive and negative impact was associated with social networking platforms. Some of the positive impacts of social networking sites included building relationships, self-expression, self-identity, community building and emotional support. While on the other hand the negative impact of these sites included issues like increased levels of depression and anxiety, poor sleep quality, cyberbullying and cybersuicide. It is suggested that parents and children should be made aware to understand the effects of usage of social networking sites on the mental health on young students.*

**Keywords**: *Mental Health, Social Networking Sites, College Students, School Students.*

## INTRODUCTION

With the advancement of Information Technology, social networking sites have emerged as significant tools for interaction. These tools are currently gaining immense popularity among people all over the world especially among youth. Youth and young adults use these sites for creating and shaping the experiences. Moreover, social media use is an important element of the developmental process for youth and young adults as they interact with others and present their forming identities online (Berryman & Ferguson, 2017).This growing popularity of social networking in young people's lives has caught the attention of academicians worldwide. A number of research studies classify connection between use of social networking sites and its undesirable outcomes like increase in anxiety, stress, depression and loneliness.With the aid of primary and secondary sources, this paper endeavours to highlight the impact of social networking sites on the mental health of the college and school going students.

## Major Concepts and Definitions

### Social Networking Sites

Social network sites are defined as web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

### Mental Health

The World Health Organisation defines mental health as "a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community"(WHO, 2013; Rohilla&Kumar, 2015).

### Social Networking Sites and Mental Health

It is undeniable that social networking sites is becoming extraordinarily popular among the youth.The top five most popular social networking sites common among youth are Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, You Tube and Instagram. Concerns regarding the social networking sites' effects on mental health have caught the attention of researchers and academicians worldwide. Some studies have indicated that social media use may be tied to negative mental health outcomes, including suicidality, loneliness and decreased empathy. Other studies have not found evidence for harm, or have indicated that social media use may be beneficial for some individuals (Berryman &Ferguson, 2017). Numerous

studies have found an association between the social networking use and depression, anxiety, sleep problems, eating issues and increased suicide risk. A 2015 study by the University of Missouri found that regularly using Facebook could lead to the symptoms of depression if the site triggered feelings of envy in the user (Fast Check: how does social media affect your mental health? The Week UK). A report by the American Academy of Paediatrics defines Facebook depression as "depression that develops when teens and preteens spend time on social media sites and then begin to exhibit classic symptoms of depression due to the intensity of the online world (www.center4research.org). However, it can also be said that those who use these sites primarily to feel connected do not experience the negative effects.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

**Bashir, H. & Bhat, S.A. (2017)[1]** in their study commented that social media usage has dangerous effects for younger generation because problems related mental health which gets developed during young period can act as an epidemic for any individual throughout the life. They suggested that the social networking sites should be constrained to certain age limit. Any social media application that has not positive effect like discrimination, violence and racism etc. should be dissolved at once completely.

**Berryman, C. & Ferguson, C.J. (2017)[2]** in their study examined 467 young adults for their time spent using social media, importance of social media in their lives and tendency to engage invaguebooking (posting unclear but alarmingsoundingpoststogetattention).Outcomesconsideredinc ludedgeneralmentalhealth symptoms, suicidal ideation, loneliness, social anxiety and decreased empathy. Results indicatedthatsocialmediausewasnotpredictiveofimpairedmenta lhealthfunctioning.However, vaguebooking was predictive of suicidal ideation, suggesting this particular behaviour could be a warning sign for serious issues.

**Rohilla, P.S. & Kumar, K. (2015)[3]** concluded that the excessive use of social media by young adults increased its negative effects. If social media use can be linked to negative outcomes, researchers need to devote more attention to understanding factors associated with negative mental health outcomes and how to tone down these outcomes.

**Hughes, S. (2018)[4]** conducted a quantitative, correlational coefficient survey to gather the necessary data. The author through his study revealed that there was a positive, significant correlation between number social media platforms across all three negative emotional states, Depression, Anxiety and Stress. There was no significant correlation between Age, Time spent on social across all platforms, the Facebook Intensity Scale and Mental Wellbeing (DASS).

**Strickland, A.C. (2014)[5]** explored the relationship between social media and mental health in the population. He indicated that there is a connection between increased social media use

and deteriorated mental health. Unfortunately, young adults, the most active social media users have a predominantly high risk for developing mental health issues, making this connection particularly concerning.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

**"Impact of Social Networking Sites on the Mental Health of College and School Going Students- A Study of Kashmir Valley"**

**Objectives:** The following are the major objectives of the present study;

1. To study the impact of social networking sites on mental health among the college and school students of Kashmir Valley.

2. To study the impact of gender in mental health and psychological attitude among the college and school students of Kashmir Valley.

**Hypothesis**: Based on the above objectives, the following hypotheses are formulated for testing.

1. There is no significant difference between school and college going students in relation to the impact of social networking sites in the mental health.

2. There is significant difference between boys and girls in relation to the impact of social networking sites on the mental health.

**Tool Used:** A structured questionnaire was used to collect the primary data. Internet Addiction test by Young and General Health questionnaire was used

### Methodology in Brief

The methodology adopted for carrying out the present study was survey method and design used was descriptive in nature. Purposive random sampling was used for a sample of 80 students (40 college students and 40 school students). Students from both urban and rural areas were selected. All obtained scores of this research study were analysed with the help of Mean, Standard Deviation, T-test and ANOVA. Correlation techniques were also used.

### Important Findings

1. There is insignificant difference between male and female students on their mental health. Further there is significant difference between rural and urban college and school students on social networking sites.

2. There is insignificant difference between school students and college students on mental health. Further, there is significant difference between school students and college students on social networking sites.

3. There is insignificant correlation on mental health. Further, there is significant correlation on social media.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is suggested that parents and children should be made aware to understand the effects of usage of social networking sites on the mental health on young students.

2. Students should be encouraged to make judicious use of social networking sites.

## FURTHER RESEARCH SUGGESTIONS

1. The sample size must be increased.

2. More variables must be added.

## CONCLUSION

This study was set out to examine the impact of social networking use on mental health of college and school going children. Results obtained with the help of ANOVA and graph showed that respondents from these two groups i.e. urban and rural showed significant difference. The findings revealed that social networking sites have positive as well as negative impact on mental health of the college and school going children of the Kashmir.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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