

# A Study of Social Media Usage Behaviour of Youth of Dharamshala City

Sandhya Yadav\*, Dr. Ram Pravesh Rai\*\*

## Abstract

Social media users create their virtual world parallel to the real world, a notion that is used quite often these days. This is because of the wider reach of social media and its magnetism on youth. Social media is based on web 2.0 which extends some crucial facilities to the user like the creation of content, sharing, exchange of user-generated content; check the others' reactions, etc. A rapid growth in social media users such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and many other forums has been noticed in the past few years. This boost may lead social media to become the fourth fundamental requirement of life apart from food, shelter, and clothes, as starvation is observed commonly in youth for it. This platform has become important not only for communication and entertainment but also for commerce, business, and political communication and widely used for persuasion. Being exposed to social media for a long period, usage patterns, and behavioral and lifestyle changes have also been observed among its users. Overall, social media has become a platform that has established new meanings of communication. The study holds much relevance in contemporary times since being connected to social media has become a routine, a gratification needs, and every so often an addiction for youth. The study aims to be acquainted with youths' behavior towards social media especially Facebook and for the purpose, a survey was conducted using non-stratified random sampling among youths of Dharamshala in Kangra district.

**Keywords:** Social Media, Youth, Facebook usage, Behavior.

## Introduction

Social media has provided a new dimension of communication in human history that is being used in almost every sphere of life. Social media is widely used in Businesses, political discussions, online shopping, education etc. Social media has freed our lives from the complexities of communication to an extent. This is the reason that today along with communication there has been a change in the way of thinking as well as the way of living. Social media is defined as 'the many relatively inexpensive and widely accessible electronic tools that facilitate anyone to publish and access information, collaborate on a common effort, or build relationships.' The advent of 'social media has increased both the quality and pace of collaboration in students'. Apart from this, social media is being used on a large scale to increase the annual sales of any organization or to increase the performance of any institution in various ways. People like to stay connected to social media 24\*7. Besides many benefits and facilities of social media, various negative effects have also been observed among its active users. Inaccurate information or fake news easily spread through these platforms which are very harmful for our society as people rely on that. Here the possibilities of privacy are always at risk. Being addicted to these, cyber bully, radiation emitted by electronic devices and other negative aspects also affect the mental status of very active users of social media. (Lissak, G. 2018).

These social media websites and applications have been designed according to the desire of the users and being updated accordingly and thus foster its usage day by day. The facility of writing and sharing ideas makes this medium widely acknowledged. Empowering user to create and share his/her own content in any form of text, audio, audio visual or graphics make the social media a popular medium. Most of the youth have started spending more time on social media rather than television and radio. This is also one of the peculiar reasons why social media is particularly impacting the youth. While noticing escalated use of social media, continuous update are being made by its providers and efforts are being made to make it more user as well as device friendly.

Technology has changed the way of thinking of young people in today's time and social media empowers them to express themselves and gratify their emotional needs at their fingertips. Global reach and acceptance of web 2.0 platforms for communication and exchange also substantiate the concept of Global Village. In past few years, social media has become incredibly popular among youth. This medium also affects

---

\* Research Scholar, Dept. of Mass Communication and Electronic Media, Central University of Himachal Pradesh, Dharamshala.

\*\* Asstt. Professor, Dept. of Mass Communication and Electronic Media, Central University of Himachal Pradesh, Dharamshala.

the youth in terms of social ethics, behavior, education, and life interests etc. (Williams, A. L., & Merten, M. J. 2008). The study aims to find out the impact of social media on youths' lifestyle, youths' behavior and also try to assess the amount of time spent by youth on social media sites especially on Facebook.

### **Review of literature**

Walrave et al. (2016) in their work highlighted the need for social media and elaborated on the influence of Social media at adolescent age. The authors emphasized that the role of social media is crucial in empowering adolescents and overall rational development. However, this lucrative work of social media has associated with various forms of threats that need to be figured out. The work revolves around in detailing the aspects of youth that are employed by them to prove their identity through Social platforms. Also, another aspect of the work furnishes the importance of empowering the youth with the necessary information in handling social platforms as it deals with the personal biographical details. So, seeing the present Scenario which is full of bucket comprising of numerous application which ask for their personal information before being permitted, it is of dire need to sensitize the youth with all possible on-line threats which in the case is not done can lead the youth fall prey to various forms of threats.

Brain Simpson(2019) in the book “Young people, social media, and the law” depicted how social media is becoming unusable for the youth despite popularity. He gives several reasons to support his work such as the Safety of facts and authorship is an important issue on social media. He thoroughly discusses safety issues, security threats, and cyber security as well. This work revolves around the practices of criminal nature such as privacy, defamation, and intellectual property in the context of social media. The author also emphasizes the aspects related to children and youth that have been focused on. Social media is moving away from positive issues. Many times the things given on it are of no use. How the non-essential flow of information not only serves the importance of social media but also becomes a problem for important information. According to the author, all these issues not only need attention but it is important to think deeply. From time to time, there has been strong advocacy of controlling social media contents. In the contemporary scenario, it becomes crucial for the citizens and governments of any country to think about it.

Information Resources Management Association (2018) says in their work that the world had not found such a big platform to share their experiences and thoughts until a few years ago. Today's youth are connected to the global network. One can easily discuss extensively by contacting each other. Many issues can also be discussed through social media at the international level. Researchers and software manufacturers are also taking advantage of this feature on a large scale. The effectiveness of this platform can be estimated from this. It also has a lot of impact in the field of media. Many cultures of the world are coming close to each other through social media. Today's youth belong to a vast global network. Easily detailed discussion by contacting each other has become more accessible and easier. Now, no issue is regional or national. Global discussions on many issues have also become common through social media. Researchers and software makers are also taking advantage of this feature on a large scale. The book also discusses the estimation of the effectiveness of the respective medium. It has a lot of influence not only in media but also in many other fields. This book also attempts to know how many cultures of the world are getting closer to each other through social media. Therefore, the cultural attachment of people is also increasing. Thus, this book proves very useful for the research work presented.

Al-Deenat el.(2013) Discussed in his book about the uses of social media. The number of social media users is continuously increasing at a rapid rate. Their number is increasing globally. It has the largest number of users in Asian countries. In this book, the importance of social media has been discussed in detail, how social media has emerged as an important medium from education to industry and entertainment to human rights. This platform has also been used extensively for various political movements around the world. Issues like the fight for democracy against corruption, social media has opened new, effective, and democratic doors of revolution. This digital medium has provided the freedom to the people of every caste, religion, and gender without any discrimination. India is the second-largest consumer media consumer country. The communication revolution of social media has created immense communication possibilities for the citizens of every country. Currently, it has become an effective platform that has become necessary for daily use as well. This book presents a detailed analysis related to social media and its uses.

Ruddock and Andy (2013) highlight the relationship between media and society in their work. There has always been a doubt in our society regarding the media. Emphasis is placed on doing any work with full attention. The lack of concentration in its users has been noticed due to social media. The youth not only see this medium in a completely different way, but their yoga is also different. His behavior on social media also affects his real life. In this book, the author has discussed social media and various issues related to it in detail. The media is seeing the youth in a new form, not just the youth. In many fields including fashion, technology, entertainment information, and lifestyle, media is disseminating information keeping in mind the youth. Social media has provided that space to the youth more quickly than traditional media. This book provides important material not only in understanding the mind set of the youth but also in understanding their information needs. This book deals with all the topics which can be related to youth and media. Each chapter of this opens a new dimension before us. Various information has been interpreted keeping in mind the global contexts. The author has used case studies to explain most of the information and research.

Subrahmanyam and Smahel (2011) have documented the utility of digital devices in youth in their work. What can be the use of new technology, how does it affect business not only its users but also society. The journey from traditional media to digital media has changed society along with the floating methods of communication. These changes have been both positive and negative. This book gives an in-depth discussion on the benefits and disadvantages of new techniques of communication and various features of social media and its regular update. Innovations are happening around the online platform and its linked environment. This information technology has also replaced traditional media. Be it print media or electronic media, it is present on all digital platforms. This shows that the online world is not limited to information or entertainment at present, but its world is very wide. Its users and research on it are doing new experiments every day.

### Research Methodology:

The research mainly focuses on to measure the impact of Facebook on changing youth behavior and for this a well-defined theory-of- change-driven cycle of impact creations has been considered. Uses and gratification theory is found most apt as a theory of change. To get the primary data for the purpose a survey was designed as a data collection tool. Survey tools do have basic analysis. After the collection of data, a separate table was made for each question for the analysis of data and interpretation. As a universe Dharamshala city of Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh has been selected as sample size of 100 youth from college and the central university has been chosen for the research. The questionnaire contains questions which were distributed to randomly selected 100 respondents of college and the university of Dharamshala city. Questions were prepared by keeping research objectives in the mind Based on primary observations a Social site Facebook has been selected for the research work. The questionnaire contained questions related to Social Media and youth engagement on Facebook. Responses of hundred youth from the age group of 18 to 35 from the selected sample size have been analyzed.

### Data Analysis and interpretation

General introduction of respondents:

The respondents in the present study are aged between 18 years and 35 years of age. 50 women and 50 men were selected for the study. It was tried to balance the respondent's gender by taking 50 percent female and 50 percent male. To get active users, weightage is given to those who regularly log-in to the Facebook. The following descriptions have been derived from the analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaire:

The regularity of respondents on social media sites.

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Always	84	84
Occasionally	11	11
Irregularly	05	05
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

The above table shows that 84 percent of the respondents regularly log in to Facebook, 11 percent of

respondents occasionally see the site, while five percent of respondents are irregular but log in to Facebook. So it may be said that most of the respondents selected for the research regularly log in to the social site. At the same time, 11 percent of people log in to the site occasionally, as well as some respondents who are not able to log in to the site on daily basis, which means that according to their convenience, they can see the posts on Facebook. It is revealed that Facebook is quite popular among users.

Facebook features that mostly used by the user

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Comments	25	25
React features	31	31
Both	44	44
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

According to the responses to the question, which features of Facebook attracts you the most i.e. 'comments' and 'react features', or both then 25 percent of respondents believed that they like 'comment' option, while 31 percent believed that they like to react icon rather than writing comments. At the same time, 44 percent of respondents were those who were attracted by both 'comments' and 'react features'. So, based on this analysis, it can be said that most respondents included in the study prefer both the features, while about one-fourth of the respondents prefer the 'comments' option more. Also, a large section of the respondents likes both 'react features'.

Frequency of checking Facebook profile by users

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Once in a day	11	11
Twice in a day	52	52
More than two times in a day	37	37
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

The table illustrates that 11 percent of the respondents said that they log in once in a day, 52 percent of the respondents said that they log in to the site twice in a day. In response to this question, 37 percent of the remaining respondents answered that they log in to this social site more than a couple of times in a day. It is thus revealed that there is a large section of the respondents who log in Facebook twice in a day, whereas lots of people are there who logs into the site for more than a couple of times.

Usability of Facebook content according to its users

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very Beneficial	76	76
Average Beneficial	16	16
Less Beneficial	08	08
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

The results shows that 76 percent of the people said that it is very beneficial, 16 percent people answered this question in the form of average beneficial, 8 percent of respondents believe was less beneficial. It is learned from the above figures that most of the respondents involved in the survey consider the information being provided as very beneficial and were satisfied with the contents. At the same time, there was a section of the respondents who said that information provided there is average beneficial or less beneficial. Therefore, the above analysis shows that the information provided on a Facebook profile is beneficial for the users.

The expediency of new trends used on Facebook according to users

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Improved qualitatively	67	67
General improvement	26	26
No to speak of	07	07
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

The above table describes that how your information gathering habits related to latest fashion and trends improved by using the social site Facebook, 67 percent of respondents believed that their habits have improved qualitatively, while 26 percent of the respondent said that they feel general improvement and 7 percent of the people said no to speak of. In this way, the above question asked during the research study revealed that social sites are making a better chance in the information-gathering habits of the users.

Reliability of content/statements given on different social media platform

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Believe	52	52
Normal Believe	31	31
General Believe	17	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

The above table elaborate the reliability of Facebook pages, groups or like pages, etc., here the 52 percent respondents said that they believe on the Facebook posts, groups or like pages, etc., While 31 percent of the people said that they normally believe on the facts presented in the Facebook pages, groups or like pages, etc. 17 percent respondents said they have belief in a general basis. Thus, from the above analysis, the facts come that most of the users have believed in Facebook posts, groups, or like pages, etc. Thanks to the beliefs of users the popularity of the social site Facebook is also maintained.

Role of social media in changing youth's behavior

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	68	68
Sometimes	17	17
No to speak of	15	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

The table shows that social media sites play a significant role in inducing youth behavior, 68 percent of the respondents said yes absolutely, while 17 percent of the people said sometimes, as well as 15 percent of respondents who were saying that they think this as no to speak of? In this way, the above question revealed that most of the users think that social media sites play an important role in inducing youth behavior. Social site Facebook is playing a vital role in this regard. Thus it can be said that social media sites play an important role in inducing youth behavior.

Time spent on Facebook

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
About half an hour	65	65
Nearby two hours a day	23	23
More than two hours a day	12	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

According to the data of the above table, 65 percent of the respondents said that they use Facebook about half an hour, while 23 percent respondents said that they use social site nearby two hours, as well as 12 percent of the respondents, said that they scroll down on this site for more than couple hours in a day. Thus, based on the above analysis, it was revealed that most of the respondents use Facebook daily for one hour to more than two hours a day. This much use of the social site can say a heavy user. Youths along with other user communities of the social site have a great impact on their lives and behaviors.

Comparison of Facebook with other social networking sites

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
More informative than other social sites	71	71
General informative	23	23
Less informative	06	06
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

The table number 9 portrays the comparison of Facebook usage with other social networking sites. From the results it was articulated that 71 percent of the users considered Facebook to be more informative than other social networking sites. However, 23 percent of respondents view Facebook as a platform which provides only general information and 6 percent of respondents give their answer as less attractive. In this way, in response to this question, based on the answers received from the respondents, we can say that most of the users consider the social site Facebook in comparison to other social sites more informative than other social sites.

**Discussion**

In the study, it was found that social media is a platform available on the internet has changed the definitions of communication. More than entertainment and information, social media platforms are now being used seriously in politics and other important social interaction. Social media users are mostly logged in through any electronic devices like mobile phones, tablet and wearable gadgets. Many respondents admitted that they keep checking Facebook or other social media at short intervals. Various features available on Facebook have made it a more interesting and facilitate the emotional exchange among friends as well as acquaintance. Facebook keeps experimenting every day to make it more users friendly. This is the reason that people who use it feel emotionally connected to it. Apart from the features like comment and writing, the emoji features and many other features such as Facebook Friends Celebration Tagging, Check in etc. make it more cozy and likable. This is also one of the reasons for its popularity among the youth. The content shared on Facebook depends on Facebook friends, likes, and followers. Question marks have also been raised on the credibility of the content shared on social media. Due to the flood of fake news in the last few years, its negative image has also been reflected. Despite this, youth choose content on social media as per their requirement. Most of the users admit that by the use of social media sites, changes in their lives are also inducing. While some users were also indifferent to their reply. During interviews with some respondents, it was also learned that they use social media for various reasons as well, like writing their thoughts and disseminating them to their friend lists. These contents are related to the latest trends, fashion, status, social scenario, and a lot of other topics. Most of the respondents said that social networking site is playing a crucial role in creating an impact on today's youths. Facebook has the highest popularity among youth in web platforms. Apart from its own features, facilities of other mediums like Instagram and Twitter are also available on Facebook in some forms, whether it is sharing photos, using hashtags; option to cut the story share, Facebook offers many such features to its users.

**Conclusion**

On the basis of the above analysis and discussions it can be said that social media sites are providing ample space to the users for expressing and discussing their thoughts, ideas believe and ideologies. Social media site like Facebook plays a crucial role in dissemination of the latest trends, fashion, status, social scenario as well as current ideas and thoughts. Thus it has been derived that social sites i.e. Facebook has potential to make an impact on youths and their behaviors.

The limitations of this study are that finding the impact of any social media platform is quite tricky. Human behavior or impact in research is a little difficult to find. Certain social media behaviors have been studied in this research. Whereas the field related to human behavior is very wide. A quantitative method has been used in this study. If a mixed method is used for human behavior, results can be obtained even better.

### **Acknowledgment/Financial Support**

The author has received financial support from the Indian Council of Social Science Research through the medium of ICSSR Full term Doctoral Fellowship.

### **References**

1. Al-Deen, Hana S. Noor, and John Allen Hendricks. Social media: usage and impact. Lexington books, 2011. Print.
2. Baghel, Sanjay Singh, and Singh, Uma S. Social Media and Indian Youth. Delhi: Apple Books Publishers and Distributor. 2015. Print
3. Berger, Arthur Asa. Media and communication research methods: An introduction to qualitative and quantitative approaches. Sage Publications, 2018. Print
4. Information Resources Management Association. Social media marketing: Breakthroughs in research and practice. IGI Global, 2018.
5. Martin, Paul, and Thomas Erickson. Social Media: Usage and Impact. Global Vision Publishing House, 2013.
6. Neelamalar, M. 'Media Law and ethics'. New Delhi: PHI Learning Pvt. Ltd. 2012.
7. Ruddock, Andy. Youth and media. Sage, 2013.
8. Siddiqui, Shabnoor, and Tajinder Singh. "Social media its impact with positive and negative aspects." International Journal of Computer Applications Technology and Research 5.2 (2016): 71-75.
9. Subrahmanyam, Kaveri, and David Smahel. Digital youth: The role of media in development. Springer Science & Business Media, 2010.
10. Shetty, Annapoorna, Et. Al. "The Impact of Social Media on Youth". International Journal of Innovative Research in Computer and Communication Engineering, Vol. 3, Page 379-383. 2015.
11. Simpson, Brian. Young People, Social Media and the Law. Routledge, 2017.
12. Walrave, Michel, et al., eds. Youth 2.0: social media and adolescence. Springer, 2016.
13. (2020, September 10). Demography. retrieved from <https://hpkangra.nic.in/>