

## ***Impact of Social Media on the Mental Health of Youth***

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### **Abstract**

*Today's world is one of technology. Internet or we can say, social media has acquired literally every sector. In this era of advancement, everyone is around social media. No matter what age group people belong to, everyone is using directly or indirectly or is affected by social media. Particularly the youth is around social media like no one other and this frequent use of social media is affecting their minds, their behaviour and their relations in so many ways. They don't even realise that the excessive use of social media made them its puppets. This research indicates that social media can result in depression, anxiety and relationship problems in youth.*

*This glorious world of social media is far-far darker. There are already many debates on the pros and cons of social media. This research is based on a study on the significance of social media on mental health of youth. A random sampling design is used to perform this research in which survey method has been applied to get accurate and fair results.*

### **Introduction**

Mental health has become a very crucial topic of discussion these days. It is a state of human well-being. But this stressful life and the world of hurry have made humans so busy that they don't care about the mental pressure and the social media has aggravated the situation. Social media has become an integral part of our lives. Every individual is on social media, especially the youth. Youngsters are more connected with social media and tend to socialise more

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'online' rather than 'offline'. In today's world of technology, it seems very difficult to live without mobile phones, internet or social media. Social media has been designed in a way that everyone is forced to stay connected with it. With every single scroll, you will get a new content which forces individuals to stay online for a long period of time. According to reports, Indians spend near about 194 minutes a day on social media platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, and Facebook. This means that every individual uses social media for near about 3 hours a day.

With widespread use of social media over a few decades, it is important to analyse its impact on the mental health. Social media's impact on mental health complicates social service delivery at the micro level due to the significant growth of mental health symptoms, as more individuals are battle with anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, etc due to high use of social media. It seems like it is becoming an addiction for most of the people. Youth these days are more present on social media rather than being physically present around their natural environment. This addiction of social media is leading to many harmful impacts on the youth's mental and physical well-being.

A recent study found that many celebrities have taken a break from social media for the sake of their mental health because of the toxicity around them. The widespread use of social media has become an integral part of contemporary life, but excessive time spent on it can negatively impact one's sleeping patterns also. The high-level addiction of social media can result in prolonged screen time that disrupts sleep. Additionally, social media platforms can create a culture of comparison, where teenagers feel they must measure up to the standards set by their peers on social media.

A number of studies have been conducted on the impact of social media, and it has been indicated that the prolonged use of social media platforms such as Facebook or Instagram etc. may be related to negative signs and symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress. Excessive use of such social media platforms has also contributed to increase in loneliness, fear of missing out and decreased subjective well-being and life satisfaction. Many social media addicts often report depressive symptoms and lower self-esteem.

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Undoubtedly, social media is a great medium. It provides everyone common platform to share their views, it helps people to connect, helps them grow their business and helps them get educated but social media has a dark side too. Youngsters spend most of their time online. Hence, they consume what social media is serving them and even with the advancement of technology and introduction of AI (Artificial Intelligence) social media has also become a threat to everyone. Social media has no limit of content and individuals sometimes neglect the kind of content they are consuming and its effect on their minds directly or in-directly on youth's daily lives and mental health.

#### **Objectives**

The purpose of this study is to determine the reasons for the high usage of social media among young people. To study the emotions of children without the use of social media. To understand how social media affects young people's lifestyles. To research how relationships are affected by social media. To discover how social media affects people's behavior.

#### **Hypothesis**

Social media is primarily used by young people as a way to express their emotions and pass the time. After a period of not using social media, children experience loneliness. Young people's habits are influenced by social media content. Individuals are spending more time online, which can cause major issues in relationships. There are behavioral changes and other psychological issues that people often experience.

#### **Methodology**

In this research work, Quantitative Research Method with Survey Technique and Questionnaire as a tool, is used to collect the data. Data is collected from people using Simple Random Sampling method and sending out questionnaire. The results of which can be depicted in the form of numerical values.

#### **Review of literature**

Kimberly Panganiban (2022) in the article Social Media & Relationships stated that social media can impact relationships by decreasing the amount and quality of time spent together. Whether

we intend to or not, social media does decrease the quality time spent in a relationship, which can decrease our satisfaction and sense of connection - and ultimately lead to a social media addiction. Social media makes it much easier for us to negatively compare our relationship to other relationships or our partner to other people. This can impact our commitment to our relationship, leading to betrayal and possibly the demise of the relationship.

According to a news published in Dainik Bhaskar (2024) celebrities are moving away from social media: reason: mental health and negativity. Social media is a place where celebrities or film stars get a platform to reach out to their fans. However, every coin has two sides. While social media gives everyone an opportunity to connect with others but on the other hand using this for a huge amount of time, also harms one's mental peace. For this reason, many Hollywood celebrities have taken a break from social media. From famous singer Selena Gomez to John Legend and Billie Eilish, are the stars who took a break from social media. Hollywood actor Tom Holland, singer Ed Sheeran, models Gigi Hadid and Nick Jonas, also took a break from social media in the past.

American singer John Legend, while deciding to take a break from social media, said, 'Now the platform has become poisonous. To take care of my mental health, it is important for me to take a break from social media. I can't take care of my mental health without leaving social media.' Captain America movie Actor Chris Evans said that 'to focus on my health and myself, I have to take a break from social media. It is quite toxic.'

The Social Dilemma: Social Media and Your Mental Health by McLean (January 2023) says that Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat increase the likelihood of seeing unrealistic, filtered photos at a time when teen bodies are changing. Apps that provide the user with airbrushing, teeth whitening, and more filters are easy to find and easier to use. It's not only celebrities who look perfect-it's everyone. When there's a filter applied to the digital world, it can be hard for teens to tell what's real and what isn't, which comes at a difficult time for them physically and emotionally.

A New York Times article that ran in June 2018 features a newlywed couple who nearly separated after their honeymoon. The

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reason: the wife spent more time on the trip planning and posting selfies than she spent with her husband.

Abderrahman M Khalaf, Abdullah AAlubied, Ahmed M Khalaf and Abdallah A Rifaey (2023 Aug 5) in their research work *The Impact of Social Media on the Mental Health of Adolescents and Young Adults* said that a recent study found that 14.8% of young people were admitted to mental hospitals because they posed a risk to others or themselves because of the kind of content available on social sites.

Research psychologist Melissa G. Hunt in her work *Feeling Down* said that social media may be to blame (2023) as 'using fewer social media than you normally would leads to significant decreases in both depression and loneliness'.

Anwar Bisma (2022) in *The Correlation between Social Media and Mental Health* found that humans are social creatures by nature. We require connections in order to maintain mental health. Studies show that more of social media interactions instead of human interactions can increase your risk of developing or worsening depression, anxiety, and other similar mood disorders. Recent research has found a trend so disturbing amongst young (primarily) women who use social media filters, a new term has been coined: Snapchat dysmorphia. While it's not (yet) a mental health diagnosis, Snapchat dysmorphia occurs when people compare their actual appearance to filtered (altered) selfies. Snapchat dysmorphia describes the deep-rooted feeling of wanting to change physical features to match filtered images. Feelings of dissatisfaction and unhappiness can surface as a result of social comparison. Research indicates that excessive use of social sites can lead to feelings of loneliness among students, worsening psychosocial well-being issues such as adjustment and self-esteem, The UK Mental Health Foundation reports that 60% of 18-34-year-olds feel lonely despite widespread access to online communication.

Sarah Nichole Koehler, Bobbie Rose Parrell (2020) writing on the impact of social media on mental health found that individuals may experience feelings of social isolation, depression, insecurity, jealousy, and poor self-esteem while using social media. Some individuals develop cognitive distortions when comparing their lives

to other users' content, which may lead to feelings of sadness and depression (Ashford, 2017).

### Research questions and outcomes

Q1. For how long do you use social media?

	<b>Total 80</b>	<b>%age</b>
<b>Less than 1 hour</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>For 1 to 2 hours</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>27.5%</b>
<b>More than 2 hours</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>32.5%</b>
<b>No time limit</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>35%</b>

Q2. Which platform do you prefer to use?

	<b>Total 80</b>	<b>%age</b>
<b>Instagram</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>77.5%</b>
<b>Snapchat</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>X or Twitter</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.25%</b>
<b>Facebook</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2.5%</b>
<b>Any Other</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13.75%</b>

Q3. Why do you use social media?

	<b>Total 80</b>	<b>%Age</b>
<b>For time pass</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>31.25%</b>
<b>For information</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>For entertainment</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>17.5%</b>
<b>For chatting</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>16.25%</b>
<b>For other purpose</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10%</b>

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Q4. According to you, to what extent you feel that social media is impacting your mental health?

	<b>Total 80</b>	<b>%age</b>
<b>To large extent</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>17.5%</b>
<b>To some extent</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>56.25%</b>
<b>To less extent</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>26.25%</b>

Q5. At what extent you prefer using social media while feeling lonely or sad?

	<b>Total 80</b>	<b>%age</b>
<b>To large extent</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>To some extent</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>55%</b>
<b>To less extent</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>25%</b>

Q6. What kind of content you prefer to watch when you feel sad?

	<b>Total 80</b>	<b>%age</b>
<b>Motivational</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>41.25%</b>
<b>Sad</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Comedy</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Romantic</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8.75%</b>

*Communication Today, April-June, 2026*

Q7. Do you ever feel depressed or doubt yourself with the kind of content you get on your explore page?

	<b>Total 80</b>	<b>%age</b>
<b>To large extent</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11.25%</b>
<b>To some extent</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>52.5%</b>
<b>To less extent</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>36.25%</b>

Q8. Do you feel that social media is the first thing you use to express your feeling?

	<b>Total 80</b>	<b>%age</b>
<b>To large extent</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>To some extent</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>38.75%</b>
<b>To less extent</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>36.25%</b>

Q9. How do you like to spend your time more?

	<b>Total 80</b>	<b>%age</b>
<b>By hanging out with friends</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>On social media</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>With family</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>22.5%</b>
<b>Other ways</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12.5%</b>

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Q10. Do you feel any kind of change in your behaviour because of the impact of social media?

	<b>Total 80</b>	<b>%age</b>
<b>To large extent</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>46.25%</b>
<b>To some extent</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>31.25%</b>
<b>To less extent</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>22.5%</b>

Q11. Do you feel lonely when there is no internet or you don't use social media?

	<b>Total 80</b>	<b>%age</b>
<b>To large extent</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>42.5%</b>
<b>To some extent</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>To less extent</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>22.5%</b>

Q12. Do social media contents make any kind of changes in your lifestyle or living habits?

	<b>Total 80</b>	<b>%age</b>
<b>To large extent</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>23.75%</b>
<b>To some extent</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>58.75%</b>
<b>To less extent</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>17.5%</b>

Q13. Have you ever faced relationship problems because of social media?

	<b>Total 80</b>	<b>%age</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>21.25%</b>
<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Never</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>43.75%</b>

Q14. Do you believe that social media is making a huge impact on human behaviour?

	<b>Total 80</b>	<b>%age</b>
<b>Yes, at some extent</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>61.25%</b>
<b>Moderate</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>27.5%</b>
<b>No, i don't think so</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11.25%</b>

Q15. Do you agree with the fact that social media is killing relationships these days?

	<b>Total 80</b>	<b>%age</b>
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>47.5%</b>
<b>Agree</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>18.75%</b>
<b>To some extent</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>33.75%</b>

Q16. Do you feel that people try to show off their selves on social media platforms?

	<b>Total 80</b>	<b>%age</b>
<b>To large extent</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>66.25%</b>
<b>To some extent</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>27.5%</b>
<b>To less extent</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6.25%</b>

Q17. Do you feel that social media is the reason that most of the people always want everything perfect and expect happy ending?

	<b>Total 80</b>	<b>%age</b>
<b>To large extent</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>52.5%</b>
<b>To some extent</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>41.25%</b>
<b>To less extent</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6.25%</b>

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### **Conclusion**

The study "Impact of Social Media on the Mental Health of Youth" provides significant and crucial findings. The main objectives of this study were to find out why youth use social media to such a large extent and to understand what youngsters feel without using social media. Also, to know about the living style of today's youth it is very important to understand the effect of social media on the lifestyle of youngsters. Social media today has become a much-known platform for everyone to share their relationship status and personal/private life so it is necessary to study the effect of social media on the relationships. The last objective was to learn about the impact of social media on human behaviour.

The first hypothetical statement to be tested was that "Most of the youngsters use social media just to spend their time and to express their feelings." This hypothesis is proved right as the data reveals that 35% users use social media with no time limit and with this 31% of the respondents uses it just for time pass, 25% for informational purpose. In addition to expression of their feelings, 39% respondents said that they use social media to some extent to express their feelings as a second tool whereas 25% use it as the first medium to pour out their feelings. Surprisingly, 40% respondents said that they like to spend their time on social media more whereas 25% choose to be with their friends and 22% with their family. This data simply reflects that today's youngsters use social media to a huge extent just to pass their time and even with no time limit. The data also shows that 40% of the respondents like to spend their time on social media rather than being with family or friends. In other words, we can also say that the youth these days are addicted to social media and are wasting their time on such platforms by using them for no productive purpose.

The second hypothetical statement to be tested was that "Youngsters feel lonely when they don't use social media." Data here proves the assumption right as large number of respondents i.e., 43% said that they feel lonely to a large extent when there is no internet. This means that the youth have bounded their selves to social media only because they feel empty without it.

"Social media content influences youth and changes their habits" was the third hypothetical statement. According to the data, 59% of the respondents think that their lifestyle and living habits

have changed as a result of social media material. To a lesser degree, however, 17% of respondents think social media has an impact. Furthermore, according to 66% of the respondents, people make a significant effort to showcase themselves on social networking platforms. This research unequivocally demonstrates how social media is pushing young people to alter their lifestyles and exalt others, which is detrimental to them and misleading to others.

The fourth hypothetical statement to be tested was that "People spend more time online which may lead to serious relationship problems. Data here proves that 40% of the youth like to spend their time on social media more whereas 25% choose to be with their friends and 22% with their family. Similarly, 47% of the respondents strongly agreed with the fact that social media are killing relationships these days. With these findings, we can say that people are around social media more rather than including themselves in physical world and such kind of habits somewhere leads to relationship issues because youth may give more preference to their online relations and this may result in the demise of the relationship.

The fifth hypothetical statement was "A person tends to feel behavioural changes and has some other psychological problems." This hypothesis is proved right as the data reveals that 61% of the respondents believe that social media is marking a huge impact on human behaviour whereas 28% said that the effect is moderate. In addition, 54% respondents said that they felt depressed and even started doubting their selves to some extent with the kind of content they get online.

Surprisingly, 47% of youngsters believe that they feel change in their own behaviour because of the impact of social media. On the other hand, 56% of the respondents felt that social media is impacting their mental health to some extent. Not just this, 54% believes that social media is the reason that most of the people always want everything perfect and expect happy ending, With all these findings, it is proved that social media is making a huge impact on the minds of youth as they are addicted to it and even bounds themselves around social media only. Social media has also made a strong boundary for youth with the fiction-based content to find out everything perfect and happy in the end which is completely opposite from the real world.

This study reveals that the assumptions made are true to a

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large extent. The high use of social media affects the mental health and even relationships of the youth. Furthermore, the addiction of the social media has a direct relationship with mental health, including low self-esteem, sleep issues, and unrealistic body standards. Youth should be aware of these effects and must control their social media uses by setting screen time limits. Social media, no doubt is a great platform to interact with others but we all know that the excess use of everything is bad. It is high time that youngsters should start paying attention on their mental health.

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