

## Social Media: Attraction or Addiction?

**Ravi Kant**

Associate Professor, School of Education,  
Central University of South Bihar, Gaya, India  
[edu.ravikant@gmail.com](mailto:edu.ravikant@gmail.com)

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**Abstract** – Social networking, which is one of the main products and tool of web 2.0, attracts all age peoples from the society to its virtual world and citizens. It offers a variety of opportunities to the young peoples to go beyond their limited real world to unlimited virtual world where they can do anything without any formal restrictions. Youths are the easiest victim of this virtual world's problems. Social media addiction is now being considered as psychological disorder in all around the world. This study aims to determine level of social media addiction. Social media addiction level shows a continuous increase in daily life internet consumption. Frequently visiting on social media platforms also responsible for the development of social media addiction. This survey was done on the students of Central University of South Bihar, Gaya, India. In the survey 200 students participated from School of Education and School of Law & Governance. Among the participants 41% were female and 59% were male. Most of them were Facebook and WhatsApp users. After going through the research, it was found that among the participants most of them were addicted to social media. Most of the participants didn't have addiction to social media. Social Media Addiction was not significantly differing on the basis of gender, but male students were more addicted to social media. Due to expansion of Internet availability, rural students were more addicted in comparison to urban students. Overall, student studying under School of Education were more addicted.

**Keywords** – Social Media, Social Media Addiction, University's students

### INTRODUCTION

In the century in which we live, called the digital age, computers, the Internet and the machines associated with them have acquired an absolutely central importance in every activity of every aspect of human life, and in this picture social media is very important. Gradually easier, cheaper and faster access to information via handheld devices and the Internet, the expansion of communication networks is one of the factors that motivate individuals to use social media. It is clear that

the importance of social media in our lives is increasing day by day, and social media is able to make its impact globally and influence the situations. Not surprisingly, its impact on individuals, especially youth, is unavoidable [1].

Communication which is an important requirement for mankind and the rapid advancement of information and communication technology has a wide impact on the way of daily communication of people. The use of social media among today's youth has presented many emerging dimensions, it cannot be said further how many more dimensions will come. Over the years, social networking has become widely popular and accepted among the youth. It provides various opportunities to communicate with other people not only in the academic campuses but also inside and outside of the home and other places. Social networking is a method that helps people feel that they belong to a community that is very large but purely virtual. Its growing popularity is now under the lens of professors, stakeholder, psychologists and social activists as they are now questioning the popularity of rapidly increasing popularity of social media among youths. They are arguing that social media, though has many benefits, creates some disturbances in the educational and social life of youth. Research has proved that internet-powered social media has the potential to positively or negatively affect the educational performance of youth. The excessive use of social media has caused many parents to worry that their wards are spending more and more time on social media by not giving time to their studies, which is adversely affecting their academic performance, as well as many other types of physical problems. And it is also giving rise to mental disorders. The attraction of social media is also making them isolated by making them out of the reach of the society [2].

Recently, several attempts have been made to study the pattern of internet usage and its effects. In this order, Bandura's social-cognitive theory is very popular, which defines Internet behaviour to have positive results. However, in the last few years and studies, some results have come in opposition to his theory. Internet addiction

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has been described as a degradation of self-control in the social-cognitive framework. One study studied 171 college students looking at the negative aspects of Internet behaviour and found that they had a 60% similarity to the social-cognitive model of Internet use [3].

This is a general notion that addiction usually related to narcotics substance like drugs or alcohol etc. But now uncontrollable habits or practices are also referred to as addiction [4]. In this sense, the concept of technological dependency has also been used to describe the extreme Internet usage behaviours that arise due to developed technologies [5] [6]. Due to the overuse and over dependency of Internet and Internet based facilities, some new psychological addiction comes in existence like Internet addiction [7] [8], Game addiction [9] [10] [11], Online addiction [12], Social network addiction [13], Mobile phone addiction [14] [15], Facebook addiction [16], Twitter addiction [17] and Social Media addiction [16] [18]. Social media addiction is considered as a kind of Internet addiction [19]. Individuals who spend a lot of time on social media have a strong desire to receive information immediately on anything that emerges as a problem for their tolerance. This desire in virtual communication and communication becomes an addiction as a problem in the use of social media. Another finding sought the help of cognitive-behavioural models to explain the formation of social network addiction; this model emphasizes that 'unusual' social networking and various environmental factors together create cognitive distortions that lead to social media addiction. [20]. Social skills model emphasizes that the commonality is that people do not have the skill of effective communication and hence they accept virtual communication instead of direct communication. Gradually, this self-presentation develops social media addiction. The social-cognitive model assumes that social media addiction arises due to Internet self-regulation dysfunction, rather than positive outcomes in virtual environments [21].

Statistics show that most internet users are effective consumers of social media along with internet. Social media enables its users to communicate with each other on a much larger scale through the Internet. It also includes communication platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube which help in establishing online communication [22]. Research shows that using social media platforms like Whatsapp, Facebook and Twitter has become very widespread and popular among teenagers. From a research work done in the US results were found that 90% of the total internet users were

between 13 and 17 years of age. The percentage of consumers using social media platform available by internet was 75%. The most shocking thing was that 35% of teenagers used social media platforms several times a day [23]. Kirk said in his study, on students between the ages of 13 and 19, that social media had a greater effect on minors as well, and that the effect was increasing rapidly in adults who were developing social media addiction [2].

Social media has become very popular as an amazing tool of the revolutionary technology of Web 2.0 and it has prepared its consumers in large numbers. The most attractive thing in social media is to establish communication with countless people. This attraction of virtual world is gradually overtaking other attractions of internet. Social media is also rapidly increasing its reach due to increasing usage in the daily life of the Internet [24]. But while another social media provides opportunities to communicate with people on a very large scale, on the other hand it has also given rise to some practical problems. Due to excessive use of social media, now the person is becoming lonely. Even while staying in the family, his interest in the activities of the family is becoming less, due to which its adverse impact on the relations of family members is being studied. Due to social media addiction, people are now experiencing loneliness, frustration and despair [25] [26].

Luo [27] in his study found that social media is the most popular means of communicating with others among adolescent students. In his studies, he considered all the means of communicating as a productive medium. According to their study social media provides a place for students where they can share their educational ideas with other people according to their convenience and interest. Facebook, Twitter, Google+, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, Academia, WeChat, Skype, Bebo, Flickr etc. were popular social media platforms among many students.

Albi [28] did his study on the internet habits of students of private universities. They found that the level of Internet addiction among the students of private universities was low and this was due to the control of the Internet uses in private universities as they were able to use the Internet for a limited time.

Dau [29] studied social media addiction among 800 students studying in higher education in Northern Nigeria. He compiled the data by survey method. They checked various internet sites used by the students and the frequency of use of the students on those sites. From the evidence collected, he found that Facebook was the most popular social media platform among students. In

the most widespread manner, Facebook was being used by students. Students mainly used Facebook to make friends as well as they were doing virtual dating on it. Many were also using social media platforms for social needs like exchange of information.

A study [1] by Al-Menais was conducted to investigate the dimensions of social media addiction in university students in Kuwait. A total of 1327 students were included in this study and data was compiled with a tool by Young called Internet addiction scale. He found in his study that there are three dimensions of using social media, which are- the experience gained from the social media, the time spent on social media and the satisfaction gained from the use of social media. The most important findings were that social media addiction was negatively impacting students' academic performance. A negative correlation between time spent on social media and student achievement was found.

Cabral [30] conducted a study on social media addiction with a specific look at Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and MySpace. The bases of his study were the six dimensions of Internet addiction given by Griffith, which are as - "salience, mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal, conflict and relapse. Cabral in his study considered those of the Y generation who were born after the invention of the Internet and who grew up watching and understanding the various uses of the Internet. They tried to know whether the people of Y generation have become victims of Internet addiction due to the need to communicate with their counterparts. He found that people of Y generation were found to be suffering on three of the six dimensions given by Griffith.

All the above literature reviews show that social media addiction is present among students of various levels, but most studies have been done to find social media addiction based on Facebook. While the number of studies done on other media of social media is quite small

From Hisson's [31] study on the students of Ghana University, it is known that the students use social media platform to fulfil their various needs. Some of these are sending written messages, sending emails, chatting etc. It was also found in this study that the main reason for students to use social media is to make friends.

Another study conducted at the University of Education, Winiba in 2013, found that students use social media to find and communicate with their old friends. They also find their family members and relatives on social media and communicate with them. Sharing information with friends and sharing their experiences was found to be a major cornerstone of using social

media. The process of socialization provided by social media platforms, which involves sharing of information and experiences with others, is the main reason for their attraction. In the virtual world, the facility of talking with friends and relatives without any hesitation is making people lonely. In the long run, this isolation is giving rise to social media addiction [32].

Jothi [33] studied various social networking sites to examine the strategy of online shopping options offered by them and the impact on their consumers. In their study, they reviewed and analysed the contents of the three major social networking sites and found that these social networking sites are highly strategically presented brands that are attractive to consumers. Due to this attraction, people are attracted to these social networking sites and become a victim of Internet addiction. It was also found that there was a glut of advertisements on these social networking sites.

Mishra [34] studied the provisions of the legal controls of social networking sites in USA and India. He found that most Indians were not aware of the provisions of government control over social networking sites. He was not known that social networking sites are also bound by certain legal obligations towards the society. While residents of the United States were more aware of this matter. In conclusion, it is said that due to low legal awareness, the impact of social networking sites in India is increasing and this is also a reason for the development of Internet addiction in Indians.

Mohammed [35] attempted to explore the perception and use of social networking sites by students at Calicut University, Kerala. The study found that most students are aware of social networking sites and are used for communication purpose with friends. Orkut is the most used site among the respondents due to which the platform is easy to access. On these sites, students used to share their activities with their friends. But these social networking sites also had problems of security and privacy violations.

Kumar [36] studied the views of adults towards advertisements shown on online social networking sites. In their study, they found that most of the adults using the internet do not show any interest in advertisements but they want to avoid them. But they show interest in ads that are useful or attractive to them.

Singh [37], through his descriptive research among researchers of GNDU, Amritsar, studied the knowledge and attitudes of research students about Web 2.0. In his study he found that Facebook is a widely used social media platform which is most popular among research students. Research students have shown that lack of time

is the biggest obstacle in using the social media platform. This study recommends that social and educational facilities such as libraries should be linked to social networking sites so that research students can be immediately aware of any activity happening in the library.

A study by Krishna [38] analysed the importance and benefits of social networking for library and information professionals. In the study, they found that the American library community has chosen a social media platform like Orkut to share information related to their profession and they are using it well. The research also revealed what are the problems that are coming to the fore in the dialogue being conducted by this library community on the social media platform.

Parveen [39] studied the presence and use of social media platforms among people related to library and information science and found that Facebook was the most used but due to lack of time some people are not using it. The slow speed of the Internet came as one of the biggest hurdles in using the social media platform.

A study namely "Social Networking Sites - A Critical Analysis of Its Impact on Personal and Public Life" detailed the dangers of the social media platform. The social media platform makes it available to people in a virtual world for mutual interaction. In this virtual world, people are identified on the basis of their friends and information shared, which sometimes provides wrong information about the identity of the people. In this research, it was also found that the strange behaviour of someone on the social media platform has an effect on the social and personal lives of other people. Another study attempted to trace the history of social networking sites. It was initially found that people used to use social media platforms mainly for providing messages or for friendship, but now people have started using them for many other purposes because social media platform allows anyone to connect with millions of people and get to know them [40].

Krishnamurthy [41] tried to find out the emerging technology i.e. Web 2.0 and its uses in the context of libraries. They concluded that social media platforms are providing a new technology and space for communicating information. They also found that libraries and librarians used these social media platforms personally and professionally.

Kuppuswamy [42] studied the effectiveness of social media platforms on the brain of youth. He concluded that the youth have addiction to social media and this addiction is associated with them both positively and

negatively. He also found that this effect is due to the personal interest of the youth. Its influence on the youth who were using social media for educational needs was positive whereas the effect of using it for other purposes like entertainment was negative on them.

Sardar [43] conducted a survey on the age group, common uses of social media, common social media platforms and the constraints faced by them. On the basis of the survey, they concluded that the trend of using social media platform is the highest among the youth between 25 and 30 years of age and it is because social media provides a virtual world according to the psychological needs of their age. Facebook was found to be the most popular social media platform among these youth to talk with friends.

A recent study on social networking sites [7] tried to look at the effects of social media networks in Indian society from a linguistic and cultural point of view. The article researcher titled "Use of social networking in linguistically and culturally rich India" found that people in Indian community use social media platform to publicize and enrich culture as well as on social media. People also oppose those who try to harm their culture. This research also found that effective social media networking like Indian Facebook is also used against people and groups who work against Indian culture and unity. Indian social media openly exchange their views on the platform on social and national problems and even on politics.

Neelmalar [45] conducted a study to investigate the use and impact of social networking sites on the Indian young generation. The results of the study suggest that the majority of youth are registered members of these sites. They become members of these social networking sites to maintain their existing relationships. Respondents also admitted that with the help of social media platform, they also find their lost old comrades as well as connect with new people so that they can share their thoughts and activities with them.

By the above mentioned studies it is clear that youths are very affectionate for the social media platform. Some of them are using for academic purpose but most of them are using social media platform making online friendship, sharing their thoughts and other feeling with the peers or others on social media sites. India is also being a leading internet consuming country. Low cost internet provides ample opportunities for surfing on internet and also providing space for broaden their sharing. This investigation is mainly focus to explore the social media addiction among Indian youths.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to determine the level of Social Media Addiction of University's students; and test the significance difference between Social Media Addiction on the basis of gender, locality, level of course and School of study.

## HYPOTHESES

1. There will be no significance difference in Social Media Addiction among students on the basis of gender.
2. There will be no significance difference in Social Media Addiction among students on the basis of residential locality.
3. There will be no significance difference in Social Media Addiction among students on the basis of level of course pursuing.
4. There will be no significance difference in Social Media Addiction among students of School of Education and School of Law & Governance

## METHODS

### Research Method

Descriptive survey method was executed in this study. This method has been the most popular and the most widely used research method in social sciences.

### Population & Sample

In this study all students of UG & PG of studying under School of Education and School of Law & Governance of Central University of South Bihar, Gaya constituted population. More than 500 students are studying in both schools. A representative random sample was drawn from both schools by selecting 100 students from both schools. Hence sample was consisting 200 students.

### Tools Used

Social Media Addiction Scale Student Form (SMAS-SF) developed by Cengiz Şahin, Faculty of Education, Ahi Evran University, Kirsehir, Turkey. With 29 items of 4 dimensions i.e. virtual tolerance, virtual communication, virtual problems and virtual information, this is a 5-point Likert type scale. After taking proper permission, this scale was modified according to local needs on the basis of language.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main objective of the study is to find out the level of Social Media addiction among University's students.

This study is well planned and carried out to test the objective and pre-formulated hypotheses which may be accepted or rejected.

**Table 1. Social Media Addiction among male and female students (Overall Sample)**

Variable	N	M	S.D.	t-value	Significance at 0.01
Male	117	79.60	16.15	2.41	NS
Female	83	74.10	15.86		

Table 1 is showing the Social Media Addiction of whole sample. Mean values and S.D. of social media addiction of male and female students are 79.6, 74.1 and 16.15, 15.86 respectively. Obtained t value is 2.41 which is not significant at 0.01 level. Hence pre-formulated hypothesis "There will be no significance difference in Social Media Addiction among students on the basis of gender" stands accepted. It can be inferred that there is no significant difference between male and female students on social media addiction. High mean score of male students shows that they have more social media addiction. One possible reason may be that female students have some other household's responsibilities, so they find less time for using social media.

Glimpses of Table 2 are showing the social media addiction of the students on the basis of their residential location. Mean values of the groups are 78.30 and 76.80 and S.D. is 18.55 & 15.00 respectively. Obtained t value is 0.58 which is not significant. So the hypothesis 2, "There will be no significance difference in Social Media Addiction among students on the basis of residential locality" stands accepted. Mean value of rural students are high and this value indicating more social media addiction in comparison to urban students. Rural students got exposure on social media after a long period due to slow development of IT infrastructure. When they came into the touch of social media with more inquisitiveness, resulting they have developed more addiction towards social media.

**Table 2. Social Media Addiction on the basis of location (Overall Sample)**

Variable	N	M	S.D.	t value	Significance at 0.01
Rural	66	78.30	18.55	0.58	NS
Urban	134	76.80	15.00		

**Table 3. Social Media Addiction on the basis of level of course (Overall Sample)**

Variable	N	M	S.D.	t value	Significance at 0.01
UG	156	77.12	16.18	-0.37	NS
PG	44	78.12	16.55		

Table 3 is indicating that obtained t value for UG and PG students are negative and non- significant at the level of 0.01. Mean values is higher in case of PG students. On the basis of obtained t value, hypothesis 3 “There will be no significance difference in Social Media Addiction among students on the basis of level of course pursuing” stands accepted. PG students may use social media platform for the sharing their course content or teaching related material but on other hand they have less regular classes in comparison to UG students. This provides them more time and opportunities for using social media.

**Table 4. Social Media Addiction on the basis of schools studying in (Overall Sample)**

Variable	N	M	S.D.	t value	Sig at 0.01
Education students	100	79.50	15.03	1.88	NS
Law students	100	75.20	17.14		

Table 4 shows the health hazards caused by water Statistics of Table 4 is mentioning the t value of social media addiction scores of the students studying in School of Education and School of Law & Governance. A calculated t value is 1.88 which is non-significant at 0.01 level. On the basis of t value, hypothesis 4, “There will be no significance difference in Social Media Addiction among students of School of Education and School of Law & Governance” stands accepted. Mean value of students of Education is high in comparison of Law students. It is indicating that Education’s students have more addiction towards social media.

**Table 5. Social Media Addiction of students studying under School of Education**

Variable	N	M	t value	Significance at 0.01
Male	55	82.65	2.37	NS
Female	45	75.64		
Rural	44	81.61	1.24	NS
Urban	56	77.84		
UG	66	79.50	1.0	NS
PG	34	79.50		

Table 5 is presenting an overall view of social media addiction of the students under School of Education. All three groups i.e. gender, location and level of course have not significantly differed on the basis of social media addiction. High mean value of male and rural students infer the high addiction towards social media in comparison to their counterpart.

**Table 6. Social Media Addiction of students studying under School of Law & Governance**

Variable	N	M	t value	Significance at 0.01
Male	62	77.00	1.34	NS
Female	38	72.60		
Rural	22	71.68	-1.09	NS
Urban	78	76.19		
UG	90	75.38	0.30	NS
PG	10	73.60		

It is clear by Table 6 than different groups of Law students are not significantly differ on social media addiction. But rural students of law are less addicted than urban students, however this condition was opposite in case of education’s students.

### CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATION

Results of this study revealed that there is no significant difference in social media addiction of male and female students. Omekwu [46] also find same result in his study. Male and female students are equally used social media platform for chatting, sharing and making online friendships. Findings of this research are also with in line of the research of Appeanti [47]. Residential location in which these university students belong has no role to play in Social Media addiction. Rural and Urban students do not differ significantly on Social Media Addiction but surprisingly rural students are using social media much more in comparison to urban students. Findings of Perrin [48] also support the above said findings of this study. Level of course i.e. UG & PG does not denote any in case of Social Media Addiction. PG students found more addictive towards social media use but they do not significantly differ from the UG students. Detailed analysis shows that in case of School wise sample, students from School of Education were more inquisitive to use social media so they have a little more addiction towards social media, on other hand students from School of Law & Governance were also addicted to social media.

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