



Social Media App Preference of Rural Students in India

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Abstract: Social media is a need of the new era which is a popular means. This source has positive as well as negative effects on society. This medium of entertainment which is regarded as a gift to mankind is not a common source everywhere. The tech-savvy world has developed into a new notion and has reached 5G connections at some places however, on the other side some places still lack internet connectivity and are unaware of the usage of social media which still is a concern. Taking a look at the picture of the multicultural country that is India one would gain different instances. In this country majority of the population resides in villages and as a result, the social media has not penetrated deep into every area. Where at one point it is considered as a benefit to build connections, expand the business and spread awareness on the other side it is counted as a source of distraction, a medium of dependence and a source that results in mental and emotional disturbance. Thus, the present paper gives a critical view of the social media app preference of rural students in India.

Keywords: Online Media, Mobile Phone, Smartphone, Social Media, Rural Students, Rural India

1. INTRODUCTION

Media has been an important segment in the lives of people. In the present time with the advent of technology, the world of media has taken a new shape. Gone are the days where media was just constrained to broadcast and print media. With the coming up of the internet, now online media has become an important part of this zone. If one looks into the past, this all began from telegraphs, newspapers, magazines and now online media more precisely social media has been ruling the world. It has become an integral part of our lives where for every little detail; one makes use of social media. This form of media has created its hype and now it is impossible to separate it from humans.



Social Media is the most powerful platform which is used for a variety of reasons. According to Merriam-Webster, social media is defined as a “type of electronic communication (social networking websites and microblogging) through which users form online communities for sharing thoughts, ideas, personal messages, videos and other kinds of content. Social Media comprises several platforms but the prominent ones are Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, Snapchat and Youtube.

Gone are the days when people use to wait every morning to read the newspaper for breaking news or public use to specifically buy magazines to know about the celebrity gossips and updates. Now, the new scenario has brought several social media apps which people use to get information. Social Media has been regarded as an important source for online news as it accounts for more than 2.4 billion internet users; almost 64.5 per cent obtain breaking news from Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat and Instagram as a replacement for the traditional media (Martin N, 2018).

Like the other parts of the world, the internet has created its sensation in India as well. Several studies have exposed that the internet is counted as an important aspect for creating an impact on the Indian economy. From searching information to reading news or talking to loved ones, the internet specifically social media is the most preferred source for same. . Not just this, the growth of social media has brought major transformations in the working and now all the brands are trying to create a great online reputation among their users by enhancing their TRP. With the increasing pace and diffusion of the internet, the buying behaviour of consumers is also affected. The potential buyers first have a look at the online reviews and recommendations before they make a purchase. As per a study 40 per cent of people like doing shopping rather than going to the stores. The internet usage pattern in India showcases the intense usage of social networking sites that are around 25 per cent of people spend time online on social media (Tarique, 2014).

Talking about the rural population, these are those people who live in the countryside and the majority of them practice agriculture as their occupation. However, when one has a glance at different occupations available, rural India is considered as a large market as around 750 million people live in 637,000 Indian villages. Moreover, the majority of the rural population’s livelihood depends on agriculture (Rai and Sahila, 2013).

Considering the past few years, the usage of social media is prominent in rural India as a 100 per cent growth could be seen there with 25 million people using the Internet to check Twitter and Facebook. As per the International and Mobile Association of India and Indian Market Research Bureau (IAMAI-IMRB), social media is the major reason which makes rural people opt for the internet. In fact, for several people who are using the internet for the very first time, social media is the only pull that makes them go for it. In all, India accounts for 143 million social media users. The urban area has experienced a growth of 35 per cent as the total users were 118 million in 2015 while the number for rural media was 25 million. However, in 2014, rural India had 12 million users which depict a 100 per cent growth in 2015 (Bhargava, 2015).

As stated by Statistica Report 2019, Rural India has a significant portion that is unable to access the Internet. Thus, there is a huge area of growth that will lead to raising the overall Internet-using population in the future period. In India, more than 65 per cent of Internet



users fall in the age group between 12-29 years. A higher proportion of this age group resides in rural areas. Hence, it indicates that there is a potential for growth in this section.

Technology has enormously grown in the past few years and is in a completely new shape. The media industry has also got a new dimension and no wonder more changes are still there to come. With this development, people have started using social media which has made information receiving a fast process. Not just this, the communication mode to people sitting in far off the land has also been a complete effortless one by just doing a single click. This medium is not just a source of entertainment but during COVID 19 these apps have been one way for the students to connect to the school and college authorities and have been a great means to improve their learning practices. Thus this technology is a great mode for providing information, innovative ideas and education, to rural youth.

REVIEW

Kumari S (2016) in the study Proliferation of Social Media among Students of Rural University in India depicted there is disparity among students of different departments when it is about social media sites. The study explained that Facebook was the most preferred platform followed by Twitter and LinkedIn. The purpose of using social media sites by the students was to connect with their parents. Only a marginal section uses it to connect to their parents. Some students use it to connect to their classmates to for getting information. Around 39 per cent of the people use social media for less than half an hour while thirty per cent use it for thirty to sixty minutes.

Gorkemli H (2017) conducted a study on the Internet and Social Media Usage of Secondary School Students in Rural India. The results revealed that students prefer using the search engine Google more than any social media app or site. Among the social media app, the most popular ones among the students were YouTube and Facebook. Instagram and Twitter were not used that much by the students. The study further also revealed that there is no significant relationship between sex and internet usage or between family's education level and internet usage. However, one exclusive fact which came out was that girls used the internet more in comparison to boys for finding resources for homework whereas boys used the internet more than girls for playing games, visiting social media sites, chatting and reading news.

Chinyamurindi T (2018) conducted a study on the topic Determinants of Social Media usage among a sample of rural South African youth. The study depicted a considerable positive correlation between Facebook and the usage habits of youth. The study cleared that again and again visiting Facebook by the students is just because of the adaption of this habit. The youth needs to be educated about the vital use of social media. The youth uses social media to escape from the reality that is the problems and issues they have in their life. To overcome this type of issue family environment should be created where positivity is there and the role of social media as an escape route should be avoided.

Bayoung et al. (2019) researched The Use of Social Media (SM) Among Pupils in Rural Primary schools in Sarawak, Malaysia. In the study, the authors revealed that Whatsapp was the social media app that was used the most by rural youth. The reason for its usage was the interaction between parents, students and teachers. The second app which was used maximum by the people was Youtube. This app was used during ICT classes so that made this app popular. The third app which was used by the students was Facebook as it helped



them to stay socially connected. The study also revealed that the respondents discussed things with their friends which they saw on social media.

Ahmad et al., (2019) in the research *The Use of Social Media on Political Participation Among University Students: An Analysis of Survey Results from Rural Pakistan* explained that online media is a great source to become aware of political issues going on in society. The respondents also said that the use of social media networking sites are for gathering public information and discussion. The use of Facebook is done to the maximum extent to talk to politicians and the local candidates who are joining politics. The study also explained that Facebook is a great way over there for students to interact with their friend circle plus stay aware of their neighbourhood.

Biswas and Ghosh (2019) researched the impact of social media on rural college students in Nadia district, West Bengal. The study gives details about the social media usage pattern of rural students, the app preferred by the students, their cycle of usage and the pattern of usage adopted by their parents. The results depicted that social media has positive as well as negative effects on students. It depicted that maximum students are using social media daily to connect to their known people. The use of Whatsapp and Facebook has been there for this purpose. Further, the students also explained that YouTube is one site which they use quite often as it helps in their studies to get the support material.

Ngonso BF (2019) conducted a study on the *Effect of Social Media on Teenagers and Youths: A Study of Rural Nigerian Teenagers and Youth in Secondary Schools*. The research revealed that most students accessed social media through their phones. Facebook was the most preferred app of the youth followed by Instagram, Whatsapp and Twitter. Further, the research explained that social media has negative effects on youth. So parents and teachers should monitor what students are doing with their mobile phones. Not just this, awareness programs related to social media should be organized for the youth. Even students should be explained about the effect of social media on their academic performance.

Chopra N (2020) studied the *Impact of Social Media on Rural Youth in the Ludhiana District of Punjab*. The research revealed that Whatsapp was the most preferred app among the students. The reasons for the same are that it helps in information sharing and having a conversation. After Whatsapp, the next preferred app was Youtube followed by Facebook. After this, Twitter, Snapchat, Tik Tok and Instagram were given the positions. The study revealed that the maximum usage of social media was on weekends by the rural students.

Makananise F (2020) researched *Social Media as a Communicative Platform to Promote Indigenous African Languages by Youth*. The study depicted that the use of Whatsapp was the maximum by the African Youth. The youth used the app to converse with their friends. The results also cleared that the African language was mostly used through this medium. The main focus of the people using the app was to make their language popular. Though, there were various instances too when people did not use their language and preferred conversing in English. This issue was due to a lack of knowledge about the language change option.

Prajapati et al. (2020) studied *Social Media, its purpose and its use: A community-based cross-sectional study in a rural area of a developing nation (India)*. For this research around 4000 participants were there. Of which around six hundred eighteen people that is 15.5 per cent people had a phone. Out of this 15.5 per cent of people, ninety per cent of people were using the internet. The number of male participants using the smartphone was more in comparison to females. The use of social media accounted for 13.5 per cent of people. The



study also revealed that the majority of people used social media for interaction with friends and entertainment. From the study, it was also analyzed that social media should also be used for the health and medication sector.

Radhakrishnan et al., (2020) in the research Usage of Social Networking Tools by Rural Youth in Transfer of Technology- An Overview explained that social media tools integration is highly seen in the lives of rural youth. It is observed that for future decisions also rural youth is dependent on social media. The usage of Whatsapp was the maximum by the youth followed by Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tik Tok and LinkedIn. The study also revealed the maximum usage of social media was for playing online games and then followed by Chatting, Recreational Activities, Friends Network, and Email and so on. The maximum usage of social media was there by using mobile phones.

Burman and Charvak (2021) researched Cancer Awareness and Media Habits of College Students of Rural Tripura, in North East India. The study revealed that Whatsapp and Facebook are the most used social media platform by the students. It also revealed that more than sixty per cent of the students use social media on an everyday basis. For all kinds of information, they approach these two sources. However, there is the use of Television and Newspaper too but then students were comfortable with the former sources. The study also cleared that spreading Cancer Awareness using Social Media campaigns is a great option.

Roy and Joseph (2021) researched on Sustainability of the Smart Phone application usage in rural India- an empirical study in Rangareddy district in Telangana. The findings of the study depict that there is insignificant smartphone ownership and smartphone application practice in rural India. The reason for the low usage was because people were uneducated and they cannot understand English. Adding more to this, smartphone usage was tough for them the people believed. However people over there were aware of certain apps such as Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram and Youtube. The teachers of government schools and people in government offices knew other apps too.

2. CONCLUSION

Rural India is a wide market where the best products can be provided to every sector. The students or being precise the youth is the future of every country and providing them with adequate resources and knowledge is vital for success. Keeping in mind the technological factor, online and social media has become an integral part of every human life and similarly, it has entered into the rural sector as well. However, in rural areas, there are still some specific zones where technological glitch makes people suffer from staying away from social and online media. Whereat one point it is observed that online media and social media is vital to provide information to people, let them connect and give them the best knowledge on another side it is being observed that it has become a glue that cannot be detached from the invidious and as a result people especially the youth is dependent on it. It has created mental disorders and emotional disturbance among the students. As a result, students need to understand that the balance of online and social media is required in life.



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