# ANALYSING IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON WOMEN: A STUDY IN VADODARA CITY

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*Abstract:* **Humans have always been socially connected or networked since the time of their origin on planet Earth. Now in modern times, social interaction has further diversified into the realm of online communication, which is any communication that is enabled by the use of computers and the Internet. Social Networking sites are termed to as web based services that give an opportunity to individuals to create their own personal profile with the choice of their own list of users and thereby connect with them in an altogether public forum that provides them with features such as chatting, blogging, video calling, mobile connectivity and video/photo sharing.**

**The main objective is to analyze the impact of social media on young women in urban area of Vadodara.**

**The study based on primary data for which the field survey had been and a questionnaire among the respondents. The questions were so designed that they explore several aspects of social media. A random sample of 100 women is collected. The primary data thus generated have been analyzed using appropriate methods.**

**Findings show that the Majority of the respondents show the agreements with these influences of social media. Respondents opine WHATSAPP and Instagram as their favorite social media with 51% followed by YouTube. They spend more than usual hours on social networking sites to download pictures, browse through updates seek entertainment and chat around with friends to keep themselves connected. The findings highlights include the followings; social media refines how females think, interacts, communicates, their social lifestyle and many more.**

**The study was able to discover diverse impacts of social media usage which are a result of advancement in modern technology.**

*Keywords:* **Social Media, Women, Urban, Technology.**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

We humans have always been socially connected or networked since the time of our origin on planet Earth. We've been using a multitude of techniques and instruments to facilitate and maintain these networks; be it postal services, telephones, telegraphs or even socializing in clubs, social contact has always been a prerogative.

In modern times, social interaction has further diversified into the realm of online communication, which is any communication that is enabled by the use of computers and the Internet. Web 2.0 technologies were initially developed to fulfill commercial and institutional purposes but they gradually evolved to focus on user-generated content. Such technology has a global reach where individuals can collaborate, share and learn.

Social media can be referred to as "*a set of online tools open for public membership that supports idea sharing, creating and editing content, building relationships through interaction and collaboration*" (Matthew & Martinez, 2014,p. 126). An online social network can be defined as a type of virtual community that consists of people who share a similar interest. These communities are able to interact with one another almost instantaneously whether they are separated

geographically or not (Johnston et al, 2013). The growth and popularity of social media means that is has surpassed its original purpose of being a personal connectivity channel between friends to becoming an essential strategic business tool. Social media is a set of collective channels for online communications sources dedicated to varieties of input, communication, sharing and collaboration. It is especially based on Websites, applications, blogging, social networking, social bookmarking, and wikis are the different types of social media.

India has 560 million active Internet users as of 2019 and is the second-largest online market, behind China. It is estimated that by 2021 there will be around 560 million active internet users in India. The majority of India's internet users are mobile phone internet users, who take advantage of cheap alternatives to expensive broadband/ Wi-Fi connections that require PC, laptop and other equipment. Indian mobile data users consume 11 gigabits (GB) of data each month on average, India is the highest globally, ahead of markets like China, the US, France, South Korea, Japan, Germany, and Spain. The overall data traffic in India increased by 47 % in 2019 driven by continued 4G consumption. 4G constituted 96 % of the total data traffic consumed across the country while 3G data traffic registered its highest-ever decline of 30 %.  Indians have 1.2 billion mobile phone subscriptions and downloaded in 2019. (Statista reports 2019, Nokia)

Indians now download more apps than residents of any other country – over 19 billion apps were downloaded by Indian users in 2019, resulting in a 195 % growth over 2016 data. The average Indian social media user spends 17 hours on the platforms each week, more than social media users in China and the United States. Indian internet users are fond of social media. In 2021, it is estimated that there will be around 448 million social network users in India, a significant increase from 2019 where it figures at 351 million. Face-book is the most popular social networking site in the country. There are about 270 million Face-book users in India as 2019, placing India as the country with the largest Face-book user base in the world.

The entry of Whatsapp into India's digital market boosted app usage, with a doubling in rural areas in recent years. Data shows that the reach of the messaging service extends wider than just urban areas. Other popular apps include TikTok and Instagram. (Source: Statista reports 2019 and Kantar IMRB ICUBE Report)

With more than 1 in 3 individuals accessing the Internet in India, penetration in urban is twice that in rural. On average, Indian users spend 2.4 hours on social media a day (slightly below the global average of 2.5 hours a day).

**Social Media and Youth**

The extensive use of Social Networking however, makes it an interesting study (D. Houghton,et al2016) regarding the risks and consequences on the existing youth. Social networking with the ability to actively vanish     boundaries, the anytime anywhere availability has seen impact on privacy as sharing too much, false unnecessary information about themselves or voice opinions, even getting exposed to fraudsters or cyber criminals and most critical of all the increased addiction to Internet and Social applications (E. Shaw2016)These tend to influence the youth for their social, emotional and psychological well-being. Adverse outcomes are seen as increasing exposure to cyber-bullying, unknown persons accessing personal information, online dating, exiting, and sleep deprivation, exposure to unsuitable digital content, outside influences of third-party groups encouraging money transfer and low social interactions and limited face to face communications.

As observed Two-thirds of Internet users in India are in the age group of 12-29 years.

For adolescents, phone-based communication is an important way to maintain their social relationships, and the use of social media websites is one of the most common activities. However, anything in excess is bad and may lead to social media addiction(Kuss DJ,2011) Nowadays, irrespective of their socioeconomic background, adolescents have greater exposure to electronic gadgets like smart phones at a much younger age, and hence, more prone to social media  overuse or addiction.

Social media addiction is an emerging health problem in India, especially among the young population.

Overall, the research on this topic is in its infancy and needs further exploration (Andreassen CS,2014).

The proposed research will attempt to fill the gaps that are existing in previous research and contribute to existing knowledge within this area. The objective of the current study is to investigate impact of social media female as perceived by them.

## 2.  METHODOLOGY

The study is explorative and descriptive in nature based on primary data for which the field survey had been conducted and data collected through a questionnaire.The questions were so designed that they explore several aspects of social media. A random sample of 100 female' respondents were collected. The primary data thus generated have been analyzed using appropriate methods.

## 3.  RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Table 1: Preferred social media application by females

| Social Media | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| | N=100 | % |
| WHATSAPP | 51 | 27.8 |
| FACEBOOK | 16 | 8.7 |
| INSTAGRAM | 51 | 27.8 |
| You Tube | 41 | 22.4 |
| Twitter | 13 | 7.1 |
| Others | 11 | 6 |

- (Total exceed 100 due to multiple responses)

In accordance with table the social media preferred by females is WHATSAPP and INSTAGRAM instead of other media.

Visual sites like Instagram attract girls more than boys, who seem to prefer video games and gaming to social media.

As of 2018, Instagram has more than 1 billion users worldwide, and more than half (over 500 million) are daily users. Of those, about 60% are females under the age of 34. This is not coincidental. In fact, the software has been engineered to keep them engaged longer and coming back for more. Bottomless scrolling, tagging, notifications, and live stories tap into the fear of missing out (FOMO) that gives teens so much anxiety.

The study in Delhi NCR region (Khurana N, **2015**) 75% responded to Facebook holding the maximum share amongst the rest. 15% responded to Instagram, 6% responded to Twitter.

### Table 2: PERCEPTION OF WOMEN ON SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT ON SOCIAL LIFESTYLE: (IN %)

| Options | STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Promotes Good Societal Norms & Values | 10 | 61 | 25 | 4 |
| Destruction Of Social Values And Lifestyle | 14 | 37 | 39 | 10 |
| Borrowing Of Foreign Culture & Tradition | 27 | 51 | 18 | 4 |
| Promotes Hatred | 26 | 56 | 17 | 1 |
| Disvalue Marriage Institutions | 3 | 26 | 35 | 36 |
| Negetive Affect On Personal Interaction | 24 | 42 | 27 | 7 |
| Destruction Of Relationship With Family | 19 | 36 | 35 | 10 |
| Immoral And Unethical Videos And Images | 9 | 46 | 39 | 6 |
| Unnecessary Information And Confusion | 27 | 50 | 21 | 2 |
| Destruction Of Gender Inequality | 18 | 38 | 38 | 6 |
| Social Media -Time Consuming | 26 | 58 | 13 | 3 |

The respondents 71% agree that it promotes good values and norms of society as in 52% (Chukwuere, 2017) It contradicts that 51% feel that SM have influenced  norms. Acceptance of foreign culture and tradition among 78% .This suggests that young females are inclined to adapt the changes in culture and traditions.

At the same time 86% believed that SM promotes hatred abusive or unethical/anti-cultural contents posting promotes hatred in the society. The finding shows that 58 (84.0%) of the female accepts that some SM posting promotes hatred in, society and possibly the world at large

A study by (Williams, 2012) proves that Face-book as SM application affects relationships including marriages. The present study reveals that a majority of respondents feels that SM does not lower the importance marriage institution

When people focus so much time on social media networks their real life relationships begin to suffer. In doing this our more important relationships with our loved ones and close family members suffer because more of our time and effort is put into the illusion of social media. Jonathan Safran Foer in his article, "How Not to Be Alone", said "Each step forward in social media has made it easier, just a little, to avoid the emotional work of being present, to convey information rather than humanity." With each passing day, these words ring truer and truer. This is true for 66% respondents who feel that SM has affected their relations.

It been noticed that rumors and false messages spread faster on Social media than any other medium.

The study further presented with 55% opined that SM promotes immoral and unethical posting of videos, pictures, images among female students. While 45% did not agree that SM encourages unethical posting of videos, pictures, comments, and others. The findings suggests that overall, unwisely usage of SM promotes unethical posting of video and photographs

About more than half respondents believe that immoral and unethical posts are causing negative feedback. In 2018, 42% of those surveyed in a Pew Research Center survey said they had taken a break from checking the platform for a period of several weeks or more, while 26% said they had deleted the Facebook app from their cell phone. The vast majority of teens (90% in this case) believe online harassment is a problem that affects people their age, and 63% say this is a major problem.

Girls also are more likely than boys to report being the recipient of explicit images they did not ask for (29% vs. 20%). And being the target of these types of messages is an especially common experience for older girls: 35% of girls' ages 15 to 17 say they have received unwanted explicit images, compared with about one-in-five boys in this age range and younger teens of both genders**.**

A 2017 Pew Research Center survey of U.S. adults also found age and gender differences in receiving nonconsensual explicit images; women ages 18 to 29 are especially likely to encounter this behavior.

Time spent is time consumed, 84% believe that time is wasted on SM. While updating the status on social networks, update account by posting photos on hourly basis, daily, sometimes more frequently.

When there is a new tweet or a post on social, it takes nearly half an hour for returning to the original job.

The advancement of social media can be argued as being symptomatic of a generation that is somewhat self-absorbed. Using Facebook to frequently change profile pictures and post pictures of yourself are methods of focusing the attention on the self (Carpenter, 2012). Social networking sites like Facebook and Instagram are often inundated with photos of individuals showcasing their "selfies" often masked by various filters and editing tools. Authors Kapidzic and Martins (2015) cited a study that analysed various profile pictures from the popular social networking site Myspace. The study concluded that "*the users purposefully selected such pictures to highlight their looks and appear sexually attractive*" (Kapidzic and Martins, 2015, p. 279). The findings from Kapidzic and Martins study resonate to what Carpenter (2012) coins as 'self-promotion' within social media.

Unlike traditional media that showcases models in their advertising, a user of social networking sites like Face-book are more inclined to be exposed to images of their friends or acquaintances. This could potentially be more damaging in terms of social comparison as individuals are comparing themselves to people they know. This in turn can lead social media users to attain a negative attitude towards their body. These images whilst they still have the potential to be photo shopped and edited to promote the "ideal of beauty", the comparisons made through social media are more relevant as they hit closer to home so to speak.

Given the heavy presence of women online, strong visual content and social comparisons mean that the area of social media can significantly impact how women engage in online activities. Women often respond to nonverbal stimuli, elaborate descriptions and "*imagery-laced interpretations*" more than men do (McMahon and McMillian, 2009).

In comparison to viewing an appearance-neutral website viewing Facebook was associated with more negative mood and body dissatisfaction for women who tend to compare their appearance with others (Fardouly et al., 2015).

Moreover, participants who were high in appearance comparison tendency reported an increased desire to change the appearance of their face, hair or skin after spending time on Facebook, in comparison with those who browsed the control website. (Alley, 1988; Berry &Zebrowitz-McArthur, 1986; Hassin & Trope, 2000).

There has been a vast emergence of technological addictions involving internet, cell phone, video games, and social networking sites over the past decade. These technological addictions have the similar core features of any behavioral addiction, including salience, withdrawal, and euphoria and also have reinforcing aspects that can negatively affect psychological, interpersonal, and occupational functioning (Griffiths,1996; Davis, 2001; Young, 1999).

Emotional well-being also mediated the relationship between time spent using social media and the quality of that user's relationships, meaning that the more time a person spent on social media the more likely their emotional wellbeing declined which then negatively impacted their relationships, the user such as fear of missing out (FOMO).

Parigi and Henson highlight the term "alone together" to demonstrate that technology hinders depth of relationships in return for increased connectivity. The researches further explain that people "easily find company but are exhausted by the pressures of performance" (Parigi and Hensen 2014:161). In a world that should value quality over quantity, social media sites influence and perpetuate the mindset of quantity over quality.

The access to digital technologies has changed the nature of human interaction, and even changed the way humans think (Pitts 2011:241).

Advances in technology have resulted in increases in sedentary behavior and, in the past, solitary activities. It is observed that 32% felt that they are lazy.

The relationship between body dissatisfaction and SM  is a common that women were dedicating extensive amounts of time to thinking about what image to upload, photos-hopping it and regularly checking their personal page to see the updated "like" counts, which in turn increased their own insecurities. This results in change in mood and anger due to dislikes. Many young women reported obsessing over the number of "likes" they were getting, feared not looking beautiful in their photos, thought individuals would think they looked different on social media than in real life.

Instagram is one of the most popular social media platforms (Kharpal, 2015). It allows users to communicate solely through posting and sharing photos. Researchers have looked at the role of Instagram on body image with adolescent girls and young women, the most frequent users of the social media platform.

In an interview with Elle Magazine, Emily Bryngelson, an associate designer at Ann Taylor, who admitted to struggling with an eating disorder as a teenager, revealed that she deletes selfies if she doesn't receive enough "likes" (Fleming, 2014). She explains, "Instagram makes me so anxious. I'm always looking at other women thinking, 'I wish I looked like that,' or 'I should get more in shape.'…I mean, young girls can now follow Victoria's Secret models and see what they look like in the 'every day.' …That has got to make any woman, let alone a 13-year-old girl, feel unsure of herself."

**PERCEPTION OF WOMEN ON SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT ON EMOTIONS**

The emergence of social networking sites has caused a shift, and now nearly all aspects of an individual's life are out in the open for all to see (Muise, Christofides, & Desmarais, 2009). 27% respondents feel social media tracks their privacy while only 18% feel this does not happen to them.

IMPACT ON EMOTIONS

| Emotions | ALWAYS | SOMETIMES | NEVER |
|---|---|---|---|
| Angry Over Unimportant Things | 11 | 85 | 4 |
| Change Of Mood | 35 | 58 | 7 |
| Internet Relationship | 9 | 49 | 41 |
| Late Night  Browsing | 39 | 50 | 11 |
| Track privacy | 27 | 55 | 18 |
| Lazy | 32 | 53 | 15 |
| Unhappy/ANXIETY | 11 | 72 | 17 |
|  |  |  |  |

Research into socially comparing via social media shows that this comparison is linked to depressive symptoms (Appel et al., 2016)lower perceptions of well-being (Chen et al., 2016; )increased social anxiety (Shaw et al., 2015) and a decrease in self-esteem (Chou and Edge, 2012).

According to a report published by PewCenter.org most of the children have become victims of the cyber bulling over the past. Since anyone can create a fake account and do anything without being traced, it has become quite easy for anyone to bully on the Internet. Threats, intimidation messages and rumors can be sent to the masses to create discomfort and chaos in the society. Social media can easily ruin someone's reputation just by creating a false story and spreading across the social media. Similarly businesses can also suffer losses due to bad reputation being conveyed over the social media.

<p align="center">Victims of Cyber Crime</p>

| | HACKING | PHOTO BEING MISUSED | FAKE PROFILE | ALL OF THESE | NONE OF THE ABOVE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Respondents | 3 | 9 | 14 | 17 | 60 |
| PERCENTAGE | 2.9 | 8.7 | 13.5 | 16.5 | 58.25 |
| | | | | | |

Another problem of SM is hacking, photo being misused; fake profile is becoming more of social and emotional problem. Although as high as 60% responded they never had such problem. These things happening so securely on a networking site, but the victim do not come out because of social stigma. In most of the time when the case comes to investigating agency, the criminal has already done a severe damage. Countries like India are also facing similar threats from networking sites. According to Central Crime Branch, all reported cases were committed on Facebook, Orkut or MySpace, with Facebook topping the list (Venugopal, & Peter, 2010). Cyber crimes on SNS includes posting objectionable content on user''s profile, creating fake profile to defame a person and getting access to someone''s profile by hacking. Due to easy and open access of SMSs, the information posted on them can be easily accessed by hackers

Conclusion: To use social media or not is an individual decision to many. But one must be aware of certain things when discussing private life in public. The growth of social networking sites shows a significant change in the social and personal behavior of SM users. It has become an essential medium of communication and entertainment among the young adults. Life on SM is far from reality and must not affect individual's social, emotional and personal values, morals and ethics of society. Though it has started to affect the daily activities of normal human beings, the popularity of SM is not going to reduce in near future. Everything in this world can be used for a bad purpose as well as for good. Cyber laws have to be equipped with rules so that violators cannot escape at the cost of societal values.

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