SOCIAL MEDIA FOR YOUTH & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN INDIA

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India

MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS

Empowered lives. Resilient nations.
SOCIAL MEDIA FOR YOUTH AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN INDIA
This report would not have been possible without the essential and varied contributions of many individuals, organizations and institutions.

**Research partners/facilitators:** Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan,

**Research and participants:** Primary field research was conducted across the project intervention districts which reached out to over 1000 young individuals from 15 districts. The Study also captured the national perspective from various youth based organisation.

UNV India wishes to thank the millions of volunteers all over the world, without whom this report would not have been possible.
Foreword

Social media in today’s times is not merely a tool for exchanging messages, but it has increasingly become a means for information dissemination, interaction and global participation.

Social media has also opened a plethora of opportunities for the young people who no longer need a physical space to innovate and initiate action. Thus, this instrument, if used effectively, has the power to harness the potential of the youth and direct them towards civic engagements.

I am glad that UNV has documented the great strength and potential that social media has and how young people of our country can be agents of change by using digital media to initiate action and bring positive changes in lives of common people.

(Asit Singh)
Foreword

We are living in times when communication is not restricted by boundaries and social media has given birth to a different kind of revolution. The concept of sociability has gained renewed interest with the emergence of the Social Networking Sites wherein interpersonal interactions and communications have been slowly replaced by online communication.

Given how emerging forms of digital civic engagement reflect people’s personal use of social media, young people seemingly are shifting to a more expressive engagement with greater emphasis on non-traditional modes of engagement such as digital networking, volunteering, and consumer activism.

According to the statistics of 2014, out of 1.2 million Indians nearly 106 million are active social media users. The increasing momentum of the Digital India Campaign has made the country digitally empowered and technologically equipped.

I believe that this report on “Social Media for Youth and Civic Engagement” will provide a framework to engage with the youth. It will help in understanding the impact of social media and establishing it as a safe space for the youth to come together to ideate, innovate and collaborate to take action and solve developmental issues of the country.
United Nations Development Programme

Foreword

Over the last decade, social networking sites have become extremely popular. Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, etc, have become an integral part of our lives. In India alone, there are some 258.27 million social network users today, up from around 168 million in 2016. These channels have revolutionized how we communicate, and this change is especially evident among young people, whose inter-personal relationships have been deeply transformed by social media.

Social media offers challenges and opportunities in equal measure. On the one hand, social media is an incredibly powerful instrument. It lets users broaden their horizons. It gives them opportunities to engage in discussions with experts they would not otherwise have access to. It can encourage a cultural exchange of ideas. Certainly, it is a crucial tool in helping organizations such as UNDP reach more and younger people to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

On the other hand, there is another, darker and grimmer, side to social media. We hear tales of cyberbullying. This report on Social Media for Youth & Civic Engagement in India finds that one-third of young internet users in the country are bullied online. And two-thirds of Indian youth think they are at risk of social-media addiction, giving up their privacy, falling for fake news and cyberbullying.

These are only some of the insights on social-media use by both urban and rural Indian youth captured in this report. Published jointly by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, UNV and UNDP, the findings in this report will help key stakeholders, including the government, to assess the impact of social media on young people and identify trends in young people’s social media use. Crucially, they will be able to identify the problems associated with social-media use and develop measures to address these issues. This report will also be useful for organizations that work with young people to develop strategies on how best to engage youth.

I am certain that the practical recommendations included in the report on how governments and civil society can unlock the potential of social media will lead to greater civic engagement among young people in India, as well as more responsible use of social media.

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Key Insights

Social media is a fast-growing phenomenon in India, as more and more young Indians are getting access to smartphones and internet.

With 250+ million social network users, India has the second highest number of social media users in the world.

Majority of the Indian social media users access social media through mobiles. The ‘Jio wave’ with attractive telecom pricing has increased internet penetration and social media usage in the past two years.

Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp dominate the social media space in India. While, Instagram is also very popular amongst urban Indian youth.

Millennials constitute the most active group on social media users. They are often found glued to their mobiles and hence referred as social media addicts by the previous generations.

Majority youth use internet for 1-5 hours and they use social media to stay in touch with their friends.

Proportion of social Media youth users across the states of India, has positive correlation with the State Human Development Index.

But social media in India has large digital divide. It is dominated by youth, urban people and male.

Two-thirds of Facebook users in India are from the age group 15-29 years, that constitutes 27% of India’s population. Similar trends are found on other networks, making social media in India, a youth-dominated virtual space.

There is a deep gender disparity in usage of social media in India. Women who represent almost half of the population constitute just 22% Facebook users and 29% of internet users. The patriarchal restrictions on women’s autonomy, mobility and self-expression in India are also reflected in the digital space.

Social Media in India is an Urban phenomenon. The top 50-cities of India that constitute 15% of population have 50% of Facebook users in India, indicating the deep digital divide between rural and urban India.

The United Nations has declared access to the internet as basic human right. The government organizations and civil society in India need to bridge the vast digital divide to fulfil this human right.

Social media has a huge participation from the millennials across the world. Indian youth also greatly depend on social media to carry out their activities. The impact of social media on Indian youth is a mixed baggage of positives and negatives.

YouTube is widely used by Indian students for Education and Learning. Some YouTube educational channels in Hindi and Indian languages have more than a million subscriptions.

Majority of the youth opine that social media is a very important source for awareness, news and global exposure.

Youth are also informed of internship, entrepreneurship and volunteering opportunities through social media.

Social media companies need to invest and incentivize educational content in Indian languages to encourage productive participation of users from rural India.

About two-thirds of Indian youth perceive addiction to social media, loss of privacy, fake
news and cyberbullying as potential risks of social media.

**CYBERBULLYING IS A REALITY IN INDIA**

About one-third of Indian youth face cyberbullying in India. Youth at higher risk of cyberbullying are in the age group 15-24 years and urban youth. Majority of the youth are aware of the option to block the person responsible for cyberbullying on social media.

Majority of youth think of--blocking the perpetrator & seeking help of friends as best means to end online harassment.

Sex trafficking, child trafficking, drugs peddling through social media platforms pose potential threat to the youth.

There are no laws in India to combat bullying and cyberbullying in India. Youth needs strong policy framework that assures Digital safety.

Social Media algorithms should take immediate action when an online abuse is reported.

Civil Society organizations and educational institutions need to conduct awareness camps to sensitize the youth on risks of social media. Online videos in Indian languages are important to reach out to Indian youth from diverse backgrounds.

**Addiction to Social Media is rampant among teenagers in India**

One in every five school children has problematic internet usage.

Behavioral addiction to social media is rampant among school going children.

Excessive usage of social media and parental neglect are important reasons for addiction to social media.

Digital detox is essential to reduce the addiction to social media and bring back our dopamine levels to normalcy.

In the digital era, social media has enormous potential to promote civic engagement. Social intelligence can solve some of the toughest problems of humanity. It needs thrust from research and development.

While social media can promote civic engagement in multiple ways, the current application of social media tools by the non-profit sector in India is basic/minimal.

Social Media is an effective tool for raising social awareness and sensitize the Indian youth in social, cultural, civic sense, political, and environmental aspects.

Civil society organizations opine that ‘Clickism’ referring to social media clicks need not necessarily guarantee action, and that there is a vast disconnect between virtual & real.

Most government and civil society organizations in India have social media presence. Some of them even have a vast digital outreach; but most don’t use social media analytics to device social media strategies.

Advanced Social Intelligence tools are important for non-profit sector to promote civic engagement. Government and civil society organizations will greatly benefit by tapping into social intelligence.

Social media companies have the responsibility to channelize the use and impact of social media. They should develop applications and technology tools to promote ‘Social Intelligence for Civic Engagement’.

Strategic partnerships and collaborations of social media companies-government-civil society organizations is vital to foster active citizenship and participatory-democracy.
Social media has taken the world by storm! In less than fourteen years, social media has changed not just the way we communicate, but also the way we govern, the way we conduct business and even our way of life. Social Media has transformed the entire world into a global village where people can interact freely with others located remotely through few clicks or taps. While social media has certainly influenced more than 2.5 billion in the world, the impact is lot more on millennials and post-millennial generations, often referred as digital natives. [1]

In India, social media is a fast-growing phenomenon as more people, especially youth, are getting connected with increased penetration of smart phones and internet. The youth in India are excessively dependent on social media be it for socializing, education or entertainment.

Social media seems to offer limitless opportunities for the youth to connect to the world, to express their opinions in the most free and transparent way, educate themselves, socialize with diverse sections of society, and expand their horizons in a creative manner.

Youth living in remote locations held back by disadvantages due to geography, poverty and exclusion can benefit enormously from internet and social media. They can avail new opportunities offering greater access to learning, propel news ideas and creativity, network with online communities of interest, access business opportunities online, access to markets and services, and other benefits that can help them fulfil their potential.

But not everyone has equal access to internet and social media in India. Millions of youth that are-female, socioeconomically backward sections, indigenous groups living in the forests--have low or no access to smartphones or internet, thereby increasing digital divide in India. Internet, which is the greatest equalizer of knowledge can also create greatest division from the lack of access to it.

Socially-conscious youth connect

Like any other technology, social media has both positive and negative impacts on the society. Social media content has become important source of learning for most students in India. Youth resort to YouTube videos to have practical understanding of concepts, and develop new knowledge and exposure to the latest developments in the world. Socially-conscious youth connect
with like-minded individuals on social networking sites to kickstart new initiatives in public service. Blogs, Vlogs, photography by the youth have found unbounded creative expression on social media.

While, the youth of India benefit from new avenues, opportunities and knowledge on social media, they are also greatly vulnerable to the risks of the interconnected world. Loss of privacy, addiction, cyberbullying are risks introduced newly by social media. These risks are often compounded for the youth due to excessive and carefree usage of social media. Youth are vulnerable to new social, psychological and emotional stresses on social media which effects their overall health and well-being.

The impact of social media on youth in India is highly debated with millennials and their parents often found on opposite sides. The government, civil society and policymakers are also divided on the impact of social media on youth. And why not, when the impact is not a straightforward positive or negative, but a mixed baggage of benefits and risks. But the big question is: can we—as government, policy makers, civil society, educational institutions, parents and society at large—help the youth mitigate the risks of social media, while encouraging them to avail knowledge and opportunities through social media?

The ‘Social Media for Youth & Civic Engagement in India’ report examines ways in which social media has impacted the lives of the youth of India, and explores ways in which it can be used to promote civic engagement in India.

Social media is a double-edged sword with several benefits as well as risks. It has enormous potential to make positive contributions to the development of youth, if used in the right way, without leaving behind sections of society such as, rural and indigenous people.

Social media can be a powerful medium for delivering education, awareness and good citizenship.

Benefits of social media are often overshadowed by risks such as behavioural addiction, cyberbullying and loss of data privacy. They cause psychological and emotional stress among youth, especially teenagers, thereby affecting their overall health and well-being.

If leveraged for civic engagement, social media can be used to solve some of the toughest problems of humanity. With the advent of big data and artificial intelligence, social media companies can build applications to deliver social intelligence. This can bring about large-scale impact by solving complex, interconnected problems of public concern. This report calls for strategic partnerships, knowledge dissemination and investments in research and development to mitigate the risks and unlock the potential of social media for promoting civic engagement in India.
With emerging technologies and market penetration, the social media space will only expand in the future. Social networking sites are no longer simple communication tools. They are the largest repositories of user behaviour data! With the unique advantage of user behavioural insights, the social media platforms are expanding fast to provide services like news, financial transactions or shopping destinations. \[1\]

Changes are happening at a fast pace in the digital world. Social media has brought about a fundamental shift in not only basic communication but also in human behaviour\[1\]. But, can we channelize the change for public good? Can the power of social media and the youth power in India be used for transformative change in the society?

The study ‘Social Media for Youth & Civic Engagement in India’ has been commissioned by Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports and United Nations Volunteers India, to understand the nuances of social media's impact on youth in India, and explore the possibilities of use of social media to promote civic engagement, instil social values and community service in India. It dwells on the key questions raised above in the context of Indian youth, and adopts an evidence-driven methodology to answer those questions.

This study is first of its kind in the country to carry out a nationally-representative sample survey (Annexure-Survey Design) capturing perspective and opinions of youth exclusively on social media. The study applies cutting edge data science tools, social media analytics along with the traditional social science research methods to understand the trends, patterns and future scope of social media to promote youth participation and civic engagement. The approach (Annexure-Study Design Matrix) is unique because it adopts evidence based, technology driven, digital market research strategies to publish key statistics on youth in social media, which is presently missing in India. It has a millennial approach to study the social media strategy to instil social values and community service amongst Indian youth.

The study relies on both primary and secondary research to generate evidence, insights and recommendations. Primary research involves both qualitative and quantitative data collected from sample survey of Indian youth (online and offline); interviews with various stakeholders such as youth, civil society organizations, and Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports. Secondary research is based on literature review and secondary data. Secondary data involves the quantitative data from Census 2011, data from election commission, UNV, Facebook insights, and Facebook audience insights, popular hashtags and Google keywords search.

This report is divided into four chapters that discuss various aspects of social media in the context of Indian youth.

- First chapter explores social media in India from the context of youth, prominent social media platforms, analysis of demographics of social media users, geographical distribution of the social media youth users in urban and rural contexts, and uses of social media as perceived by Indian youth.
- Second chapter analyses various positive and negative impacts of social media on Indian youth using social media analytics, case
studies, research papers, primary survey, and voices of youth.

- Third chapter explores the dark side of social media through risks associated with it, especially from the context of digital safety and cybercrime in India, and discusses strategies that can be employed by various stakeholders to mitigate the risks of social media.

- Fourth chapter explores the extent to which social media can be used as a tool to promote civic engagement--by analysing the various initiatives of social media companies, government departments, civil society organizations and youth organizations. Social media for civic engagement is understood systematically through a framework with components—Awareness, Action, Social Intelligence and Social Entrepreneurship.

Recommendations are provided based on best practices in digital marketing and innovations through artificial intelligence.

The report concludes with practical recommendations for how the government, civil society, policymakers and social media companies can unlock the potential of social media for promoting civic engagement in India, and mitigate the risks to foster responsible use of social media by the youth of India. These include:

1. Digital access for all youth especially female and rural youth.

More than 43,000 villages in India still don’t have mobile phone access. Government should rapidly scale up digital inclusion programs like Digi Gaon, to increase the digital access in unconnected rural areas, and bridge the digital divide. Telecom companies can be incentivised to achieve cellular network penetration in rural India.

Awareness drives by government and civil society organizations is much needed to confront the cultural barriers imposed on girls and women that prevent them from going online. Government programs on women empowerment should include the aspect of digital empowerment of women.

2. Encourage social media content creators in all Indian languages.

India has rich linguistic diversity with 22 official languages, 13 scripts and hundreds of dialects. But the social media content in India is mostly dominated by English and Hindi. Social media companies should have an active policy to promote linguistic diversity on their platforms to encourage participation from all sections of society for inclusive online communities. Social media platforms should be available in all official Indian languages and provide for accurate translations of content.

3. Promote learning and education through social media.

Social media platforms like YouTube have emerged as conventional medium for self-learning and education by the youth in India. Government and civil society working in Education sector, need to recognize social media as learning-friendly medium and use it effectively to maximize
educational outcomes of youth in India. Investments should be channelized to promote educational content attractive to the youth in as many Indian languages as possible.

4. Mitigate risks of social media.

Social media risks can be mitigated only through coordinated actions between law enforcement, social media companies, parents, civil society, education and institutions of mental health. Digital Safety with emphasis on behavioural addiction to social media should be introduced in the education curriculum for youth in various age groups. Government and civil society should invest in India specific social media content in various languages, to create awareness on risks of social media. Social media companies have a special responsibility here to shape up early experiences of youth online. Artificial Intelligence based applications that filter out abusive content, fake news and bots should be encouraged.

5. Strategic collaborations between public-private sectors to promote civic engagement.

Social media can be very effective in promoting civic engagement and good citizenship. Government agencies, social media companies and civil society should come together to develop specific use-cases, technology tools and funds required to promote civic engagement in the most efficient manner.

Behavioural change is one of the most desirable outcomes of civic engagement initiatives. Social media initiatives contributing towards behavioural change of the society at large need to be assessed systematically through controlled experiments and impact evaluation studies specific to Indian context.

Social intelligence has a vast potential to solve some of the toughest problems of public concern. Social media companies are at a unique position with big data on user behaviour, user location, hobbies & interests at an unprecedented scale; along with cutting-edge technologies like Cloud computing, Machine learning and Artificial Intelligence. Investments in research and development on social media for civic engagement with active partnerships with government agencies or (and) civil society will achieve synergies to achieve large-scale impact.
Merriam Webster dictionary defines social media as “forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos)” [3].

Social media refers to the sites and services that emerged in early 2000s that allow participants to create and share own content. Social media also hints at a cultural mindset and phenomenon that emerged in mid-2000s referred to as “Web 2.0” [4]. Social media connects user with other individuals or groups and facilitates the development of online social networks.

Social media technologies take many different forms including blogs, business networks, enterprise social networks, forums, microblogs, photo sharing, products/services review, social bookmarking, social gaming, social networks, video sharing and virtual worlds. Generalizing these forms, social media is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user Generated Content. [4]

SOCIAL MEDIA IN INDIA

The most popular social media websites in India are Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Google+, WhatsApp, and Snapchat. According to the Statista Global Consumer Survey 2017, India has 196 million active social network users, second only to China which has 596 million social network users [5]. The active users include those internet users who have used social networking site at least once a month. With such active users projected to almost double by the year 2022, India has the fastest growing social media users in the world.

Facebook is the most popular social media platform in India. With 270 millions Indians registered on Facebook, India tops the list of
facebook registered users amongst the countries of the world [6]. The second most popular social network in India is Youtube with 225 million users. WhatsApp is emerging as fastest growing platform in India, with more than 200 million users [7].

**PROMINENT SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS IN INDIA**

Facebook is the pioneer for social media revolution since its inception in 2004. As on date, it connects 2.32 billion active users across the globe [8]. It’s a go-to platform for sharing media, photographs, videos, creating groups, chatting, and making new friends.

Facebook can be accessed from a large range of devices with Internet connectivity, such as desktops, computers, laptops, and tablet computers, and smartphones. Anyone who claims to be at least 13 years old can become a registered user of Facebook. Users can express views, thoughts and feelings by posting on their ‘wall’, get instant updates from friend’s posts through notifications, participate in like-minded community groups and even share current location with friends or even with the whole world!

Even after 14 years, Facebook remains popular amongst millennials and older generations. Despite other social media platforms with similar features, Facebook continues to lead due to emphasis on community-building. Facebook pages keep the users engaged. Facebook is an important platform to promote businesses, companies, products, services, events and celebrities. Facebook earns its revenue from targeted advertisements that are displayed in the sidebar of most pages of the site and in the newsfeed.

Started in 2009, WhatsApp has become a part of our personal and professional communication today. It was acquired Facebook in 2014. WhatsApp is a popular application that allows for sending of text messages and voice calls, video calls, images and other media, documents, and user location. It runs from a mobile device but is also accessible from desktop computers. Whatsapp requires users to provide a standard mobile number.

The most attractive feature for many users in India is Whatsapp calling, which is free and convenient option to communicate. WhatsApp users can post WhatsApp stories and update photographs and status messages that can be viewed by everyone in their phonebook. Presently, WhatsApp connect more than 1.5 billion users from 180 countries [9]. Instagram is a photo and video sharing social media platform owned by Facebook. Launched in 2010, the app allows users to upload photos and videos, which can be edited with various filters, organized with tags and location information. An account’s posts can be shared publicly or with pre-approved followers. Users can also browse other users’ content by tags, locations, and view trending content.

Presently, Instagram is the most trending social media app, with more than one billion active users. Instagram is very popular among the younger generation in the age group 15-25 years. All the prominent celebrities in the entertainment industry engage actively on Instagram. Popularly
known for its picture, video sharing features and amazing filters, Instagram expanded its services by including chat options and story sharing. Insta Story feature enables users to constantly share happenings of their life. Insta stories consist of a single still shot or video – or an entire story that lasts for 24 hours. Instagram has wide range of editing tools such as drawing tools, new funky text/typing tools, boomerang, reverse video, story highlights, video, images editors etc., that make Insta stories very popular amongst young generation. With very high user engagement, Instagram is also emerging as an active platform for marketing products, brands, and services. Key interests of Instagrammers in India include music, travel, food, photography, technology, fashion and sports.

Youtube is the most popular video sharing website, founded in 2005. It was acquired by Google in 2006. YouTube allows users to upload, view, rate, share, add to favorites, report, comment on videos, and subscribe to other users. It offers a wide variety of user-generated and corporate media videos. Its content includes video clips, TV show clips, music videos, short and documentary films, audio recordings, movie trailers, live streams, and other content such as video blogging, short original videos, and educational videos.

YouTube is the quintessential social video platform. YouTube now has over 1.9 billion users every month. It is also an advertising platform that targets ads to the users based on interests and other demographics. Youtube shares advertising revenue with the uploader of the video which is essentially generating viewership for advertisements. Popular YouTubers earn a good chunk of money through their videos on YouTube.

Snapchat is a multimedia messaging app which is more popular among teens and the young generation. One of the principal features of Snapchat is that pictures and messages are usually only available for short time before they become inaccessible to users.

Snapchat was the first social networking site that introduced the idea of limiting the time available to view picture uploads. This photo and video sharing app has 188 million daily active users as on date.

Snapchat emphasises on interacting with virtual stickers and augmented reality objects. The app has evolved from photo sharing to interesting features such as “Stories”. Snapchat started the story era with Snapchat stories and then other platforms have adopted it as a key way of sharing content. Even Whatsapp and Messenger have the story format now. Stories feature is favorite among teens today. Snap Story is a collection of Snaps (photos edited with filters) that play in the order they were taken. Users and their friends’ Stories typically cover the events in the form of snaps during the last 24 hours.

Founded in 2006, Twitter has emerged to become the most popular social media network for online news and political announcements. It is a social networking service on which users post and interact with messages known as ‘tweets’. Tweets were originally restricted to 140 characters which has been expanded to 280 characters now. The micro-blogging service has 326 million monthly active users worldwide.

Registered users can post, like, and retweet tweets. Users access Twitter through its website interface, SMS or its mobile app. Twitter gets advertising revenue from companies that purchase ‘promoted tweets’ to appear in selective search results on the Twitter website. Promoted tweets, promoted accounts and promoted trends are sources of revenue for Twitter. Twitter provides Verified Accounts (with blue tick mark) to celebrities, musicians, athletes, actors, public officials and public agencies to tackle the problem of celebrity impersonations.

Neighbourly (Upcoming App):
Neighbourly, the hyper-local social network has been recently launched in India in May 2018, by Google’s Next Billion Users program. The concept is that of neighborhood network—that lets people share local expertise and crucial information with others in the vicinity. The crowd-sourced
recommendations range widely: kitchen cabinet makers, service stations that repair electric scooters, cricket ticket sellers, gardening supplies stores etc. [11]

With almost a half billion Indians now using smartphones, Google sees an opportunity to become a one-stop shop for search, social networking and payments. It would help people get precise information without participating in group chats that keep getting bigger and noisier. Neighbourly users can browse, ask and answer questions without sharing personal information.

**YOUTH DEMOGRAPHICS: FACEBOOK INSIGHTS**

Demographics of Indian youth using social media
The demographics of Indian social media users could be understood from the Facebook audience insights which give rich insights on region specific demographics specific information of Facebook users. Since Facebook tops the list of social media users in India, the Facebook audience data could also be used to understand the Indian social media users in general.

The analysis on social media demographics from Facebook audience insights and surveys reveal the following:

**Facebook Users**: India has 290 million registered users of Facebook in all age groups. Out of this, 190 million users are youth in the age group 15-29 years [12]. It is interesting to note that the youth in the age group 15-29 years constitute 66% of total Facebook users, although they constitute only 27% of the total population.
**Gender:** Among the youth social media users, majority of 78% are men while only 22% are female. This is in contrast with the population proportion of youth, which is almost 50% female according to the census of India. A low female participation is also in contrast to the social media users in the U.S where more than half of the social media users are female. The social media gender gap in India at 56 percentage points is mainly due to the prevailing digital gender gap in India, where girls and women are not using mobile phones. This gap is a result of deep-seated cultural barriers, particularly in rural India. “One village governing body in rural Rajasthan stated that girls were not to use mobile phones or social media. Another village in Uttar Pradesh banned unmarried girls from using mobile phones (and from wearing jeans)” says a UNICEF report \[13\].

**Age distribution:** The Age distribution of Facebook users in India also shows the domination of youth on social media. The age group 30+ years constitute only 33% or 1/3rd of the total social media users in the country.

Within the age group 15-29 years, the youth who are in early 20s constitute the largest pie among young Facebook users. A similar trend has been found on Instagram in a study ‘Indians on Instagram’, conducted by market research company Nielsen in 2015 which revealed that the age group 18-24 years is most active on Instagram \[14\].

The social media users are a subset of internet users, who are not spread evenly across India. The IAMAI-IMRB report enumerates the internet users in India as 481 million in 2017 and this number is expected to reach 500 million on June 2018 \[15\].

**Urban-Rural:** The Urban India with an estimated population of 455 million (2011 census) has 295 million using the internet. While the rural India, with a population of 918 million (2011 census) has only 186 million internet users. This shows a deep urban-rural digital divide in India as the internet penetration in urban India is 64.84%, whereas it is a mere 20.26% penetration in rural India. The skewedness of the penetration of Internet is further proven by the fact that the top nine cities account for 35 per cent of all urban Internet users.

According to IAMAI report of 2016, urban internet users in India were 72% and rural were a mere 28% \[16\]. This contrasts with the population proportion in India where 35% of the population is urban while 65% is rural. A similar trend has been found in terms of social media users as well. Analyzing Facebook audience insights for geographical distribution, it has been found that most social media users in India are found to be urban. Half of the social media youth users reside in top 50 cities of the country that constitute only 15% of
country’s population. Social media is mostly urban phenomenon in India, as there is a huge urban-rural digital divide here.

**Metros:** Dissecting the Urban phenomena further, it was found the top cities that have less than 15% of total population of India, have half of the social media users of the whole country.

Analyzing the top cities further, it was found that 50 million Indians residing in India’s eight metro cities are social media users. Delhi, followed by Mumbai lead this list with more than 8 million users each. It is interesting to note that although India’s eight metros with less than 5% total population, these cities have more than 26% of social media users. Clearly social media is more of a metro phenomenon in India!

The Facebook audience gives rich insights on Facebook users of a given geography. Applying filters for each state of India and age group corresponding to youth, the insights were collected and visualized on Indian map. The number of youth users for each state are compared with that of the total youth population in the state which is extrapolated from census 2011. The percentage of youth using social media was then calculated to compare the social media usage across the states.

The patterns reveal that the states with low HDI (human development index) such as Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Assam have low internet penetration and hence low social media coverage. While the high HDI states like Goa, Delhi, Kerala, North East (excluding Assam), Himachal Pradesh, Punjab have more than 70% youth connected through social media. A positive correlation has been observed between HDI and Social media usage in states.

While the proportion of Facebook youth users is important for comparison across states, it is also vital to understand the total number of social media users in each state. This is important because any civic engagement initiative that needs to target the youth of a region needs to understand the potential in the region first.

The Facebook users map reveals that Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra that are also most populous states in India have more than 10 million Facebook Users each! While the Himalayan states in the North and North East that have relatively lower density of population have less than one million Facebook youth users.

**SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE: PRIMARY SURVEY**

UNV’s nationally-representative primary survey on social media reveals the following about social media usage:

- **Proportion of youth using social media**
  - 52% of India’s youth are using Facebook.

- **Social Media Coverage vs HDI : State-wise**
  - Central and Eastern states have lower Facebook presence compared to other parts of the country.
  - Sikkim, Goa and Himachal Pradesh have more than 80% youth connected through Facebook.
media usage by Indian youth:

“I like using social media apps like Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram to communicate with friends. We can also find new friends by these social media apps. We can also come to know about various news and information on social media through mobile because wherever we want, we can use social media apps.”
– Sayar Dey, 21 Years

- Majority of the youth access the internet through multiple devices. Smartphones are most prevalent for accessing the internet as 80% of the youth surveyed use smartphones.
- WhatsApp, YouTube and Facebook are the most popular social media apps used by the youth. More than 90% of the youth use WhatsApp and YouTube.
- Watching and downloading music and videos, and interacting with friends on social media are the most popular activities of the youth on the internet. More than one third of the youth also use the internet for homework and educational purposes.
- 70% of the youth are satisfied with the quality of their internet connection while 23% are not satisfied.
- Almost all the youth with access to the internet also use one or more social media platforms.
- More than two thirds of the youth primarily use social media for staying in touch with friends, and for news and current events.
- Half of the youth use social media to watch entertainment videos.
- 40% of the youth use social media for educational purposes, and only 18% use it for business and professional networks.
- The social usage patterns of Indian youth are similar to those of the world, as revealed by Statista Global Survey.
CONCLUSION

Social media is a fast-growing phenomenon in India, a country which also has the youngest population in the world. Social media is bringing about rapid transformation in human interactions in India. But there is a large digital divide in the country between urban and rural users; male and female users. Social media is disproportionately dominated by youth, urban people and males.

Since the changes in the digital space are happening very fast, it is imperative for the government to also address the digital divide at a faster pace.

More than 43,000 villages in India still don’t have mobile phone access [2]. The government should rapidly scale up digital inclusion programs like Digi Gaon, to increase digital access in unconnected rural areas, and bridge the digital divide. Telecom companies need to be incentivised to achieve cellular network penetration in rural India.

Awareness drives by government and civil society organizations are much needed to confront the cultural barriers imposed on girls and women that prevent them from going online. Government programs on women empowerment should include the aspect of digital empowerment of women.

Social media apps are also available in their “lite” versions —like Twitter Lite, Facebook Lite, and YouTube Lite— which can be used on less powerful Android devices and slower mobile internet. They keep the speed up and data usage down by omitting superfluous features that people on slower connections wouldn’t be able to use [19]. Rural youth should take advantage of the Lite Apps, and stay updated with the events of the world.

The United Nations has declared access to the internet as a basic human right. Government organizations, civil society, and social media companies operating in India should strive to bridge the vast digital divide to fulfil this human right.
Technology and social media scholars describe techno-utopian and cyber-dystopian views as two extreme views on social media. Techno-utopian idea believes technology as a solution to address inequality and societal transformation. Cyber-dystopian view on the other hand visualizes everything will be ruined due to the widespread adoption of technology. They associate the rise of digital technology with decline – social, intellectual and moral. Both extremes are part of technological determinism, that apply black and white lens to perceive the implications of social media, while, the reality, the networked model is nuanced, messy and complicated. [4]

Social media is often referred to as a lifeline for ‘socializing’ amongst youth. Widespread engagement of youth with social media in today’s era is unprecedented. Rather than being a subcultural practice, participation in social media has become normative. Social media scholars observe that the perception of social media by youth is significantly different from that of adults. It is often found that the younger generation is more optimistic, while the adults are sceptical about social media. Being born in the internet era, digital technology is a given for most youngsters. Media reports millennials as “digital native”, since they grew up with digital technology. Their multitasking skills on the internet - sending and receiving thousands of text messages every month - astound adults. On the other hand, there are also media reports that warn the youth as vulnerable to unprecedented new dangers: sexual predators, cyberbullying and myriad forms of intellectual and moral decline including internet addiction, shrinking attention spans, decreased literacy and reckless sharing.

This chapter explores both the positive and
negative impacts of social media on Indian youth using a wide range of sources like research papers, social media audience analytics, social media pages/hashtags/channels, news articles, focused group discussions with the youth of India, and most importantly a nationally-representative sample survey to understand perceptions of the Indian youth on social media.

**POSITIVE IMPACTS**

Social media has connected people at an unprecedented rate. It has helped exchange of ideas amongst diverse groups of people, helped people to stay in touch with their loved ones, and allowed people with common interests to form online communities. Facebook’s founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg in his open letter to build a global community writes: “For the past decade, Facebook has focused on connecting friends and families. With that foundation, our next focus will be developing the social infrastructure for community -- for supporting us, for keeping us safe, for informing us, for civic engagement, and for inclusion of all” [20]. His emphasis is on developing communities that are supportive, safe, informed, civically-engaged and inclusive.

Social media, which started primarily as a platform to connect people and their activities, has now expanded to many other sectors traditionally serviced by mainstream media or mass media. Social media is central to the lives of the youth, who are benefiting from it in multiple ways. Our national survey on social media and focused discussions reveal that the youth perceive “Awareness and Exposure” as an important benefit of social media. Some youth are benefiting from the learning resources on social media, while others are connecting to new entrepreneurship opportunities through social media. Talented artists, musicians, and dancers from remote locations can portray their creative edge on social media platforms and reach out to a larger audience, thus transcending regional boundaries.

**EDUCATION AND LEARNING THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA**

Learning through social media is a commonplace utility for most urban youth in India. Indian youth are able to connect to the best learning resources from industry experts and universities across the world through social media. Be it academic concepts, do-it-yourself (DIY) art, technology projects or art lessons, the youth are finding instant learning solutions on YouTube. This makes YouTube a vital social media platform for education and learning.

In fact, “Education and Learning” has consistently featured in the top priorities of YouTube. The CEO of YouTube, Susan Wojcicki writes in her official blog: “We’re committed to empowering both the creators who want to share their knowledge with the world and the users who come to our platform to learn--from home improvements to the basics of physics to grammar lessons” [21]. YouTube has also announced investment of US$20 million in YouTube Learning, an initiative to support education-focused creators and expert organizations that create and curate high-quality learning content on YouTube [22].

The success of Khan Academy’s YouTube channel in providing free and high-quality education for everyone from anywhere in the world, is a well-known example. Khan Academy started in 2006, and has more than 7000 videos and about 4.3 million subscribers across the globe. Its videos are mainly in English but are now made available in 26 other languages [23]. After Khan Academy, many educational channels have sprouted on YouTube. A teaching portal has listed 197 YouTube channels promoting high-quality free education for all. Unacademy is a leading educational technology company that originally started as a YouTube channel for promoting free education. It has educators from all over the country who teach high-quality educational lessons in various languages. Unacademy has more than 2.5 million subscribers on YouTube and 215,298,274 views as of date, and its Hindi subscription is growing very fast [24]. Like Unacademy, there are several Indian educational channels on YouTube catering to specific learning needs such as English education, competitive exam preparation, personality development/soft skills, life-long learning etc. The top Indian educational YouTube channels with more than one million subscriptions are Study IQ, Learn English with Let’s Talk, wifiStudy, Mahendra Guru, Adda 247, Learn Engineering, nptelhrd, Navin Khambhala, and Learnex - English lessons through Hindi.
YouTube Hindi and other Indian languages are gaining popularity as the internet is progressively reaching the rural hinterlands. For instance, TsMadaan - a YouTube channel catering to Hindi-speaking viewers - has set a record in India with 6.5 million subscribers. S. Madaan is a motivational speaker who delivers video trainings on life skills, spoken English, physical and mental health, selling skills, general knowledge and entertainment. [25]

**AWARENESS & EXPOSURE**

Our national survey has revealed “Awareness and Exposure” as prime benefits of social media as perceived by the youth. Youth are exposed to news, politics, communities, social issues, health and consumer goods through social media. Some of the social media awareness campaigns have gone viral and reached out to millions of youth.

**#helpachildreach5**

Every year, around 6 million children under the age of five die of infections like diarrhoea and pneumonia, lack of basic hygiene being the culprit. The campaign #Helpachildreach5 was launched by Lifebuoy with a video on YouTube and other social media platforms. The heartfelt appeal, through the story of Gondappa and his son Muthu surviving his fifth birthday, became a social media hit and received a strong response from the community. It created a huge impact on social networks with over 19 million views on YouTube and over 3 million fans on Facebook. [26] [27]

**#SelfieWithDaughter**

Sunil Jaglan launched a mobile app Selfie with Daughter to initiate a campaign in Haryana against female and sex selection. It was applauded by President Pranab Mukherjee and Prime Minister Modi. The latter, during his radio address Mann Ki Baat, urged the nation to protect the girl child and encouraged citizens to post their pictures with their daughters online immediately, with the hashtag #SelfieWithDaughter. Twittereratis across the globe, including politicians, film stars, celebrities and common citizens, flooded social media sites with their selfies with daughters. It was the top trend in India, both on Facebook and Twitter, and was trending worldwide among the top five positions. Over 100,000 tweets have been shared on this topic. People from Africa and Europe have shared selfies, contributing to this awareness campaign. [28]

**BookTubers**

Indian social media is gradually seeing a rise of BookTubers, i.e. people who film videos on YouTube based on books. Books on Toast, for instance, is a YouTube channel for readers, which engages the Indian reading community with fun panel discussions, and provides a platform for book reviews. It has about 18,000 followers on YouTube, and a little over 9,000 on Instagram. Another young BookTuber Manpreet Kaur from Bhatinda (Punjab), has started a YouTube channel Indian BookTuber, which shares book reviews and encourages the reading community to explore new authors. She has more than 19,000 followers on YouTube and has an active profile on Instagram. [29]

**Booklet Guy**

Amrut Deshmukh, a social entrepreneur, started using WhatsApp to spread his mission “Make India Read”. He was concerned that the youth of India are reading wrong stuff and not reading good quality books. He started sharing a book summary every week with 15 of his close friends on WhatsApp and asked them to share it with their friends. Within two weeks, he got 1,000 requests WhatsApp. When his subscribers reached 100,000, he decided to start an app called Booklet through which he provides free audio summaries of books. This app has more than 100,000 downloads and has a 4.7 rating (out of 5) on Google Play Store. [30]

**BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

Social media branding is an essential strategy for most businesses today. As consumers spend more time on social media, the platforms also become the go-to source for product and brand information. With more than 60 million Facebook pages, brands are reaching millions on the social media
Facebook Audience Insights reveal that about 24 million youth are interested in Business and 19 million are interested in Entrepreneurship (i.e. liked/posted on pages related to entrepreneurship). Social media marketing has become the haven for most startups and business ideas, as it gives access to a large number of many potential customers engaging on social media platforms. In India, many startup ideas by youth have started shaping up on social media platforms before taking off as full-fledged businesses.

Inshorts

A popular news app, widely used by youngsters today, began as a Facebook page that provided news summaries in the “Shorts” format. The idea came from a concern that the youth in India were increasingly getting disconnected with the idea of reading news every day. The founders Azhar Iqubal (IIT Delhi), Anunay Arunav (IIT Delhi), and Deepit Purkayastha (IIT Kharagpur), being youngsters themselves, could relate to this situation and understood that the long-form nature of news items made it difficult for most youth to keep up with all the latest national and global happenings. They started providing news in 60-word summaries with infographics for a quick read.

“Being able to intelligently curate the most significant news items of the day across categories like national, world, politics, business, sports, technology and entertainment, we have been able to cater to the reading patterns of millennials across the country. With the core focus of creating an engaging user experience on the app, our strategy helped us get more loyal users,” says 24-year-old Azhar Iqubal, Co-Founder and CEO, Inshorts. Focused on curating interesting and relevant content for millennials, Inshorts has a massive user base in almost all cities of India, with a majority of most users from tier I and tier II cities. 

Today, Inshorts has more than one million “Likes” on its Facebook page and more than ten million downloads on Android and iOS. It is one of the highest-rated news apps on Google Play. [32]

SheMeansBusiness

Facebook announced a capacity-building programme called SheMeansBusiness by mentoring women entrepreneurs and helping manage their businesses on its platform. Facebook has trained more than 4,500 women entrepreneurs from all over India on creating a Facebook page, social media branding and running marketing campaigns. [33]

Dirty Feet, a Hyderabad-based enterprise started by two women entrepreneurs Nivedita and Archana, participated in SheMeansBusiness in 2016. They organize interesting tours for urban kids to experience the lifestyle and livelihoods of rural communities. Dirty Feet connects to parents of kids through schools and social media. Social media campaigns on Facebook and Instagram have helped them increase their customer base. [33]

s-commerce

In the startup world, the next big wave after e-commerce could be s-commerce or social commerce. Social media platforms are no longer limited to networking. They are the new digital
Social media is a great medium to pursue hobbies and interests such as fitness, yoga, meditation, travel, music, dance and technical gadgets. Youth are able to pursue their hobbies and interests more seriously, make meaningful connections and present their talent on a free and open platform that could get as grand as the world stage. Good content generators are monetizing their passion and interests by posting creative content and generating revenue through advertisements on their channels and pages. There are several examples of vloggers, photographers, musicians, dancers and other artists in India who are able to earn a living through social media platforms. Many others generate employment opportunities by showcasing their hobbies and interests on social media platforms. With fast-growing participation, opportunities and connections in the digital world, the nature of jobs is moving towards freelancing and self-employment in the West (Future of Work, European Commission) [35]. A similar trend in opportunities could be observed in India and other developing countries in the near future.

Facebook Audience Insights helps us understand various hobbies and interests that youth have on Facebook. The audience insights for Indian youth reveal that 28 million (about 15% of) Facebook youth users are interested in social issues such as community development, environment, charity, volunteering and sustainability. Majority of the youth engage with Facebook pages related to technical gadgets and software. This is evident from the popularity of Facebook pages and posts related to technology reviews. Technology-related content is very popular on many social media platforms.

**Technical Guruji**, a YouTube channel in Hindi, has 9.5 million subscribers. This channel helps Hindi-speaking viewers understand technology videos in the easiest possible way. Founded by Gaurav Chaudhary, Technical Guruji has emerged as the most popular Indian tech YouTube channel in a very short span of time. He has followers from India, Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh. [36]

Facebook Audience Insights on various interests of the Indian youth reveals that Facebook pages and posts related to Music Videos and Online.
Games engage users the most. About 50% of the Indian Facebook users that are youth are interested in music videos and games. The popularity of music videos is evident from the success of innovative musicians such as Vidya Vox (Indo-western vocals), Tushar Lall (Indian Jam Project) and Kenneth Sebastian (musical comedy).

**The Indian Jam Project**
The Indian Jam Project is a fusion platform for arranging and composing Indianized adaptations of popular western theme songs such as Game of Thrones, Star Wars, Interstellar, BBC's Sherlock (Holmes) etc. Tushar Lall, a 22 year-old music composer who initiated this project, shot to fame after producing the Indian version of Game of Thrones theme song. He posted his music video on YouTube, which went viral with 1.8 million views and more than 38,000 likes! He founded The Indian Jam Project to compose Indian versions of western music using the sitar, tabla, sarangi, flute, percussions and many more instruments, played by talented Indian musicians. “People think a sarangi is only good for a raag yaman or for playing ragas and tukdas but why can’t it play Star Wars?” argues Tushar. He is attempting to knit classical Indian tones into the script of western music to showcase the beauty of Indian music. This project is the first of its kind where the fusion of Indo-western styles of music produces a concoction that is deeply emotive as well as thought-provoking.

Analyzing the interests of Indian youth on social media, it is interesting to note that 53 million youth engage with content related to newspapers.

Physical fitness is another area which interests a lot of Indian youth. This is also evident from the popularity of the fitness challenge #HumFitTohIndiaFit started by the Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports of India in 2018.

**#HumFitTohIndiaFit**
A twitter challenge posted by the then Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, Shri Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore, turned viral on social media and became a nation-wide campaign for a fit India. It all started with the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, speaking about Fit India in one of his monthly radio talks, Mann Ki Baat. Inspired by this, the Union Sports Minister uploaded a video of him doing push-ups on Twitter and nominated celebrities Saina Nehwal (badminton champion), Virat Kohli (captain of the Indian national cricket team) and Hrithik Roshan (actor) for the #FitnessChallenge. His tweet received 517,000 views and 48,000 likes, and went viral as Twitteratis went on retweeting, posting their own fitness videos and nominating friends in a chain reaction. Within a few hours, thousands of people had posted photographs and videos on this fitness challenge.

**Volunteering**
About five million youth users of Facebook engage with pages and content related to volunteering.
Volunteer groups often take to social media platforms to actively spread awareness, organize volunteers and conduct public service. India has several public service groups mobilizing volunteers on social media such as The Ugly Indian, Youth Ki Awaaz, Rally For Rivers, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Full Stop, Greenpeace India etc.

#RallyForRivers
Rally For Rivers is a nationwide campaign addressing the depleting conditions of our rivers. Started by Jaggi Vasudev (popularly known as Sadhguru), founder of Isha Foundation, the campaign is aimed to create awareness about the condition of rivers in India. Sadhguru would personally drive across the nation from Kanyakumari to Himalayas, covering sixteen states and inspiring volunteers. The campaign plans to tackle the depleting condition of rivers by planting trees on either side of the river and its tributaries. The campaign connected to volunteers through social media channels. For instance, its Facebook page has received 7.1 million likes and followers; and more than 20,000 Twitter followers.\(^\text{[40]}\)\(^\text{[41]}\)

The campaign received massive support from artists, politicians and other celebrities like Salman Khan, Arbaaz Khan, Anupam Kher, Rishi Kapoor, Kajal Agarwal, Ramya Krishnan, Manisha Koirala, P.V. Sindhu, Mithali Raj, Uma Bharti and Sonia Gandhi. The campaign urges people for support by giving a missed call on a toll-free number. It has received 160,500,000 missed calls so far.\(^\text{[40]}\)

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (SBA)
Swachh Bharat Abhiyan is a national level campaign by the Government of India covering 4,041 statutory towns to clean the streets, roads and infrastructure of the country. The campaign is India’s biggest ever cleanliness drive in which thousands of government employees, schools and college students have participated. The mission was started in 2014 by the Prime Minister of India, who nominated nine famous personalities for the SBA social media campaign, who then challenged and nominated nine more people, triggering the movement like a nuclear chain reaction. SBA movement has been carried forward by celebrities and people from all walks of life. The Facebook page of Swachh Bharat Mission received more than 500,000 followers.\(^\text{[42]}\)

#BeatPlasticPollution
The social media campaign #BeatPlasticPollution by UN Environment engaged with millions of viewers, through various channel across the globe, to stop plastic pollution. The message “If you can’t reuse it, refuse it!” was communicated very effectively through various social media campaigns on World Environment Day 2018. The YouTube video on Learn how to beat the plastic pollution from Bottle Island, targeted towards children, received more than 182,000 views. UNV India has campaigned in a unique way by encouraging volunteers to upload pictures on social media with the hashtag #BeatPlasticPollution, thus pledging their commitment. It received more than 1,700 photographs and 3,500 applications for online volunteering in a short span of 16 days.\(^\text{[43]}\)

Connected Youth – Connected Government
Participation of the youth in public affairs is a strong indicator of a functioning democracy. Social media is a transparent medium through which citizens and youth can have a dialogue with the government and public servants. Youth can question, appeal, express public grievances and congratulate the government directly through social media platforms. Government departments often operate at different levels and hence miss direct contact and feedback from the citizens. Social media is ideal for bridging the gap between the government and youth, where both can convey their messages in the most transparent manner.

In India, ministers are using social media platforms like Twitter to address citizens’ grievances directly. There are several instances when Smt. Sushma Swaraj, the then Minister of External Affairs of India, resolved grievances of Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) found in difficult circumstances abroad, through direct communication on Twitter.
In most incidents, she responded within a few hours of the public grievance being aired. Through appropriate response followed by suitable action, she reinstated the faith of the youth in the government and established social media as an effective platform to resolve public grievances.

Indian youth, being the major users of social media in the country, are often found in the forefront: actively interacting, questioning and petitioning with the government ministries at both the state and union levels. Today, most of the ministers, Members of Parliament/Legislative Assemblies and other people’s representatives are active on social media platforms. Social media images, followers and trends are given high importance by the politicians of the day. Visibility and approachability on transparent social media platforms are helping the youth to directly connect with their representatives, ministers and other officials in public service. Social media is empowering the youth by bridging the gap between them and the government. Social media is gradually emerging as the greatest level-playing field of our times.

Social media is also being used actively to motivate the youth to vote in elections. For instance, the Election Commission of India partnered with Facebook to remind the youth who recently turned 18 to register to vote by sending them reminders on their Facebook profile. Under this campaign, all users who were going to turn 18 years got a “birthday wish” message on their birthday, with a reminder encouraging them to register with the poll panel to vote. The reminder was sent in English and 12 Indian languages. The message had a “register now” button that took the users to the National Voters’ Services Portal upon clicking.

Social media platforms also facilitate the youth to fight against corruption. For instance, @ipaidabribe uses social media platforms and its own website for citizen reporting. It aims to identify corrupt government services and work with local governments to affect process change. Started by Janaagraha, a prominent Bangalore-based non-profit organization, I Paid A Bribe aims to tackle corruption by harnessing the collective energy of citizens. One can anonymously report the bribe paid, along with the nature, number, pattern, type, location, frequency and values of actual corrupt acts on their website. It runs social media campaigns to bring like-minded youth together for collective action - raising awareness and promoting public debate on corruption, and forming a strong citizen pressure group against corruption.
NEGATIVE IMPACT

More than three billion people, who constitute about 40% of the world’s population, use online social media. A social media user, on average, spends two hours every day liking, sharing and tweeting messages on social media platforms. Youth are much more dependent on social media apps, as the first and the last thing they do while they are awake is to check for messages on social media. Most social media apps are less than 10 years old. But in a short span of time, they have become ubiquitous in the lives of youth across the world. Studies are beginning to show links between smartphone usage and increased levels of anxiety and depression, poor sleep quality, and increased risk of car injury or death. “The short-term, dopamine-driven feedback loops that we have created are destroying how society works,” says Chamath Paliwaperitiya, former Vice President of User Growth at Facebook. Dopamine is a neurochemical known as the “reward molecule”, which is released after certain human actions or behaviours such as exercising, or setting and achieving a goal. Platforms like Facebook, Snapchat, and Instagram leverage the very same neural circuitry used by slot machines and cocaine to keep users engaged.

Loneliness

Social media promises an end to loneliness but produces an increase in solitude and an intense awareness of social exclusion. Texting and other technologies give you more control over your social interactions but also lead to thinner interactions and less real engagement with the world. In her book Alone Together, Sherry Turkly addresses the effects of technology and social media on one’s sense of self; empathy; understanding and using emotions; sense of safety and security; an increase in anxiety; and the effects of technology on the developmental challenges of independence and identity construction among adolescents in the digital age. She observes that people are beginning to prefer texting to face-to-face communication, which could contribute to feelings of loneliness. She also discusses how the new social contracts and social norms of social media, with the continuous need to “stay connected”, cause stress and anxiety amongst young people.

Declining empathy

Cyber-psychologist Terence Chan, author of ‘Facebook and its Effects on Users’ Empathic Social Skills and Life Satisfaction’ conducted research on college-aged Facebook users. He found that Facebook usage suppresses both extroverted and neurotic individuals’ empathic social skills. While Facebook can be a beneficial tool in complementing face-to-face interaction, extended usage may replace real-world interactions to the detriment of users’ ability to exhibit empathy toward others. This finding concurs with recent studies that indicate the downsides of Facebook activities—mainly the exacerbation of social isolation, greater dependency on computer-mediated communications, and replacement of real with virtual relationships. Thus, this study implies the strong addictive nature that Facebook can have on young adults and cautions against its excessive use. While Facebook provides new opportunities for communication and learning, it embeds the risk of weakening empathic responses to others, which is crucial for effective communication.

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)

“There are many risks of social media. People even suffer from extreme cases like depression or suicide. As a result of social media, studies are also being neglected. Social media has resulted in low self-esteem and the rise of ‘Fakeism’ in society. People don’t act natural and hide behind the masks of S.M.” – Ayimnaro Jamir, 21 Years
The rise of social media has brought forth an anxious feeling among youth known as Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), a form of social anxiety caused by the concern of not being in touch with the latest events in the cyber world \(^{[50]}\). The Oxford Dictionary defines FOMO as “anxiety that an exciting or interesting event may currently be happening elsewhere, often aroused by posts seen on social media” \(^{[51]}\).

According to Ryan and Deci’s Self-determination Theory (SDT) of motivation and personality, people have increased their social media and internet usage to satisfy basic psychological needs. Hence, FOMO may be involved in the relationship between social media use and the satisfaction of certain psychological needs wherein one is anxious of being left out. Studies have shown that chronic FOMO is significantly related to problematic internet use (PIU) and social media addiction \(^{[50]}\).

Youth look on their social media newsfeed because they start to feel anxious about not knowing what is happening in the daily lives of those they call “friends”. However, when they look at the newsfeed, they start to feel inadequate due to what they see: happy pictures of friends having an exciting time together at a social event or holiday. It is a well-known fact that social media doesn’t give an accurate account of a person’s life, as most posts/pictures on social media showcase only their good times and high points in life. FOMO leads to a compulsive desire to stay connected all the time with other people’s lives online, which is a false reality. Studies show that FOMO leads to extreme dissatisfaction and has a detrimental effect on our physical and mental health – mood swings, loneliness, feelings of inferiority, reduced self-esteem, extreme social anxiety, and increased levels of negativity and depression \(^{[52]}\).

**Sleep disturbance**

Social media use may directly cause disturbed sleep in three ways. First, social media use may directly displace sleep; for example, if an individual stays up late posting pictures on Instagram, his or her sleep time may be reduced. Second, social media use may promote emotional, cognitive, and/or physiological arousal. For example, watching a provoking video on YouTube or engaging in a contentious discussion on Facebook just before going to bed may contribute to a disturbed sleep. Third, bright light emitted by devices may delay circadian rhythms. In each of these cases, sleep may be disturbed because of the stimulating and rewarding nature of social media \(^{[52]}\).

According to research published in *The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism*:

“Artificial light at night exerts a profound suppressive effect on melatonin levels and shortens the body’s internal representation of night duration.

“Exposing oneself to electrical lighting in the late evening disrupts melatonin signalling and could therefore potentially impact sleep, thermoregulation, blood pressure, and glucose homeostasis.”

Humans are used to spending their evenings in darkness, but now we are surrounded by artificial lighting all day and night, especially the blue light, emitted by smartphone and laptop screens \(^{[53]}\).

A research study conducted in USA asked 1,700 students in the age group of 18-30 years about their social media and sleeping habits. They found a connection with sleep disturbances – and concluded blue light had a part to play. The time they were logged on, was an important predictor of disturbed sleep, suggesting obsessive checking for notifications. The researchers say this could be
caused by physiological arousal before sleep, and the bright lights of our devices can delay circadian rhythms. [54]

**Personal vs Social Conundrum**

Youth who are glued to social media apps are so continuously engaged in the virtual world that they “lose the moment” – the present. In the quest to connect virtually, they often disconnect from the reality and the people in it. Youth are losing their ability to be alone and feel, emote, participate, not participate, or witness life by themselves. The virtual world taking over space and time in the real world is detrimental for the development and overall well-being of the youth.

The downside is that social media often leads to a loss of identity. Youth lose the sense of authenticity while trying to fit the ‘perfect’ mould on social media. Young people are often susceptible to social pressures that encourage them to reveal personal data when posting online. Young people, especially teenagers, often post information about their personal life such as activities they are doing, their current locations, who they spend time with, their thoughts and opinions. They tend to share this information because of FOMO and the fear of being judged by their peer group - who is continuously sharing activities - and thereby they give out a lot of personal information. Teenagers in the social media era are making their lives open book, and are often susceptible to extrinsic forces that weaken their spirit of self.

**Fake News**

Fake news can be understood as a type of propaganda that consists of deliberate disinformation or hoaxes spread via traditional print and broadcast news media or online social media [55]. Fake news has been on the rise during the past few years in a world that is deeply and strongly interconnected by social media networks. Fake news can drive the misallocation of resources during terror attacks and natural disasters, can misinform elections, can cause panic, and even trigger public anger and cause deaths. While all the major social media platforms grapple with the problem of fake news spreading unchecked and unregulated, the most severe consequence that lead to killings of people in India was triggered through fake messages on WhatsApp, owned by Facebook Inc. In the past few years, WhatsApp has received intense criticism as it was being used to spread false information, hoaxes, hate speech and fake news.

In 2017, it was linked to the spreading of fake news in Kenya. In 2018, it was associated with mob killings in India due to rumors on child lifters and cow slaughter. In Brazil, rumors associating yellow fever vaccines with fatal reactions and chemicals started to spread on WhatsApp. The most destructive fake news item was on the Rohingyas, the minority group in Myanmar. [56]

Tens of thousands of people from the Rohingya community have been killed, raped and assaulted; villages were razed to the ground and more than 700,000 Rohingyas fled over the border to Bangladesh due to hateful and hoax messages that exploded on Facebook unchecked. Facebook has admitted “it did not do enough to prevent

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The research on ‘The Spread of True and False News Online’ by MITCITATION Sor18 [1033] [96] investigated the differential diffusion of all the verified, true and false news stories distributed on Twitter from 2006 to 2017.

They used data comprising of approximately 126,000 cascades of news stories spreading on Twitter, tweeted by about 3 million people over 4.5 million times.

The news stories have been classified as true or false using information from six independent fact-checking organizations that exhibited 95%-98% agreement on the classifications.

The research found that falsehood diffused significantly farther, faster, deeper, and more broadly than the truth in all categories. The effects were most pronounced for false political news than for news about terrorism, natural disasters, science, urban legends or financial information.

False news was 70% more likely to be retweeted than the truth.

Novelty is an important factor. False news was perceived as more novel than true news, which suggests that people are more likely to share novel information.
the incitement of violence and hate speech in Myanmar.”[57]

In India, rumours and hoax messages on WhatsApp created panic and public anger in various states causing mob attacks in villages. WhatsApp messages on child lifters causes rural people to patrol in anxious groups on the lookout for anyone they don’t recognize. WhatsApp-lead mob attacks caused killings of 27 people across the states of India in the year 2018. Those being targeted include migrants, mentally-challenged people, nomadic and denotified tribes and other vulnerable sections of the society. In Maharashtra, where 14 such killings were observed, the state government has put up large boards at prominent public locations across cities and towns, cautioning people against believing social media rumours. [58]

The following map by the Indian Express shows the death and rumour trail linked to the child-lifting rumour that spread across various states of India in 2018. [56]

Responding to the rumour trail, WhatsApp spokesperson Carl Woog said: “We’re working to give people more control over group discussions and are constantly evolving our tools to block unwanted automated content. In the run up to next year’s elections we will step up our education efforts so that people know about our safety features and how to spot fake news and hoaxes.” [60]

While WhatsApp keeps reminding users that their messages are encrypted, it does not remind its users to not forward unverified information or misinformation, as is prohibited by its Acceptable Use Policy. The Acceptable Use Policy is available only in English, and there is no user conditioning about what kind of messages aren’t acceptable. Also, there is no literacy training on the fact that the platform has rumours and misinformation, how to spot them and avoid becoming a source of fake news. [61]

Polarization
In the era of social media, majority of the internet
users consume news through social media, which makes it a very important medium for dissemination of news and information. Due to features like filter bubbles and selective exposure, social media tends to feed customized content to the users according to the topics they like, causing ideological polarization. “Although millions of people are using the internet to expand their horizons, many people are doing the opposite, creating a ‘Daily Me’ that is specifically tailored to their own interests and prejudices,” says Cass Sunstein, US legal scholar. Warning against the irresponsible use of social media, Barrack Obama, former President of USA and Noble Peace Prize laureate, said: “One of the dangers of the internet is that people can have entirely different realities. They can be cocooned in information that reinforces their current biases. The question has to do with how do we harness this technology in a way that allows a multiplicity of voices, allows a diversity of views, but doesn’t lead to a Balkanisation of society and allows ways of finding common ground.” The symptoms of ideological polarization are often associated with fake news that are not subjected to editorial norms and processes for ensuring the accuracy and credibility of information. Lack of digital media literacy causes social media users to share sensational fake news and make it go viral.

They should leverage the extensive usage of social media by the Indian youth for improved educational outcomes. Government programs promoting entrepreneurship / small and medium enterprises (SMEs), should use social media as an effective platform to reach out to potential young entrepreneurs. Social media companies should promote content creators in various Indian languages to be shared as posts.

The hyper connectivity made possible through social media has some negative impacts too. Sleep disturbance, loneliness, depression and anxiety caused by social media affects the mental and physical health of users. At the societal level, social media has caused increased spread of fake news and polarization of opinions, thereby increasing intolerance in the society.

Civil society should step up educational and awareness campaigns on mental health issues caused by social media. Spread of fake news needs to be deterred by effective means. Fake news is an amorphous category that includes misleading news, unverified content, hoaxes, and even fabricated pictures in the nature of internetas memes. Some forms of fake news could lead to defamation, sedition, threat to life and national security—which need to be controlled at an early stage. It is important for the government to take measures to ensure deterrence and accountability of perpetrators of deliberate online falsehoods, and impose punitive measures on such perpetrators.

While anti-fake news legislation seems like a direct solution for this problem, it is important to consider that such laws often pose the threat of pre-censorship and must strike a balance with the considerations of Article 19(1)(a) Freedom of Speech in India. In addition, traceability of the perpetrators of fake news becomes difficult due to the end-to-end encryption technologies used by messaging apps that ensure privacy of the users.

Any policy related to anti-fake news in India should balance the objective of deterrence of fake news with that of “freedom of speech” and “right to privacy” of its citizens. Educational institutions and civil society should step up digital literacy efforts to encourage individuals to learn the skills required to question the content to which they are exposed.
Social media is emerging as the most important networked public space where young people can gather and socialize with peers in an informal way. The conversations on social media are not ephemeral like face-to-face conversations. The interactions are “on the record” to an unprecedented degree, as the technology is designed to endure. The casual social interactions of the youth and chit-chat happening in lobbies are done on social media now. The interactions in public places, especially in urban India, are gradually being replaced by social media conversations. Parents often complain that youth are interacting less with the real world as they are always glued to their mobiles. Most Indian youth spend their prime time every day on internet and social media, while rapidly exchanging information, opinions, photographs, events etc. But the freedom they experience on social media comes along with several risks. “There are risks of using social media as people really get addicted to this kind of stuff. Along with this, people’s lifestyle has been changing gradually, which in turn has a great impact on their physical and mental health. Cyberbullying is another big risk.” says 21-year-old Shama Ansari from New Delhi. “Cyberbullying is increasing day by day. Greatest risk of social media is our information being available everywhere and anywhere...there is no personal life left I feel, which is the biggest threat to our civilization.” says 23-year-old Pooja from Thane.

This chapter explores prominent risks of social media affecting the youth of India, identified through focused group discussions with the youth, parents and educational institutions.

## Addiction to Social Media

Addiction to social media emerged as an important risk in this research. The youth opine that their peer group is addicted to social media apps - sharing stories and photographs, and liking other people’s photos all the time. In this process, they often neglect their studies, sports and other important activities in the real world. Sometimes, the excessive usage of social media turns into behavioural addiction, which could be dangerous for the health and overall well-being of youth.

Behavioural addictions related to the use of mobile technology are increasingly being recognized as a major public health problem in the digital era. The All Indian Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) has started the country’s first Behavioural Addictions Clinic (BAC) in New Delhi. It offers

### Problematic internet use is addictive behaviour.

*Indications include preferring socializing online to interacting in real life, feeling happy when online, and compulsive use of the internet.*

AIIMS conducted a study on the ‘Extent and pattern of problematic internet use among school students from Delhi’ in 2018. The study was conducted on 6,291 students in Classes VI to XII from 25 schools in New Delhi. The study found that:

- About 19% of study participants reported problematic internet use.
- 37% used the internet for mood regulation.
- 67% used personal devices to go online
- Male students studying in senior grades and owning a personal device were associated with higher rates of problematic internet use.
- Use of the internet for accessing social media, online gaming, and recreational surfing is associated with problematic internet use.
- There is a need to cover all students under a cyber awareness programme in order to facilitate safe and healthy use of internet.
Many children nowadays are spending a lot of time on social media. Social media per se is not bad but we need to understand and find the right dosage for them. We need to guide our children on what tools to use.

In this regard, I would like to draw attention to Sanskrit Sloka meaning Excess of anything is bad. This applies to usage of social media.

My children have not chosen social media for entertainment. They don’t have personal mobile. They have also found other means of spending time such as painting, playing football and karate. Luckily, they have interesting friends who also don’t use social media. So, they don’t feel out of place in conversations with friends.

As a teacher, I come across parental neglect as the main factor causing social media addiction. Basically, children follow their parents! If parents are glued to their mobiles, children will also follow the suit. Also, if parents cannot give time and attention to their children, they may be forced to look for other means of entertainment, which is mostly spending time on social media. If this is not addressed, social media might also become an addiction like smoking, alcohol and drugs.

Schools and colleges should spread the awareness on social media addiction amongst youth and parents. We need an effective detox strategy to help the youth addicted to social media! - Srilatha Madduri, Teacher (Secondary School)and Mother of two teenagers

Social media platforms are “sticky” by their very design. They keep visitors on their site once they have navigated there or encourage the visitor to visit frequently. Stickiness is an important quotient for these apps since it determines online advertising revenue and company valuation. Research shows that social media stimulates dopamine, a neurochemical also known as the “reward molecule”, which is released after certain human actions or behaviours. Instant gratification

Dr. Yatan Balhara, who started the first BAC in India said: “Social media addiction is the worst among those between 15 and 23 years. We have seen a teenager who would spend 19 hours a day surfing the internet and a girl who would spent 16 hours on social media.” According to him, exposure to computers, cell phones and other gadgets is good, but it must be monitored. The physician said that since children were constantly browsing through social media, they didn’t have time for other activities. Most parents, in fact, miss the initial signs. [63]

Our national survey on social media reveals that:

- Three fourths of the youth spend more than one hour on the internet. And 22% of the youth spend more than five hours on the internet!
- When asked about the maximum duration for which the youth can stay away from social media: 18% youth said they can stay away only for a few minutes while 48% said they can stay away for a few hours.

prevention, early detection and protection against internet addiction by joining hands with educational institutions. The idea is to educate the youth about the dangers of social media.
on social media when someone likes our post, and unpredictable stimuli in the form of random notifications and alerts trigger dopamine in our brains. This cycle of action-reward ensures that we are hooked to social media, and gradually addicted to it. [64]

Digital detox is necessary to escape the dopamine shots our brains are used to! Social Pundits estimate that social detox for 100 days can help dopamine levels return to normal. [65]

**CYBERBULLYING**

Cyberbullying is defined by Oxford Dictionary as “The use of electronic communication to bully a person, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature” [66]. Cyberbullying can be found in many acts on social media such as posting humiliating content of the victim, sending or posting vulgar messages online, threatening to commit acts of violence, stalking by messages, threats of child pornography etc.

For this study, cyberbullying could be understood as repeatedly harassing someone using technologies such as email, instant messaging, social networking sites, blogs and other websites, cell phones, text messaging, picture messaging, video phones, etc. with the intent of harming, embarrassing, or damaging the other individual.

Cyberbullying, trolling and cyberstalking are all forms of online harassment that pose a threat to the free use of social media by the youth. The three terms are often used interchangeably, and are all collectively referred to as cyberbullying for the purposes of this research.

The perception of cyberbullying can vary across different cultures, and even among different individuals. However, from a common viewpoint, negative experiences online such as being called mean names, being teased, being embarrassed etc. are unwarranted behaviours that can have adverse effects. It is a virtual event having real consequences! It causes a lot of psychological stress to the victims. Sometimes, victims/victims’ resort to extreme measures like suicide. [67]

Traditional bullying usually stops when a victim returns to the safety of his home, but cyberbullying is a continuous process on online platforms. It is a new-age problem that has arisen in this internet age. [67]

**Magnitude of Cyberbullying in India**

Our nationally-representative survey tried to understand the magnitude of cyberbullying in multiple forms as commonly understood by the youth. We found that:

- **41% of the youth have received offensive content on social media.**
- **15% of the youth were asked for personal information that is sexual in nature, on social media.**
- **11% of the youth felt threatened on social media.**
- **One third of the youth faced cyberbullying with varying frequency on social media.**
- **Of those who faced cyberbullying: More than half said cyberbullying lasted for 1-2 weeks; one fourth said it lasted for more than one month.**
- **Of those who faced cyberbullying: 46% knew the person bullying them online; 34% did not know the person cyberbullying them.**

**Coping Mechanisms for Cyberbullying**

Youth try dealing with cyberbullying in multiple ways: blocking the person responsible for cyberbullying; changing their contact information like name, email address, telephone number on their social media accounts; reporting the incident online; leaving the social media platform completely; sharing with friends; sharing with teacher/parent. If none of these options work, they call the police!
Our nationally-representative primary survey explores the measures taken by youth affected by cyberbullying. It was found that most youth tried more than one means to end cyberbullying.

More than two thirds of the youth affected by cyberbullying blocked or warned the person responsible. 44% changed their own contact information on social media such as name, email address, telephone number.

One third shared with friends/parents and even called up the police.

More than one fourth of the affected youth left the social media platform to end cyberbullying.

**Graph 10: Measures taken by affected youth to end cyberbullying (primary survey)**

Bullied and ridiculed by his friends and strangers over TikTok (a social media App) for “dressing up in women attires”, a 24-year-old man from Chennai committed suicide by jumping off a train [Hindustan Times, October 2018] CITATION Hin18 (79)

A 17-year-old schoolgirl from Kolkata committed suicide when her online friend posted her morphed picture on Facebook. Her online friend avenged her neglect by creating fake profile, morphed her photographs and posted them with her mobile number. When obscene calls started coming to her mobile, she thought there was no escape and ended her life. [Times of India, June 2014.] CITATION Tim14 (80)

Our focused group discussions revealed that the youth from metropolitan cities were more aware about the technology options to end cyberbullying such as “Block the person responsible” or “Report the incident online”.

The youth from small towns and rural areas were not much aware of these simpler options due to language barriers. Most social media platforms were available only in English for a very long time; only recently, they are being made available in
more Indian languages.

We have also found that the youth from small towns and rural areas were not aware about data privacy issues and settings on social media platforms. The social media use in semi-urban and rural areas in India is growing fast but awareness on safeguarding personal information is not growing at the same rate.

Lack of awareness on sharing personal information on the internet is also evident from the fact that more than half the youth have their email address and telephone number on record on the internet. One third of the youth have their address on the internet.

Cyberbullying differs case to case in terms of intent, duration, intensity and impact. It includes trolling by people who intentionally start arguments, use offensive and argumentative tone or upset others by posting inflammatory remarks. The sole purpose of trolling is angering and upsetting the victim. Some people troll to derive entertainment or pleasure by annoying others. Celebrities with a huge fan following get trolled very often by people who want to gain attention, feel powerful or gain recognition. Such inflammatory remarks online could be offensive for some, while it could be freedom of speech and expression for the trolls. Freedom of speech is guaranteed as a fundamental right to all the citizens under Article 19 of the Indian constitution. However, it is also subjected to reasonable restrictions that include decency and defamation.

Sometimes, cyberbullying could take the form of cyberstalking, which is a severe form of online harassment. Cyberstalking is strategic, technologically-based attack on the target person, for reasons of anger, revenge, or control. Cyberstalking includes acts like humiliation of the
victim, instilling fear in the victim, blackmailing the victim for money, and harassing the victim’s family, friends and employers to isolate the victim [69]. Social media, blogs, photo sharing sites and other online activities provide cyber-stalkers with a wealth of information, which helps them plan their online harassment and keep tabs on an individual’s daily life. Cyberstalking is a crime under the Indian Penal Code Section 354D (IPC 354D), punishable with imprisonment for a term of up to three years and a fine.

**LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK**

India doesn’t have exclusive laws to address bullying, cyberbullying or cyberstalking. However, the existing legislative framework has relevant provisions to address cyberbullying, trolling and cyberstalking.

Online harassment - associated with inflammatory remarks, defamation, undignified actions, intrusion into personal space and personal life - needs a strong legislative framework that provides a clear direction for the law enforcement agencies to act upon. In the context of online harassment, the often-debated rights of citizens in a democracy include: “Right to Personal Liberty”, “Right to Privacy”, “Right to Dignity”, “Right to Freedom of Speech and Expression”, and “Duty to be Decent”. The constitution of India, being the supreme law of the country, guarantees its citizens with Fundamental Rights, and empowers citizens to approach the Supreme Court of India to seek enforcement, or protection against infringement of their Fundamental Rights. Under the Fundamental Right to Freedom, the Indian constitution provides the “Right to Life and Personal Liberty” under Article 21.

The judiciary in India has applied judicial activism and judicial creativity to interpret Article 21, to address various emerging issues of social concern. Some of the interpretations relevant to Reputation, Privacy and Personal Security are presented in this chapter.

**ARTICLE 21, CONSTITUTION OF INDIA**

“No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to a procedure established by law.”

**Right to Privacy**

Privacy as per Black’s Law Dictionary, privacy means “right to be let alone; the right of a person to be free from unwarranted publicity; and the right to live without unwarranted interference by the public in matters with which the public is not necessarily concerned”

**Right to freedom of speech and expression**

Freedom of Speech and Expression with reasonable restrictions:

Article 19(1)(a): All citizens shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression.

Article 19(2): Nothing in 19(1)(a) shall affect the operation of any existing law, or prevent the State from making any law, in so far as such law imposes reasonable restrictions on the exercise of the right conferred by the said sub clause in the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence.
Social Media for Youth & Civic Engagement in India

Young people often refer to the fundamental right “Freedom of Speech and Expression” as an absolute right. Very few are aware of the “reasonable restrictions” that could be imposed on their freedom of speech by the society and the legal system.

While posting messages online, it is important for the youth to know their freedom of speech and expression is not absolute. The freedom of speech guarantee under Article 19(1) (a) can be subject to reasonable state restriction in the interest of decency or morality under Article 19(2). It is important to understand that “Freedom of Speech” doesn’t include the right to someone else’s attention and Mindspace, or personal intrusion. While hearing one of the cases on artistic independence, the Supreme Court said: “There is a distinction between freedom of idea and freedom of words. You have an idea, express it, but the words you choose must be controlled and under the statute.” Clearly freedom of speech cannot be the reason to mask or justify abusive and obscene online content.

The constitutional provisions need to be supported by enforceable laws that protect the rights of all sections of the society in varying contexts. The big question is: Does India have adequate laws that can be enforced to ensure digital safety of children, youth, women and minorities?

India lacks specific legislation on online harassment and cyberbullying. Some of the frequently used legislations (details in Annexure-2) against online harassment include the Information Technology (IT) Act of 2000 and sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) against defamation, sexual harassment, invasion of privacy, and stalking in general, which are also applied to cyberstalking.

There are many limitations to the existing legal framework and investigation boundaries that don’t allow complete redressal of online harassment complaints. For instance, IPC Section 506 (Punishment on Criminal Intimidation) and Section 354D (stalking of women) - which are frequently applied to online harassment cases - are bailable offences. According to National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, over 80% of the people accused under IPC Section 354D are given bail before the charge sheet is filed [70]. Easy bails and long-pending cases make the existing laws very ineffective in delivering justice for the victims of online harassment. It is even more difficult to redress cyberstalking of men, as Section 354D is applicable only to women. Also, national boundaries limit the investigation of our police, as the perpetrator of cyberbullying is traced using their IP or VPN address. Incidents of transnational crimes are increasing, so the police often must coordinate with government agencies, international partners and private corporations to trace the perpetrator. In addition to that, tech-savvy cybercriminals use secure software to remain anonymous. They use proxy servers that hide their location and route their communications through multiple countries. This helps the cybercriminal evade direct detection, and commit the crime from

In R. Rajagopalan v. State of Tamil Nadu, the right to privacy of citizens was dealt with by the Supreme Court in the following terms: “...the right to privacy is implicit in the right to life and liberty guaranteed to the citizens of this country by Article 21. It is a ‘right to be let alone’. A citizen has a right to safeguard the privacy of his own, his family, marriage, procreation, motherhood, childbearing and education among other matters. None can publish anything concerning the above matters without his consent – whether truthful or otherwise and whether laudatory or critical. If he does so, he would be violating the right to privacy of the person concerned and would be liable in an action for damages. Position may, however, be different, if a person voluntarily thrusts himself into controversy or voluntarily invites or raises a controversy...”
other countries where they cannot be prosecuted. As cybercrime is getting complicated day by day, it is important for India to adopt new laws and technologies to catch up with the changing times.

**CONCLUSION**

Youth often face the risks of addiction, loss of privacy and cyberbullying on social media. Social media addiction, caused by excessive usage of social media, should be addressed through effective digital detox strategies and de-addiction clinics. Parents and educational institutions should be wary of early signs of addiction, and encourage the youth in the detox process or approach a psychiatrist to treat behavioural addictions. Social media addiction affects studies, career, health, and overall well-being of the youth. India has just one behavioural de-addiction clinic in Delhi to treat social media addiction, which is prevalent across the country. The Government of India should treat this as an emerging priority in public health and open more clinics across India; and spread awareness on social media addiction in close collaboration with educational institutions.

Cyberbullying is a criminal practice that induces psychological stress in the youth, with serious consequences on their mental health. Cyberbullying - which includes trolling, cyberluring and cyberstalking - has severe consequences with varying degrees, and will only aggravate in the future. While the trolls argue about freedom of speech and expression, invasion of the personal life of the victim is clearly a violation of the “right to privacy”. However, the present legislative framework in India is not adequate to address this new-age problem of cyberbullying.

The government needs to have clear laws on cyberstalking to combat cyberbullying and ensure digital safety for all. The provisions in the IT Act are not adequate to ensure digital safety of the youth. It is important to acknowledge that formulating laws is challenging in this delicate space that tries to balance “inconvenience” with freedom of speech. Section 66A of the IT Act made it an offense to send “any electronic mail or electronic mail message for the purpose of causing annoyance or inconvenience or to deceive or to mislead the addressee or recipient about the origin of such messages”. This law was struck down by the Supreme Court as it was unconstitutional.

The present government’s intermediary guidelines under Section 79 of the IT Act are important measures, as they require social media companies to respond to complaints from not just courts but also from social media users. Also, the government is drafting guidelines that will bind social media companies such as Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube and Facebook to respond to complaints over content in a “few hours” as against the current norm of 36 hours [71].

Social media companies should use artificial tools like Google’s Perspective to prevent abusive and obscene content. Perspective API uses Artificial Intelligence (AI) to silt out toxic comments in response to the hordes of harassment cases online. The AI is supposed to automatically flag comments it determines would ruin conversations, and to allow moderators to choose whether they should delete it [72]. Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence solutions are also being developed by Facebook and Twitter to detect bots, abusive content and fake news.

The civil society plays an important role in conducting awareness camps addressing cyberbullying and ways to tackle it, in all educational institutions and online forums. It is important to sensitize the youth about the reasonable restrictions on freedom of speech and expression, and the legal consequences of cyberstalking.

The interconnected global village makes cybercrimes more difficult to solve as the crimes are increasingly becoming transnational. Also, tech-savvy criminals operating in global networks use advanced technologies to become almost untraceable. The police should coordinate with government agencies, international partners and private corporations to trace the perpetrator. The police should work closely with INTERPOL, have effective partnerships in place, and use complicated digital forensic tactics to trace down the perpetrators.
Civic engagement and civic participation are often used interchangeably, and there are multiple definitions for these terms based on different cultural contexts. The term civic engagement is conventionally associated with participation in local governance; voting in local elections; actively engaging with local news; community development in the neighborhood; community volunteering etc. The scope of civic engagement broadened with time, as the boundaries of communities expanded beyond the boundaries of geography, family, village and ethnicity. For the purposes of this study, civic engagement is defined as “the actions taken by citizens on individual or a collective basis to identify and address matters of public concern.” [73]

Historically, the political participation of citizens, which is the driving force for any democracy, was central to civic engagement. Engaging with electoral processes such as voting, trying to persuade others to vote for a candidate, working for a political party, political demonstrations, protests and marches, signing petitions, writing political articles—have been conventional actions for political participation in democratic nations. Other forms of civic engagement focused directly on providing help to people in need, solving community problems or raising money for charitable causes. [74]

In the digital era, the scope of civic engagement has been growing as the communities are growing beyond geographic, national and linguistic boundaries in the interconnected world. Digital technologies, especially social networking sites, play an important role in shaping up new global online communities. Also, there is growing evidence that indicates a shift in priorities and interests of the millennials towards non-political aspects of civic engagement; even transnational issues such as pollution, global warming, consumer activism, global poverty, human rights etc. [74]

Why is Civic Engagement Important? How does civic engagement help the youth and help the community?

Civic engagement is one of the key components for positive youth development. It allows young people to “practice” and exercise citizenship, develop life skills, and enhance their employability and learning outcomes. Beyond their positive impacts on participants, youth civic engagement programs can significantly impact communities: they can increase social capital, decrease violence, provide key social services, and meet overall community development needs. [73]

The benefits generated by civic engagement are both collective and individual. Collective benefits may be material/physical (improved infrastructure, for example), socio-economic (improved health and education systems or reduced ethnic tensions and violence), or governance-related (decreased levels of corruption or greater efficiency in the delivery of public services due to increased citizen participation). Individual benefits are those gained by the person participating in the activity
and include increased life and livelihood skills. Life skills, are applicable to almost every aspect of daily life, including employment (the so-called “soft skills” valued by many employers), among other areas. Increased life skills also allow individuals to participate more fully and effectively in future civic engagement activities, creating a virtuous cycle. Livelihood skills refer specifically to the skills necessary for gaining and maintaining employment or achieving long-term financial self-sufficiency.\[^{73}\]

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN INDIA

Civic engagement in India has an interesting pattern. India has seen lower participation of youth in electoral politics, as the registered youth voters in the age group of 18-29 years is much lower when compared to other age groups. According to the statistics published by Election Commission of India, only 75% of the youth are registered as voters. This is much lower when compared to other age groups as depicted in the figure.

This doesn’t directly imply that the civic engagement of youth in India is low. In fact, civic engagement movements in the country like Swachh Bharat, clean-up drives in public places, gender equality initiatives, environmental concerns e.g. Beat the Plastic, and online petitions have grown significantly in recent years, with enormous participation from the youth of the country.

Civic engagement of youth through social networking sites has become ubiquitous in today’s world. Indian youth are using social media to voice their opinions on issues of public concern, raise funds for charitable causes, coordinate disaster relief, organize volunteering activities, mobilize resources for social entrepreneurship, participate in digital activism through online petitions, participate in “liveathons”/“tweetathons” etc.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

This study attempts to understand the forms and trends of civic engagement on social media through (1) Facebook Insights and (2) nationally-representative primary survey of Indian youth. While there are several themes under the gamut of civic engagement, this study explores six aspects of civic engagement that the youth of India can easily relate to and are prominent in India, namely Civic Sense, Environmental, Social, Community Volunteering, Political and Cultural.

The six aspects of civic engagement should not be perceived as straightjacketed compartments, rather as interconnected categories to appreciate the understanding of civic engagement from a broad context.
Civic Sense: Civic Sense is all about having consideration for a fellow human being. Civic Sense encompasses unspoken norms of society that help it run smoothly without someone stepping on somebody else's toes. It means being polite; showing consideration to the elderly, women, children and people with disabilities; driving in one's lane without honking; not littering on streets, keeping public property clean; smoking only at designated places etc. In a large and diverse democracy like India, civic sense also constitutes being tolerant to perspectives different from one's own; and adopting the practice of non-violence.

Environmental: The public concern about environment deals with the harmful effects of human activity on the biophysical environment. At the individual consumer level, it involves activities like stopping the use of plastic, switching to renewable energy resources, saving electricity and water, recycling waste, lowering consumerism, using bio-degradable materials, buying energy-saving and water-saving appliances, harvesting rainwater, and using chemical-free products. At the community level, it involves activities like planting more trees in the neighborhood, spreading local awareness on air pollution and water pollution, demonstrating the circular economy, conservation of biodiversity and wetlands etc. At national and global levels, environmental civic engagement involves fighting against global warming, biodiversity loss, oil spills, ozone depletion, acidification of oceans, desertification of land, depletion of the groundwater table, genetically modified foods etc.

Social: The public concern in the social dimension consists of identifying and addressing factors that hinder societies from providing basic human needs to all individuals and facilitating individuals to reach their full potential. Social issues of public concern include poverty, inequalities, gender issues, illiteracy, public health, unemployment, religious intolerance, bullying, and providing social security for older persons, people with a disability and indigenous peoples. Youth can contribute to the social dimension of civic engagement through a wide spectrum of activities such as teaching poor children in their neighborhood; helping the poor in availing basic public services; campaigning against child labor, human trafficking and gender discrimination; and collaborating with civil society organizations. Social issues are interconnected, complex problems that often need long-term engagement and collaborations for synergy of efforts. Social issues can be addressed at local, subnational, national and global levels by collaborating with governments, civil society, youth organizations, social enterprises, cooperatives and informal collectives.

Community Volunteering: The term volunteering refers to a wide range of activities— including traditional forms of mutual aid and self-help, formal service delivery and other forms of civic participation— undertaken of free will for the public good, and where monetary reward is not the principal motivating factor. Here, the...
emphasis is on free will, which is non-obligatory in nature, and depends entirely on the choice of the individual—whether to act. Volunteerism is not bound by an obligation, contract or academic requirement. In India, most commonly found community volunteering activities involve organization of blood donation camps and free medical camps, raising funds and resources during disasters, planting trees, and teaching poor children free of charge.

**Political:** Political participation is very important for civic participation in a democratic nation. The political dimension of civic engagement is concerned with how to influence others (elected representatives, policy makers) while they make decisions of public concern. Historically, political participation has been understood from the lens of electoral politics. Over time, the scope of political participation has increased to include protests, strikes, boycotts, and has recently expanded to online petitioning, e-campaigning and blogging in the digital era.

**Cultural:** Cultural aspect of civic engagement involves conservation, promotion and innovative use of cultural heritage in support of economic growth, social cohesion and environmental sustainability. Cultural heritage is a shared resource and forms part of the cultural identity of communities and individuals.

Cultural heritage consists of physical artefacts and intangible attributes of a society that are inherited from past generations. Cultural heritage includes tangible culture (such as buildings, monuments, landscapes, books, works of art and artefacts); intangible culture (such as folklore, traditions, language and knowledge); and natural heritage (such as culturally significant landscapes and biodiversity). In India, conservation of cultural heritage involves activities such as:

- **Campaigns to save monuments (example: save Taj Mahal from discoloration; conservation of Ajanta/Ellora caves, Buddhist monuments in Sanchi and forts of Rajasthan);**
- **Citizen movements to save the regional dialect and native language (example: UNESCO has rated 42 Indian languages as “critically endangered”);**
- **Conservation of dying art forms (like puppetry, Mithila painting, Patola sari weaving etc.);**
- **Conservation of cultural biodiversity (example: sacred forest sites in Himalayas, tribal medicinal herbs in central India etc).**

### Civic Engagement of Indian youth through Social Media

**Civic Engagement of Indian Youth through Facebook Insights**

Facebook Audience Insights provides the aggregated number of users interested in (i.e. Liked/Followed pages related to) the category ‘Politics and Social Issues’, which is further divided into finer components such as Charity and Causes, Community Issues, Politics, Volunteering, Sustainability and Environmentalism.

The aggregated data of users from India in the age group 15-29 years (youth) has been analyzed for the categories relevant to civic engagement. The audience insights reveal the following:

- **42 million Indian youth (out of 190 million Indian youth in total) are interested in (i.e. liked/followed) Facebook pages related to civic engagement.**
- **7.6 million Female and 34 million Male users are interested in Facebook pages related to civic engagement.**
- **Majority of the Indian youth users interested in**
civic engagement are in the age group of 20-29 years.

30 million Indian youth are interested in Facebook pages related to the category ‘Politics’.

Among the non-political civic engagement categories, ‘Community Issues’ has interest from 19 million Indian youth users, and sustainability interests 11 million users.

The categories ‘Volunteering’ and ‘Environmentalism’ have about 5 million Facebook followers each, while ‘Charity’ has only 1.8 million Indian youth users.

Further analysis of Facebook user data of India reveals that the youth group that is most interested in non-political civic engagement pages consists of: Male users in the age group of 20-24 years, residing in Tier-1 and 2 Indian cities that are not metropolitan.

The map of Indian youth Facebook users interested in (non-political) civic engagement state-wise, as proportion of total Indian youth Facebook users is depicted in Graph 14. It reveals that the Himalayan states of North India, North East India, and the Western Ghats have relatively higher proportion of youth interested in Facebook pages related to civic engagement.

The nationally-representative primary survey conducted by this study focused on the opinion and experiences of Indian youth on social media for civic engagement. The survey responses reveal that:

Two thirds of the youth think that social media increases civic engagement. Less than one tenth think that social media decreases civic engagement.

Three fourths of the youth have said that they have received civic engagement messages on social media.

Among the several dimensions of civic engagement, ‘Environmental’ messages are most frequently received on social media.

About 27% of the youth have never received any ‘Social’ or ‘Political’ messages on social media.

About 73% of the youth actively participate in social media groups (like WhatsApp/Facebook groups) associated with one or more dimensions of civic engagement.

46% of the youth actively participate in social media groups related to ‘Social’ issues, followed by ‘Environmental’ and ‘Volunteering’ online groups with 40% youth participation in each.

‘Political’ and ‘Cultural’ social media groups have less than 30% of youth participation in each.

Youth respond positively to civic engagement messages received on social media. More than two thirds of the youth respond to such civic engagement messages by sharing/forwarding or even volunteering.

More than 40% of the youth are interested in volunteering for Environmental, Social and Civic messages received on social media.
The primary survey shows that more than 70% of the youth are engaged—actively or passively—in one or more forms of civic engagement on social media. But the big question is: Can these virtual interests be channelized into concrete initiatives in the real world? What was the Indian experience in channelizing virtual civic engagement?

**SOCIAL MEDIA FOR AWARENESS & ADVOCACY**

Inspiration, Knowledge and Skills are vital elements necessary for civic engagement. Although civic engagement is driven by internal forces of self-motivated individuals, inspiration from outside helps in sustaining their motivation and conviction. Knowledge needed for civic engagement may include general information about the rights and responsibilities of citizens (citizenship education) as well as specific information about how to access programming options and opportunities. Skills are essential to turn inspiration, motivation and knowledge into actions. Skills required for civic engagement are often referred as “Life Skills”, which include creative thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, communication, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, conflict management, teamwork, civic values, empathetic skills, respect and responsibility. Social media, with its core functionality to engage the youth, can be used to channelize their attention towards civic issues through posts, videos and online communities. Social media platforms have a great potential to develop all the three ingredients essential for civic engagement. [73]

Connecting people across the world at lightning
speed, social media platforms can reach out
to millions of people, thereby making it a very
powerful tool to carry forward a message.

Maximizing outreach is often an important aim
of social awareness campaigns. Outreach of the
message/event is multiplied when the message is
powered by a celebrity with millions of followers.
For instance, Facebook collaborated with Priyanka
Chopra recently for the #SocialForGood Live-
athon, a first-of-its-kind, social media-powered
event that aims to drive social change and inspire
people to do good.

The success of social media campaigns is often
measured by audience engagement metrics such
as number of views, number of likes, number of
comments, number of online signatures etc.
Advocacy messages often direct users to express
their views on the topic; or sign an online petition
supporting the cause. Advocacy groups try to
garner citizen support from far and wide: capturing
popular publicsentiment and forming a virtual
pressure group on social media to influence public
policy and governance.
Social media is a great level-playing field for
everyone. Spreading awareness through social
media can be done by both socially-conscious
individuals and organizations. Creative
individuals with minimal resources can create
successful social media campaigns to foster civic
engagement.

SOCIAL MEDIA FOR ACTION
Civic engagement through social media platforms
is often referred to as “clickism”, which doesn’t
bear any significant impact in the real world. This
is part of the ongoing debate on the disconnect
between the real and virtual. The actions in the
virtual world may or may not reflect true actions.
Millions of clicks and shares of online campaigns
need not necessarily influence mindsets and
behaviors in the society. Sometimes, these clicks
of convenience are also coming from a comfort
zone of non-action. Similarly, digital activism
and advocacy need not necessarily translate into
participation in the real world.

While not all campaigns or posts on civic
engagement translate into action, there are
some great movements that got the momentum
through social media and made a significant
difference in the society. For instance, thousands
of people across India participated in the Nirbhaya
movement that brought about a strong legislation
on violence against women. India Against
Corruption, the movement started by Gandhian
Anna Hazare, also spread like wildfire on social
media and mobilized lakhs of people across India
to protest against corruption. These are great


#EndAcidSale
Make Love Not Scars, is an Indian NGO working
for complete rehabilitation of acid attack
survivors. In 2015, the organization launched
the campaign #EndAcidSale through YouTube
videos titled Beauty Tips by Reshma. CITATION
You151 \l 1033 [82]
The videos created for #EndAcidSale guided
viewers towards a petition addressed to the
Government of India, demanding a complete
ban on toilet-cleaning acid and a stronger
implementation of Poisons Act and Poisons
Rules. The videos went viral over two million
views. The petition garnered over 225,000
signatures within the first two weeks itself.
Within six months of the campaign, the
Supreme Court of India directed Indian states
to enforce the ban on over-the-counter sale
of acid. Reshma Qureshi, the face of the
#EndAcidSale campaign became a role model
and social media star. She is an anti-acid
activist, vlogger and Indian model today.
CITATION Mak15 \l 1033 [81]

“Social media is like reality show. You can say
a lot of stuff, make lots of promises, say good
things and get away without doing any of those
in real.
You can see that from the disclaimers on twitter
handles of eminent people “Retweets are not
necessarily endorsements.” Then why retweet
in the first place?
Virtual is fake!”
Anonymous youth, 24 years, Pune.
Social Media has become a commonplace platform for communication for volunteering in India. Most volunteer groups use social media for outreach, visibility and coordination. It is an essential medium where volunteers kickstart social initiatives. India has witnessed several such initiatives in the recent past, especially in the civic sense space, where volunteers call for an action for clean-up of public places like streets, beaches, lakes, parks, rivers etc. While many groups create social media pages, events, announcements and campaigns, very few succeed in motivating and mobilizing volunteers over sustained periods of time. Sharing their experience on a community clean-up in Delhi, a volunteer writes: “We created a Facebook event and sent out invites to friends. Many expressed interests and some wanted to attend as well. But when the day came, none showed up, again! Who would want to wake up early morning to pick up trash and get their hands dirty anyway? I thought it would be easy to mobilize people. But for a month, we were the only ones plugging. Despite plaudits on social media and assurances from friends, none showed up. It was disheartening at first as we questioned people’s real intentions, but continued doing our job. Eventually, we extended our drive to another park for a change of location. This was when we posted before/after pictures of trash on their Facebook page and park authorities took note of that. Some volunteers also came forward to support us.”

Mobilizing volunteers is clearly not an easy job! More so, when your goal involves clean-up of a long-neglected beach, which has layers and heaps of plastic waste weighing more than 5,000 tons! Afroz Shah took up the challenge of Versova beach, which was one of the filthiest beaches of Mumbai. It was a dumping ground for the residents and slum dwellers. A lot of garbage also ended up on the beach from several creeks in Mumbai. Afroz took up reviving of the beach in 2015, and within a span of three years, brought the beach to its original pristine glory. In one of his interviews, Afroz recalls that at the beginning only he and his neighbour, Harbansh Mathur, had taken up the task of clearing garbage from the beach. Over the course of time, the project grew manifold in scale and caught the attention of government authorities, celebrities and the United Nations. Afroz was recognized for leading the world’s largest beach clean-up by the UN. In 2016, he was bestowed “Champions of the Earth” award, the top environmental honour of the United Nations.

Describing the challenges faced during his campaign in one of his interviews, Shah said: “The first challenge was to change the mindset of the people who live around the beach and also of the people who litter on the streets and the nearby creeks, thereby contributing to the unsanitary surroundings. The second challenge was to change the outlook of municipal authorities. In some campaigns, the authorities came on board, but the people didn’t; in others, the situation was precisely the opposite. Getting both to join a cause is a difficult task”.

In 2018, a group of volunteers noticed Olive Ridley turtle hatchlings at Versova beach. The turtles are believed to have been sighted at the beach after 20 years. The Versova Resident Volunteers movement certainly had a significant impact on the habitat.
local communities on a sustained basis. Social media is a very effective tool for community mobilization, coordination and communication, which are important for conducting spontaneous civic action. Social media platforms are also best suited for many-many communication and for organizing civic engagement activities. However, it is important to note that social media is only a catalyst for action. The key determinant for success is effective leadership in the real world, which serves as the real inspiration for sustained action.

**SOCIAL MEDIA FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

Social Media are ideal platforms for connecting people to opportunities, for advertising and brand visibility, and even for financial transactions—all of which are vital for budding enterprises. Supplementing these, there are digital tools like Facebook Workplace, Google Suite and Google Classroom that provide enterprise-level tools to facilitate operations, trainings and coordination. Social media companies are providing most of these digital tools free of charge for non-profit organizations. Social media tools are a great blessing for social entrepreneurship.

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**The Ugly Indian: Kaam Chalu Mooh Bandh!**

The Ugly Indians are an anonymous group of volunteers in India who are engaged in “spot-fixing” - an activity to clean streets. Started in 2010, their mission is to learn what it takes to keep a street clean, and do it! CITATION 10No \l 1033 [86]

With help from volunteers and local civic authorities, the group is striving to not only keep its city clean, but also bring about a change in the “ugly” attitude of Indians. The Ugly Indian chooses small segments of road each week to clean - pavements piled up with plastic, defaced walls, footpaths rendered unusable by potholes are chosen as spot-fixing places. All tools, materials and instructions are provided on the spot. All spot-fixes are self-funded and volunteers are requested to make a contribution towards material costs. The group has fixed hundreds of spots in Bengaluru and other cities of India. CITATION The19 \l 1033 [88] CITATION Vas11 \l 1033 [89]

The group uses Facebook very efficiently to reach out and inspire volunteers to join the spot-fixing effort. The Ugly Indian Facebook page has 4.3 lakh followers, which is one of the highest among volunteer-based groups in India. Their Facebook page and Report a Spotfix app (also on the Facebook page) post the before and after photographs of spot-fixing activity. Volunteers sign up for Spotfix on ‘The Ugly Indian’ Facebook page that directs users to a Google form; or by writing directly to their email id theuglyindian@gmail.com. They collect requests for volunteer opportunities and make local groups based on the volunteers’ locations. Their Facebook page has photographs and videos of spot-fixing and its impact. They also have a TUTORIAL album on their Facebook page that explains the step-by-step lists materials and tools (with price lists) required for spot-fixing. CITATION 10No \l 1033 [86]

The Ugly Indians believe in being an anonymous group. They don’t want to be a registered organization, don’t accept funds from external sources for spot fixes, don’t accept awards/rewards, have visibility only through social media; yet they are most popular in India for their volunteering work! CITATION You14 \l 1033 [87]

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**Osama Manzar, Digital Empowerment Foundation**

“Social media has opened the gates of imagination for self-driven individuals and given them wings to explore potential of their own vision.”

CITATION Soc18 \l 1033 [90]
enterprises that connect products and services from the hinterland of India to national and global markets, in the most transparent fashion. While it is important to understand these sophisticated tools for well-coordinated action, it is also important to note that business practices like financial management, channel management, and delivery in time on the ground are still vital for the success of social enterprises.

Indian social enterprises have been exploring the s-commerce space actively. Several social enterprises have sprouted on social media platforms in the recent past. Artisan collectives have been connected to s-commerce by social enterprises like Villcart, Khoj, Krea etc. In Agriculture, producer collectives are being connected to markets by social enterprises like Kheti Badi, Kisan Network etc. Another social enterprise Haqdarshak is providing customized information on government schemes and entitlements to the citizens.

Social media companies have vast stores of data on every user, every click, every scroll happening on their platform. They also have user information, user live location, user contacts, media files etc. The social media tech giants use their unique

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Reaching Sky with Social Media: New Generation Non-Profit

An education non-profit organization started by two millennials from New Delhi, Reaching Sky has carved out a new digital path to conduct their activities with Zero employees! Being digital natives, the founders have identified the potential of digital platforms for ease of conducting business, outreach and, most importantly, minimizing manpower cost. They realized early that tech skills are essential for carrying out operations, even when the goal is to connect communities, impart skills and social values in the real world.

Reaching Sky focuses on promoting volunteerism among youth. It uses social media and Google Suite to carry out operations and increase their outreach to youth, without having a large pool of employees. It started actively partnering with tech companies such as Google, Facebook and Salesforce through their non-profit programs, to avail their sophisticated enterprise solutions free of cost. Tools such as Google Suite, AdWords, Google Classroom, Facebook Workplace and Salesforce ERP were provided free of cost through non-profit partnerships. The millennial founders used free training videos online to quickly learn and customize the tools to suit their organizational requirements. Reaching Sky runs an efficient project cycle with least cost, using digital platforms.

The founders perceive the main advantages of their digital strategy as (1) Access to youth (2) Visibility to the organization (3) Automation of operations (4) Inclusivity of people from remote locations.

Using the sophisticated digital tools, Reaching Sky is actively engaging with over 500+ Volunteers and has trained 25,000+ youth across India in a short span of three years. Working from a humble office in New Delhi, and having automated their trainings, webinars and projects, they are channelizing efforts in actively engaging with committed volunteers and expanding their volunteer base.

“"It is magical!” says founder of Reaching Sky, “we feel so humble with the power of diversity and inclusivity of young people in our processes of learning and self-skilling through volunteering in local communities; which otherwise is slow and unrealistic process for a growing organization like ours! We really believe that, tech is a boon to all of us. If we know how to use it well, it doesn’t substitute human intervention, rather multiplies human potential. Tech helped us create the magic! We started with big hopes, small resources, bold actions, inspire and continue to get inspired by our young volunteers- the real change makers of future India.”"
Disaster Maps: Social Intelligence in Action

When tech giants innovate for social good, the returns are enormous! “Social Intelligence for Social Good” is an emerging area of research and development, as the social networking companies of the world are trying out solutions that promote social good.

Disaster relief agencies often lack information on the status of affected people when responding to natural disasters. Facebook’s Disaster Maps address this information gap by providing aggregated location information that people continuously share with the Facebook app on their mobiles. This helps government agencies like National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) and NGOs get a real-time picture of the location of affected so they can determine where resources like food, water and medical supplies need to be reached. CITATION The171 \| 1033

Facebook provides critical information about aggregated and de-identified data of its users in three formats: Location Density map, Movement map, and Safety Check map.

Location Density maps show location of people before, during and after a disaster. This information can then be compared to administrative data like population, so that response organizations are informed about the populations impacted by the natural disaster. CITATION Pai17 \| 1033

Movement maps show patterns of movement of people between places, so that disaster relief agencies can have better prediction on patterns of evacuation, patterns of congestion and resource availability.

Safety Check maps are based on Facebook’s safety check feature, which helps Facebook users in the disaster-affected areas to mark themselves safe and notify their friends and family. Aggregated data of people using this feature are visualized as maps so that disaster relief agencies know where people are most vulnerable or need help. CITATION Pai17 \| 1033

Globally, Facebook provides disaster maps to organizations like Red Cross. In India, Facebook has partnered with selected NGOs to share data about Facebook users at the time of disasters. CITATION The171 \| 1033

New maps are now being added to Facebook’s Disaster Maps product, to help address questions like: CITATION Pai18 \| 1033

- Cellular Network Coverage: Where has a disaster disrupted cellular service? Where can people access a cellular network to reach out to their friends and family?
- Battery Charging: Where are people able to charge their devices in a disaster-affected area?
- What does this imply about power availability?
- Population Displacement: How many people have been displaced from their home city after a disaster? Which cities are these people displaced from? Which cities are displaced people traveling to?

Big Data Analytics is creating a new era of intelligence for disaster response. Vast amounts of data are created during times of disaster, including personal and medical data, the geolocation of roads, the tracking of survivors, and more. Managing this data presents challenges, but when effectively employed, it provides crucial information on which to act, prioritize and optimize response efforts and, via crowdsourcing, enhance situational awareness.

analytical expertise and insights from this big data to earn advertising revenue from businesses. The market intelligence generated by social media companies is very crucial to solve not only business problems but also problems of public concern. This report refers to the social media intelligence used for public concern as social intelligence.

Social intelligence generated from social media companies has enormous value for the public
sector. Data held by social media companies can help government, non-government and humanitarian organizations to better understand demographic trends, public sentiment, and the geographic distribution of various phenomena. For instance, a public health agency trying to control an epidemic will greatly benefit if it knows the affected areas in the present; and the potential spread of the epidemic soon. Such intelligence, which is difficult to obtain otherwise, is now possible through social media intelligence. Social intelligence can provide large-scale solutions to promote civic engagement in India.

The use cases for social intelligence are increasing fast with the advent of new-age technologies like Data Mining, Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence. These technologies allow for pattern detection on vast amounts of data, and provide insightful trends and predictions that can answer: what is most likely to happen soon?

Data, which is traditionally understood in the form of structured data tables, has expanded to unstructured formats like text, images and audiovisuals. Technologies like computer vision and natural language processing help in extracting intelligence from these unconventional data forms. For instance, Facebook research team has developed an application that can run through the user content (photographs) posted on its platform to detect users with mental health issues. Twitter can run algorithms on its text data (user posts) to detect the dominant public sentiment.

Tapping into social intelligence could be very important for civic engagement. Extracting public value from the privately-held data is important here. Data collaboratives formed through public-private partnerships between social media companies and government agencies/civil society organizations could help in leveraging social intelligence towards public goals. [75]

Citizen Science to mitigate Air Pollution in Delhi

Citizen Science works when conventional channels of information fail!

Delhi air pollution has been a serious concern for the past 10 years. Delhi is often referred to as a gas chamber during the months of October to January, when the air pollution peaks.

Sources for Delhi air pollution are many. There are extrinsic sources such as stubble-burning of crops in the neighboring states of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh; and intrinsic causes such as vehicular pollution, burning of solid waste, construction dust, chulhas (traditional stoves) used in cooking, thermal power plants etc. Although stubble burning of crops originating outside Delhi is the major reason for the spike in air pollution, the other intrinsic causes aggravate the situation during winters. Tackling local causes of air pollution would also address part of the problem, but it is difficult to track the local sources as they are many in number and spread across the city.

Citizen science can help in identifying the local sources of air pollution through geo-tagging of all such sources on a day-to-day basis. For instance, open burning of waste is a serious health hazard but difficult to spot. Volunteers all over the city can use a simple mobile app to geotag the sites around them, where open burning of waste is happening. They can also persuade the perpetrators to not burn the waste in future.

Such information collected through citizen science can be made publicly available for government and civil society to act upon. Netizens can therefore help by doing their bit!

When conventional channels of information fail or cannot be reached, Citizen Science is useful to obtain information monitoring, and participatory action research [76]

[75] In the context of civic engagement, it can be understood as crowdsourcing of data and insights...
Citizen science plays an important role when conventional channels of data are absent or broken. For instance, during Chennai floods, when the government did not have information on the live status of the streets of Chennai, a tech start-up volunteered and delivered Chennai Flood Map, a crowdsourced map of inundated streets of the city. Data flowed from residents who were reporting the live status of their respective streets. Enabled by the Chennai Flood Map app and coordinated over social media, several teams and NGOs were able to identify high-risk areas, coordinate relief supplies and deliver them to those in need.

NASA also uses innovative methods to integrate science from a variety of sources, which is used not only as a method for integrating community-level information, but also as a method to verify satellite data on the ground (ground truthing). “Citizen Science has enormous potential!” said Jason Jabbour, Regional Coordinator and Senior Science Advisor, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). With so much of the developing world under the age of 30, the smartphone has opened possibilities for the sharing of data as never before. “We have all these devices and they’re collecting reams of information, in real time. And you have the ability to collect more specific types of information—you don’t need much training to contribute to the scientific process.” [78]

Social media is a vital technology tool to promote civic engagement in India. It can be used effectively for spreading awareness, communication, coordination, community mobilization fundraising, online petitions, garnering social intelligence, and social entrepreneurship.

This chapter tried to answer: Are the youth of India interested in content related to civic engagement on social media platforms? To what extent can social media be used to promote civic engagement? Does civic engagement in the virtual world translate to actions in the real world?

CONCLUSION
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[Accessed 14 February 2019].


# ANNEXURES

## STUDY DESIGN MATRIX

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<td>Does “Likism/clickism” translate into volunteerism on the ground?</td>
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<td>5. To suggest measures to promote effective and responsible use of social media among youth for promotion of social values, community engagement, participation in civic engagement &amp; governance and youth development;</td>
<td>What are the successful social media strategies adopted by the digital marketing firms to target the audience? How relevant are these strategies for running social media campaigns to promote public service and civic engagement?</td>
<td>Literature review: International experience and case studies; Social media and youth activism; Volunteering and Civic Engagementa Secondary Data: Youth volunteers baseline data</td>
<td>Social Media Frameworks and strategies used by Digital marketing companies</td>
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<td>6. Suggest measures for mitigating the risks associated with the use of social media for promotion of social values, community engagement, youth participation etc.</td>
<td>Is cyberbullying an issue in India? What is the magnitude and intensity of the problem? What coping mechanisms against cyberbullying are being used by the youth? Does India have effective laws against cyberbullying?</td>
<td>Primary Data: Survey of Indian Youth; Focused Group Discussions with youth Literature review: Strategies and laws against cyberbullying</td>
<td>Recommendations and Conclusion</td>
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A national survey has been conducted to collect the primary data on social media - usage, participation, and impact by Indian youth. The survey has been conducted by the District Youth Coordinators (DYC) of the MoYAS and UNV project “Strengthening Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) and National Service Scheme (NSS)” in their respective districts that are spread across the country.

Survey area has been identified through random sampling, by selecting 5 to 10 random pin codes from each of the districts where the DYC's are operating. After this a stratified sampling has been conducted in the survey area, to include representation of youth of: different area type (rural and urban), gender, different age groups, religions and castes.

Sample Size: According to the Census 2011, the total population of Indian youth in the age group of 15-29 years is 333 million. The sample size that can represent such a population can be derived from the following Cochran’s equation for large populations:

\[ n_0 = \frac{Z^2 p(1-p)}{e^2} \]  

(1)

where,
- \( n_0 \) is the sample size
- \( Z \) is the z-value of the desired confidence level
- \( p \) is the population proportion and,
- \( e \) is the desired precision level (half of confidence width interval).

Applying confidence level of 90% and confidence interval width of 5% (i.e., 2.5% precision level) to the formula (1), the sample size for the Indian youth population (which is 36% of the total population) has been arrived at 996 observations. These observations shall be collected from randomly allocated pin codes, geographically distributed across the six zones of the country and stratified on the basis of: gender, age group, religion and caste. The following formula has been applied for determining sample size from each stratum.

\[ n_h = \frac{N_h n_o}{N} \]  

(2)

Where,
- \( n_h \) is sample size of the strata
- \( n_o \) is size of entire sample
- \( N_h \) is the size of the layer in the population
- \( N \) is the population size (Population of youth in India)

The population distribution of strata within each of the six zones of the country has been processed from census 2011 data. Using this distribution, the stratified sample size is then calculated using the formula (2).

### Laws relevant to cyberbullying

**Information Technology (Amended) Act, 2009.**

Punishment for sending offensive messages through communication service, etc.

Any person who sends, by means of a computer resource or a communication device —

(a) any information that is grossly offensive or has menacing character; or

(b) any information which he knows to be false, but for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience, danger, obstruction, insult, injury, criminal intimidation, enmity, hatred or ill will, persistently by making use of such computer resource or a communication device,
(c) any electronic mail or electronic mail message for the purpose of causing annoyance or inconvenience or to deceive or to mislead the addressee or recipient about the origin of such messages,

shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years and with fine.

Explanation — For the purpose of this section, terms “electronic mail” and “electronic mail message” means a message or information created or transmitted or received on a computer, computer system, computer resource or communication device including attachments in text, images, audio, video and any other electronic record, which may be transmitted with the message.

**IT Act 67**

Punishment for publishing or transmitting obscene material in electronic form.

- Whoever publishes or transmits or causes to be published or transmitted in the electronic form, any material which is lascivious or appeals to the prurient interest or if its effect is such as to tend to deprave and corrupt persons who are likely, having regard to all relevant circumstances, to read, see or hear the matter contained or embodied in it, shall be punished on first conviction with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years and with fine which may extend to five lakh rupees and in the event of second or subsequent conviction with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to five years and also with fine which may extend to ten lakh rupees.

**IPC 354D**

Under Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013

Stalking

Any man who—

follows a woman and contacts, or attempts to contact such woman to foster personal interaction repeatedly despite a clear indication of disinterest by such woman; or

monitors the use by a woman of the internet, email or any other form of electronic communication, commits the offence of stalking;

Provided that such conduct shall not amount to stalking if the man who pursued it proves that-

it was pursued for the purpose of preventing or detecting crime and the man accused of stalking had been entrusted with the responsibility of prevention and detection of crime by the State; or

it was pursued under any law or to comply with any condition or requirement imposed by any person under any law; or

in the particular circumstances such conduct was reasonable and justified.

(2) Whoever commits the offence of stalking shall be punished on first conviction with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years and shall also be liable to fine; and be punished on a second or subsequent conviction, with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to five years, and shall also be liable to fine.
Obscene acts and songs
Whoever, to the annoyance of others:
does any obscene act in any public place, or
sings, recites or utters any obscene song, ballad or words, in or near any public
place, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which
may extend to three months, or with fine, or with both.

IPC 294

Defamation
Whoever by words either spoken or intended to be read, or by signs or by visible
representations, makes or publishes any imputation concerning any person
intending to harm, or knowing or having reason to believe that such imputation
will harm, the reputation of such person, is said, except in the cases hereinafter
excepted, to defame that person.

Explanations:
1. It may amount to defamation to impute anything to a deceased person, if the
imputation would harm the reputation of that person if living and is intended to
be hurtful to the feelings of his family or other near relatives.
2. It may amount to defamation to make an imputation concerning a company or
an association or collection of persons as such.
3. An imputation in the form of an alternative or expressed ironically, may amount
to defamation.
4. No imputation is said to harm a person’ reputation, unless that imputation
directly or indirectly, in the estimation of others, lowers the moral or intellectual
character of that person, or lowers the character of that person in respect of
his caste or of his calling, or lowers the credit of that person, or causes it to
be believed that the body of that person is in a loathsome state, or in a state
generally considered as disgraceful.

Punishment for defamation:
Whoever defames another shall be punished with simple imprisonment for a term
which may extend to two years, or with fine, or with both.

IPC 499

Punishment for Criminal intimidation
Whoever commits the offence of criminal intimidation shall be punished with
imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years, or
with fine, or with both;

IPC 500

If threat be to cause death or grievous hurt, etc — and if the threat be to cause
death or grievous hurt, or to cause the destruction of any property by fire, or
to cause an offence punishable with death or imprisonment for life, of with
imprisonment for a term which may extend to seven years, or to impute unchastity
to a woman, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term
which may extend to seven years, or with fine, or with both.

IPC 506
**Word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman**
Whoever, intending to insult the modesty of any woman, utters any word, makes any sound or gesture, or exhibits any object, intending that such word or sound shall be heard, or that such gesture or object shall be seen, by such woman, or intrudes upon the privacy of such woman, shall be punished with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years, and also with fine.

**Intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of the peace.**
Whoever intentionally insults, and thereby gives provocation to any person, intending or knowing it to be likely that such provocation will cause him to break the public peace, or to commit any other offence, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years, or with fine, or with both.

**Statements conducing public mischief**

1. Whoever makes, publishes or circulates any statement, rumour or report with intent to cause, or which is likely to cause, any officer, soldier, sailor or airman in the Army, Navy or Air Force of India to mutiny or otherwise disregard or fail in his duty as such; or

2. with intent to cause, or which is likely to cause, fear or alarm to the public, or to any section of the public whereby any person may be induced to commit an offence against the State or against the public tranquillity; or

3. with intent to incite, or which is likely to incite, any class or community of persons to commit any offence against any other class or community, shall be punished with imprisonment which may extend to three years, or with fine, or with both.

4. Statements creating or promoting enmity, hatred or ill will between classes – Whoever makes, publishes or circulates any statement or report containing rumour or alarming news with intent to create or promote, on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, caste or community or any other ground whatsoever, feelings of enmity, hatred or ill-will between different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities, shall be punished with imprisonment which may extend to three years, or with fine, or with both.

5. Offence under sub-section (2) committed in place of worship, etc. – Whoever commits an offence specified in sub-section (2) in any place of worship or in any assembly engaged in the performance of religious worship or religious ceremonies, shall be punished with imprisonment which may extend to five years and shall also be liable to fine.
Voices of the Youth

Internet Access & Connectivity...

In the last two years, the internet speed and quality have improved. Because of such improvement, my efficiency in working has also improved. Now with unlimited data and high speed, my phone becomes a device to learning and I spent my most of the time on YouTube learning things.

Honey Sharma, 20 years, Jaipur

The increase in the internet speed and the browsing quality has made it easier to stay online and read through several links and hence, add to the knowledge and reach to different perspectives on a given content, be it audio, visual, or text.

Shagun Sharma, 20 years, North West Delhi

The internet speed had improved in terms of quality and time of browsing also had improved. I don’t think there is an improvement in the content. But, one thing is of sure that there is an inspiration for the youth to focus on educational content than the entertainment content.

Anagha P, 22 years, Kannur

There has been an improvement in the internet speed. Also browsing time of an individual has exponentially increased now, with access to more and more varied content over internet. And yes, the shift from entertainment to education has also happened for me.

Pooja Rao, 23 years, Thane

The internet speed as well as browsing experience is improved a lot. But I don’t think that there is too much of a shift to educational content because majority of people still waste hours watching YouTube videos.

Shubham Agrawal, 23 years, Pimpri Chinchwad

The use of internet changed drastically for the last two years. Before that, I used 1GB for one month. But nowadays, due to Jio revolution, we happened to use 1GB per day. However, I restrict myself to use internet for valid purposes like online classes/professional courses. I use social medias too but not available all the time.

PM Karthick, 23 years, Trichy

Data got cheap and the net got faster also the quality has also improved. Besides the net has reached into the grassroots and it’s not just being used for entertainment or educational purposes...I see more business being generated through the net which was not the case 2 years before.

Anyatam Shukla, 22 years, Raipur

Using internet has become way easier. It has improved from 2G to 4G and the browsing has improved drastically. Internet is the most essential for accessing educational content or for entertainment purposes.

Mashangva Mino, 23 years, Ukhrul

Internet has changed a lot of things in past 2 years. Firstly, education has become very easy, internet helps us in learning through as well as practice online. Secondly internships and volunteering has become easy as it provides work from home as an option. Third phone calls have reduced people now mostly talk through messages, invites have changed from cards to virtual cards and many more. Marketing has taken a new form of social media marketing which is a field now itself. With advancement like 4G, quality and speed of internet has improved. And surely there is easier access to educational content, learning, teaching, solving doubts, practice.

Bhavika Mehta, 18 years, Juhu, Mumbai

Internet has impacted me a lot as I got connected with YouTube and got to know about many things. Using internet, I did many courses on NPTEL and Coursera or Edx which gave me access to education that matches global standards.

Anurag, 20 years, Gautam Buddha Nagar

There has been a drastic change in use of internet in the previous last 2 years. People are more involved in it. It has become a basic need of survival. Everything is available online. People have unfortunately become more dependent on
technology.

**Shivank Bansal, 19 years, New Delhi**

Jio has made mobile internet so affordable that daily mobile data limit is around 1GB compared to previous 1GB for whole month.

**Apurv Agarwal, 20 years, Ghaziabad**

The internet speed has improved especially because of the fibre optics network. There’s been a shift from entertainment to educational content with so many pages about general knowledge YouTube videos applications etc.

**Trisha Gupta, 20 years, Faridabad**

Use of internet have impacted both the entertainment and educational content. With the help of internet, I have accessed various social media sites and educational sites.

**Saumya Singh, 18 years, Varanasi**

Initially, during school days I used to access Internet for my project purposes and to have a look at science experiment videos. From then till now I’ve witnessed a lot of changes in the use of internet. Nowadays, internet is mainly used to access social media, connect to different people via emails and to send/receive documents of concern. For two years, there is a significant change the internet speed has changed from 3G/2G to 4G LTE speed. The quality of browsing has also improved. More than educational requirements, I now use internet for my social needs.

**Pooja Shridhar Parvatikar, 20 years, Bengaluru**

The ease of access of internet has helped me obtain and develop more skills continuously through online courses and webinars which is playing an important role for gaining clear perspective about the career opportunities out there.

**Anusha. J, 18 years, Chennai**

The quality of browsing has improved and there has been a huge shift from entertainment purposes to educational purposes. The offering of MOOCs by educational websites and organisations are also a huge indication of educational inclination of the ‘use of internet’.

Harsh Vardhan Mishra, 20 years, Jhunjhunu

The speed of internet has significantly improved. As for browsing time, the ease of using the Internet has increased it. Initially the content on platforms like YouTube used to be mainly entertainment but these days people are becoming more interested in educational content and news.

**Monisha Gowda, 21 years, Bangalore**

Internet speed is improved 10X in the past two years. I use several educational, e-magazine, e-newspaper app like UN DATA, UN NEWS READER, NCERT, IGNOU, E-PATHSALA, JIO MAG and so on. It is space saving than conventional printed material and saves time.

**Anisur Rafat Wawesi, 26 years, Hooghly**

It changed my life completely I got to know many things I entered into field of volunteering via internet. I was able to start my own organisation that was like amazing thing that happened to me. As students, we are able to take our notes via internet and listen to online Google classroom. I feel internet if used in right way, everyone can do miracles.

**Namratha Rao, 19 years, Anantapuram**

The use of internet has a vast impact in the life of a normal human being. Each and everything is available on the Internet. Where we used to stand in long queues to pay the bill or to buy movie tickets or to purchase a product from a supermarket or store…nowadays everything is done online. Banks have shifted their services to the e-banking facilities. Thus, everything is done online.

**Gauri Sharma, 18 years, Jaipur**

Internet is common in now a days. Internet has changed our life. People have been changing their lives and all are being connected well through social media. Jio network has brought big impact to our country. Alike, rich and poor are easily accessing the internet. It helps in socializing and looking for what they really need. Browsing and speed quality of internet has increased. Students are using the internet for education, socializing, jobs, playing and entertainment.

**Janne Vishva Teja, 23 years, Warangal**
Internet is now changing the life of villagers as they can access everything from their homes without going to city.

**Ritesh kumar Pandey, 21 years, Bikramganj**

Not really, while the speed of internet has certainly improved, it has also increased demand for more entertainment and not necessarily education. For me, the educational content on internet is untrustworthy. I would certainly prefer libraries on internet.

**Flavia, 20 years, Palghar**

Internet speed has certainly improved. I have easy access to internet now than ever before. Jio has made life easier to some extent. Due to constant uninterrupted access to internet, a lot of time is wasted on entertainment than educational content.

**Pranav Sarode, 20 years, Thane**

A lot has changed in the past two years of using the internet. Both in the speed as well as the content consumption. I have personally observed a shift in use of internet towards educational content such as assignment completion, campaign, advocacy and the likes being a part of my internet consumption which was a recreational activity initially.

**Madhurima Sanyal, 22 years, Kolkata**

The speed has improved as we have shifted from 3G to 4G and now 5G is on its way. Browsing on internet is what everyone likes, and it has been increasing day by day. With the advent of technology, quality of content has improved. The internet is reaching villages and small towns too. When people want to study or just learn or even want to get general knowledge about something they turn to internet as it is free and very easy medium of information.

**Komal Jakhetiya, 21 years, Jaipur**

The “use of internet” developed for me over the past couple of years. The speed of the internet developed giving quick access to a lot of information and entertainment. Even browsing became easier to navigate and the time spent has been drastically reduced. I saw a considerable shift in the “use of internet” from entertainment to education. Many people are starting to use the internet for research, homework help, jobs etc.

**Spandana Kantam, 20 years, Hyderabad**

The speed had improved. Also, there is a mix of educational content and entertainment. Social media brings about possibilities of connecting with the people in various fields and learn from them.

**Sakshi Gour, 22 years, Durg**

The internet has improved manifolds in the last two years. With the smartphone accessible to all, internet market was bound to improve its quality and cost-effectiveness. The speed, content as well as digital platforms have given the entire market a faster pace altogether. The content especially pertaining to news from around the world and initiatives round the globe are now just a minute away. The internet has become a huge source of information for the youth.

**Srishti Singh, 29 years, Ahmedabad**

There is a shift from entertainment to educational content for me and Internet speed improved. I think most of the population of urban areas in India are using a smartphone with 4G connectivity and the way of browsing has also improved in the past two years. Now we have new concepts like distance learning and Online teaching assistant that makes the use of internet more wisely. Apps like BYJU, NPTEL online course are good examples for that.

**Shubham Soni, 22 years, Sagar**

The internet speed has improved. There has also been an increase in the accessibility to everyone, including rural population. The browsers are smarter, as they save data by displaying mobile sites which do not download much data. There are many educational apps which offer useful information. I think people use internet for both entertainment and educational content.

**Monica M N, 21 years, Bangalore**

Internet changed everything specially access to Digital Banking. Internet helps people from Remote areas to learn online and get entertained. It changed my lifestyle also.

**Sandeep Arora, 24 years, Sunam**

Use of internet has significantly changed for me,
now I have unlimited data pack to access any website or app, it helped me in keeping myself updated and serve as a complete guide in my education. All social media is now easily accessible and help in keeping us updated about lifestyle of our close relatives, YouTube is now not only used for songs or videos but also for getting any lecture on any topic or to learn new skills. Work from home is also easily available due to internet.

**Sakshi Garg, 19 years, Faridabad**

Absolutely, usage of internet has been increased for me, also the connectivity and the speed of the internet has improved a lot. Furthermore, the browsing time has improved a lot. 4G network helped me to explore the education facilities through internet. I have done many courses online and become a lifelong learner.

**Subahan Basha, 21 years, Chittoor**

Use of internet ‘ changed for me during the last 2 years, earlier I’m not able to access Internet regularly but because of the reduction in the data cost now I’m able to access the internet whole month with less cost. I have used internet for both educational and entertainment purpose. There is immense effect of internet access on my day to day life.

**Muskan Chouhan, 19 years, Indore**

The ‘use of internet’ has changed tremendously. Yes, the internet speed as well as accessibility has improved. But I wouldn’t say that there is a shift from entertainment to educational content; the latter is growing but the entertainment segment hasn’t contracted because of it. With the prominence of edX, Data Camp and other educational platforms, Netflix, Amazon Prime and other have risen too.

**Saundharaya Khanna, 21 years, Ambala**

The use of internet has drastically changed during these past 2 years with the introduction of Jio services from Reliance Ltd. Due to the price competition introduced by the former with providing more data at relatively cheaper rates, the overall rates for internet services in the telecommunication industry have drastically reduced.

Internet speed has marginally improved over the 3G days but what remains still are connectivity issues. Browsing quality has certainly improved during this time, thus people are spending more time on the internet as cheaper internet services have now attracted many! India has more internet active population than many European countries combined! But it cannot be certain that there has been a shift from entertainment to educational content on the internet with the emergence and rise of platforms such as Netflix and Amazon Prime. The web services market has certainly gained during this period where online presence for any company/brand/individual has become prime necessity.

**Nitish Lakhanpal, 22 years, New Delhi**

In this era Internet Is Must Have. Internet changed a lot of things till now and sometimes life changing impact.... For me it’s not much different because last year I’ve applied for Google India Challenge Scholarship and coincidentally, I got selected to learn Front End Developer Nanodegree from Udacity which online learning platform is. By getting this scholarship I learnt Front End Web Development now its career changing for me. I got Front End Developer Nanodegree this month, after 9 Months of Hard Work....So Definitely for Some people it’s an entertainment factor and for some it’s educational...And in today’s era we’re seeing how one thing we post on Social Media can get viral instantly so has many advantages of this.... We Can Use Internet To encourage many Youths Toto Do Good cause...

**Harshal Ravindra Patil, 23 years, Palghar**

Earlier internet was just meant to google things, mails etc for me but now it is so much more. The influence of social media has really become an important part of our life and has been a window to the outside world. The internet speed has drastically improved. People have shifted focus from mere YouTube binging to more of educational websites, videos and stuff. The internet has made things very social awareness friendly.

**Anmol Mehta, 23 years, Mumbai**

The use of internet has changed drastically in the past few years. When I returned from abroad 4 years ago, I was awestruck by the number of smartphone carriers in the country. The mobile data (costs) have been hitting an all-time low,
allowing any one to tap into the world of internet. Initially this meant more of entertainment but lately in a lot of schools like mine there has been a greater push from the top to use internet and mobile devices for educational purposes trying to integrate it into our educational system in a more coherent manner.

*Sushil Ayyadurai, 19 years, Chennai*

The internet speed has surely improved with cheap plans of 4G data plans which has surely impacted the browsing capacity of internet in all terms. But surely somewhere the quality has deteriorated too because of easy circulation of fake news, rumours and multiple poor content videos. People are consuming all sorts of content these days from entertainment to educational.

*Neha Jain, 20 years, Kolkata*

There is a huge difference in today’s and 2 years back internet effect in society. Earlier the net speed was less fast...but now due to the advent of 4g there is a great speed in network. And people have got more acquainted with the internet, all over the Country.

*Sitesh Kumar Raulo, 19 years, Ganjam*

Social Media affects the way opinions get formed scattered and accepted through lines other than the general media which are portraying similar opinions of political agenda indifferent from about its negatives, despite of that everyone has now social media as one of the necessities of their life. It is important as in today’s information age, where changes are so dynamic and quick in nature it helps you stay updated and feel connected and one with different parts of the world virtually. For me it is important as it helps in networking and staying connected and updated about people whom you care about. My favourite social media app must be WhatsApp which has made everything from messaging, broadcast to video calling everything convenient and available under one roof, which is why it makes more sense to me than other apps. I prefer accessing social media via mobile as again everything available quickly and under one roof and saves the hassle of connecting your device to a charging point when you need to use it.

*Pooja Rao, 23 years, Thane*

Social media platforms are productive in achieving knowledge, and it helps a lot in volunteer activities. Facebook is my favourite social media app. It is a platform where one can get informed of various news and day to day happenings around you. It is a powerful tool in spreading news and messages. Even during the flood disaster in Kerala, they were converted to control rooms to spread news regarding the relief activities.

*Anagha P, 22 years, Kerala*

Social media connects us to different people across the world and helps us exchange ideas and thoughts on a larger platform. Having said that, it also consumes a lot of personal time leading to distance between the physically present people around us. I like using Instagram and that is mainly because it is very much interesting than Facebook or Twitter. People share their stories and posts and because of the fun content. I access social media through my smartphone and it feels convenient rather than a PC or laptop. It feels compact and easy to handle. To me, social media is just for gathering information, talking to different people and exchanging ideas.

*Pooja Shridhar Parvatikar, 20 years, Bengaluru*

Social Media for Youth & Civic Engagement in India
righteousness. It will make me feel kind of dumb, secluded and detached from others that seem to have different opinions from me but similar among themselves.

**Trisha Gupta, 20 years, Faridabad**

Internet has improved my life positively in ways like it provides me knowledge, happenings around the world and the developments in the world. Whereas there is no impact of social media platforms because I don’t use them much.

**Vibhuti Singh, 19 years, Allahabad**

Internet and Social Media has improved the life in much better way; to raise the voice against iniquity and can complaint to the authorities for a wrong and unethical work in the society.

**Garvit Bhirani, 18 years, Gurugram**

It improved my thought process as through internet I could access different perspectives in a single topic. From a normal student to take active part in social work (as per my reach) I could improve my personality and gain experiences both at National and International level.

**Manisha Bezbaruah, 20 years, Nalbari**

Internet and social media’s use made my academic and social life more improved, skilled and flexible. Online teaching assistant or distance learning concept is the amazing gift of the internet. These made the world a global village. For effective communication and for gathering knowledge and exploration these mediums are the best and unbelievable.

**Shubham Soni, 22 years, Sagar**

It has introduced me to clear majority of opportunities hanging around the world. It has brought me closer to my family and friends who live away from me. It is a constant source of motivation for me to do better in my life. It is the best source of raw knowledge to me. It has made me a confident and socially interactive person. I have been able to get few good mentors as well. It enables me to implement ideas in a better way through Suggestions from various people.

**Shankul Dwivedi, 24 years, Bhopal**

“Social media and internet have dual effects on my life i.e., positive and negative as well. Positive: it helps to improve my knowledge skills and other things. Negative: Due to the use of social media I’m get addicted to my smartphone. It is difficult to spend time without internet. But this can be improved by self-control that is what I’m trying. After all, in this era Internet Access is must.”

**Muskan Chouhan, 19 years, Indore**

For one, having internet access all the time has made it safer for me to go about my work post 7PM; I can always send my active location to my parents and they would know if I get into any trouble. It has also brought skill-enhancement closer to home. I am learning Japanese through a free online course, which I had always wanted to do, without having to worry about the funds or having to compromise on my schedule. There are many other ways in which social media has improved my life.

**Saundharaya Khanna, 21 years, Ambala**

“Social media is also very helpful for expanding our sources of content. With so much being blogged and written, then curated and shared proactively, the volume of content has grown exponentially. Now, there is no shortage of viewpoints and sources from which we can draw our own conclusions about what is really happening in the world. It’s less important to have a news team interpret it on our behalf. Now, a small company can achieve global reach within days of launching their business when the cards fall right. Perhaps it’s via an ingenious video, by sharing opinions that resonate and haven’t been stated in the past or creating new knowledge that spreads like wildfire. Maybe it’s by simply sharing the business concept and bigger voices latching onto it. In any case, social media has provided a means to have a voice on par with the big dogs for everyone, including the smallest start-ups.”

**Saurabh Basu Chowdhury, 22 years, Noida**

I have become more “woke” as a person. Social media has made me realize how ignorant I’m towards some social issues, I have become a better feminist and I’m still learning to unlearn patriarchy with the help of social media. My communication skills have improved a lot. The content that I consume on social media has made me more...
confident, happy, balanced, and opinionated. 

**Neha Jain, 20 years, Kolkata**

Internet and social media have made my life very easier. I can get answers to any questions on the internet now and most importantly I can delegate my work in which I am facing difficulties to my friend who is afar. Social media helped me to connect with a lot of persons and organisation who are making a difference through their work like government officials, international organisations such as UN and its constituents, Universities in which I hope to study such as Harvard, Yale, Oxford, Ashoka, etc... I get to know about UNV from the social media (Facebook).

**Akash Chandrayan, 18 years, New Delhi**

The internet has been helpful to me in many ways. With the emergence of applications and websites that cater to every requirement of the public (food delivery, groceries, medicines, cosmetics, clothes, books, basic necessities, entertainment, healthcare, research etc), the importance of the internet has had a revolutionary boost and has helped me improve my health, learn new recipes, learn about several new areas of study pertaining to the course I study at college. It has made me aware of the world around me and has helped me grow as an individual and pass on valuable information obtained from the internet to people in need.

**Shreeka Shravya, 19 years, Bangalore**

Social Media has not improved my life it is just waste of time. Physical world is more bright than virtual.

**Kavya Prasad, 20 years, Kolar**

Parents & Social media

My parents do not appreciate my use of social media as they see it to be a form of addiction which is true. The prolonged exposure to the rays from these devices also has a lot of effects on one’s health which is the primary reason of them discouraging me to use social media

**Pooja Rao, 23 years, Thane**

My parents are okay with my online activities until I am using it to a limit as excessive use of anything will give harm. My parents encourage me to use social media but only up to a limit where it is good for me. They also understand that the world I am growing in needs social media as a platform. My school is also connected with me online and even the teachers, it eases my studies and that is convenient, my teachers also encourage social media up to a limit.

**Aryan Singh, 19 years, Bhopal**

There aren’t any barriers set by my parents except they always tell me respect woman and respect people’s privacy. They are my friends on Facebook and my teachers because they are my mentors and I look up to them so that I can become good person. My parents and teachers always encouraged me of social media because I will be able to know lot of culture and people mentality all over the world.

**Mohammad Haziq Khan, 25 years, Srinagar**

My parents are very open with me. They have told me that this is your life and you have the right to choose your lifestyle as you want to live. They encourage me to use social media cautiously to support my growth.

**Nargish Parwin, 22 years, Jaipur**

Parents think its waste time. We as students in Jio boon period are happy about using social media but unable to resist it for excess use. I guess too much usage may lead to either Victim or blockage of social media.

**Kalpesh Shah, 21 years, Pune**

Since my parents are illiterate so they did not have any knowledge about social media. But my elders say not to involve too much in any activity which may cost your life. Some of my teachers also encourage to use social media up to a point

**Muddam Ramu, 22 years, Medchal**

I Think Parents and Teachers have same
perspective on this Topic, because “Every Parent Is A Teacher and Every Teacher Is Parent.” So Definitely They Both have same perspective. Excessive Use of Anything is harmful even it’s good. Everyone Knows Social Media is also Good and bad. Like I said Both parents and teachers have same perspective So they Both react same on this, my parents are not much educated but they know impact of social media nowadays. They encourage to use it in right way and in limit, so I don’t get harm by excessive use. Because there are lots of advantages of using social media, we stay updated. Like advantages there are many disadvantages too like we get distracted by our goal by over use of social media. And many more.

Harshal Ravindra Patil, 23 years, Palghar

Well, my parents don’t react all the time. They encourage me to use social media but at the same time they don’t like if I use social media all the time. Instead they will say that the right usage of social media is good, but it should not affect my other activities like studies, sports, attending functions, meeting friends and relatives etc. There should be some limit to the usage of social media. And the same goes with my teachers also.

Mohammed Tanveeruddin, 21 years, Vikarabad

No Barriers on using social media, as my parents have no idea how much I am using social media. I think if they know, then it will be difficult for me to use internet.

Oshit Vijay, 21 years, Bhopal

Data Privacy which is really a big concern because we really don’t even asexpect that how the tech giants can use our data to manipulate the things with the help of emerging technologies which sometimes discourage me to use the things in a very limited way. But, my parents never discouraged me from using social media but yes, they always point me when I hang with the social media apps in excess. And, I think, this happens with every activity that can harm when used for long hours/terms. Some teachers discourage to use the social media and invest that valuable time for preparing other things in life by focusing on the important things. But also, on the other hand, some teachers insisted on personal branding through social media to showcase the skills through it. So, there is a mixed review from the life-changing people.

Puru Khanna, 21 years, Moradabad

On Risks of Social Media

People should know that there exists a world outside the social media and not get obsessed with your social life.

Navneet Shah, 19 years, Jaipur

There are risks of social media such as privacy, harassment, and breach of information, which is why maintaining your mystery is the best thing to do. I’ve never been one-on-one with such issues, but I’ve known people who’ve suffered.

Trisha Gupta, 20 years, Faridabad

Too much of addiction is not good for anything. Social media keeps your life as an open book which is the biggest risk.

Aman Gupta, 21 years, Faridabad

No risks of social media. We just need to stay alert and know our limits.

Shivank Bansal, 19 years, New Delhi

Fake news in WhatsApp and Facebook leads to riots and bad things in terms of racial and communal ways. Cyber looting has increased. People’s personal information gets leaked. These are ill features of internet and social media. At times of Racial and Communal triggering, people don’t think intellectually, and they tend to take improper actions. This needs to be solved by proper understanding. We the youth can make groups for volunteering and make people aware of these fake and inflammatory issues.

Vibhuti Singh, 19 years, Allahabad

I think today’s parents think that using social media, we are wasting our time but it’s not so
because using internet and other social media sites is an essential tool for connecting to the world.

**Saumya Singh, 18 years, Varanasi**

Social media comes with its own baggage, if not used correctly, it can lead to all sorts of emotions like depression, jealousy inferiority complex etc.

**Sandhya, 19 years, New Delhi**

If social media is used in moderation there is no risk. But excessive use can take you away from important work. Many people are neglecting their important work because of social media.

**Satyam Dwivedi, 21 years, Vidisha**

Cyberbullying is increasing day by day. Greatest risk of social media is our information being available everywhere and anywhere. Data is not secure with any organisation as you never know which hacker has found the tool to hack into system of that application despite the policies being updated regularly. Hence there is no personal life left, which I feel is the biggest threat to our civilization.

**Pooja Rao, 23 years, Thane**

There are risks of using social media. They can be prevented by becoming aware of each risk and the preventive measures. In my opinion parents should have an eye on what their children do online especially teenagers and adolescents.

**Anagha P, 22 years, Kannur**

There is a risk of using social media. And the major one is about our PRIVACY. If our data is recorded and leaked to third Parties we may fall in some serious trouble soon in the upcoming years.

**Shubham Agrawal, 23 years, Pimpri Chinchwad**

There is no risk from social media. It depends on the user-- how much time they spend, how much they are addicted to it. Many students keep on checking the notifications, get engaged in malicious activities.

**Parag Gupta, 19 years, New Delhi**

Cyber bullying is one of the risks which can shatter the person and his/her image. Misuse of photos and data too are perilous. To anticipate this, there should be limitation in terms of viewing the personal data of others.

**Garvit Bhirani, 18 years, Gurugram**

Privacy and data leakage are two of the most important risks on social media. They’ve to be specially taken care of as it risks the reputation, private life and respect of the affected people.

**Pooja Shridhar Parvatikar, 20 years, Bengaluru**

Risks of social media are always there. I agree that students neglect their work, school and other social activities as they are busy with social media and wasting their time. Prevention of harassment can be done through ways like the social media apps should be more secure in storing personal information and details. The person using social media should know the limits of what to share and what not to share. Strict checking should be done to avoid cyber bullying.

**Mashangva Mino, 23 years, Manipur**

Excess use of social media is harmful, people should limit it. The connection to the world outside social media is also important, the way how nature is. Addiction of social media should always be taken care of. I believe that there should be a committee that takes care of crimes like cyber bullying as these types of crimes are increasing, if there is then it should be well endorsed so that all social media users are aware of it and feel secure.

**Aryan Singh, 19 years, Bhopal**

Social media own disadvantages, as people like my friends spend a lot of time on checking notifications of several social media platforms such as comments, likes, etc. I have never faced cyber bullying because I avoid such stuff or posts which lead me to this.

**Mayan Kurariya, 18 years, Indore**

There are certainly some risks of using social media but when people become aware of the risks and are alert for their own digital safety, the risks can be avoided. I have not faced cyber bullying, but I think when people become more considerate towards each other there is high chance such things might come to an end and on other side people can also think twice before adding someone as their friends on social media as it may lead to troubling
themselves if the person added as friend is not of good intentions. People are becoming more aware of these things like trolls and how to face it and such things can be prevented if people do not share such trolls or do not motivate people who troll others.

Anusha. J, 18 years, Chennai

If we are more addicted to social media then we are cutting ourselves from being social, we can’t focus on our work and also online harassment is another big problem if we could do anything to make our accounts more secure and keep a limit and quality of content to be shared on the social media then it may help.

Vinayak Bhushan, 21 years, Sonipat

Breach of data is one of the greatest risks in using social media. Other risks of excessive use include lack of concentration in studies and at work.

Harsh Vardhan Mishra, 20 years, Jhunjhunu

On a personal level you can’t control what other people post or say about you on Social media. I firmly believe that even though you can’t control other people’s actions you can always control your own reaction. I have been bullied online but I decided to ignore and not react to it and it stopped after a point.

Anuja Patil, 19 years, Thane

Social media has a vast number of things which fascinates us. We get inside the social media sometimes or quite often so deep that we forget to do our daily chores sometimes we even forget to have our meals due to it. I have faced cyberbullying quite a few months ago as a person unknown to me kept messaging me on Facebook messenger which was vulgar mostly. I reported it to the Facebook and I blocked the account forever. I think social media companies should check and deactivate the fake profiles and fake news sources that creates nuisance and promotes extremism.

Akash Chandrayan, 18 years, New Delhi

Overuse of social media harms a lot! I too think that neglecting studies and being more frequent in social media is a bad growth and should be stopped!
I have been cyber bullied! I tagged the wrong doer and made him realise about his faults by making his friends know what wrong that person has done.

Sitesh Kumar Raulo, 19 years, Ganjam

I have read many incidents about who have faced such issues. Reporting is a great way. But still ignore such trolls. I think people really need to understand the consequences as a responsible consumer, that your actions are monitored and you can harm your own image if you are bullying anyone online, because everybody is using social media, it’s for all so better be and act as a more matured consumer and use it for self-development, for doing some good, or for helping others rather than bullying and wasting your own precious time. Cyber cells should be there where consumers can place their complaints. We have seen the concept of cyber security getting strong in Bihar with an initial setup of few cyber stations in the capital itself.

Ayesha, 24 years, Patna

Over exposure (to social media) is a threat as it can deviate students from other important tasks as well. I have not faced cyber bullying. It can be handled by promoting awareness among the people as to what it is, how it is spread and how to avoid or handle them. Even government rules should be made stringent and enforced strictly.

Ganesh P, 28 years, Mumbai

Cybercrimes hate spewing and derogatory comments and vulgar online content when exposed to children or personal insults aimed at adults dismantles the perception of moral sense by the society.

Vandana Anil, 21 years, Kannur

There are many risks of using social media. Cyber bullying and harassments being one of them. I’ve been harassed on social media. Once I happen to read the archived messages on Facebook and some of them were very nasty. I didn’t reply, I just reported the account and blocked him. I think the first thing that needs to be done is, prevent such incidents is a tight security system by the makers of the apps itself. People, especially girls should avoid accepting the request of strangers. If such incidents happen then one must report against it.

Akshita Bisht, 21 years, Ghaziabad

In today’s times social media can be quite risky.
As we are aware of instances of bullying, body-shaming, malice, fraud and harassment that take place on social media, these at times lead to people taking drastic steps such as self-harm. It also leads to a loss in their confidence levels and this is an alarming threat.

Shreeka Shravya, 19 years, Bengaluru

I have faced lot of harassment online of being a Kashmiri because lot of people say that I am Pakistani. I am born in India I have an Indian passport still they think I am from Kashmir I am terrorist. This must be stopped.

I lodged a complaint against them and police took care of them.

To prevent such incidents, people must become mature and think positive because Kashmiri have too right to live in peace. We should do workshops and volunteering all regions of India including all religions people to make them believe we are one.

Mohammad Haziq Khan, 25 years, Srinagar

There are risks of using social media like in India, there are many incidences of hurting religious sentiments on social media. Recently, a campaign from WhatsApp is running to prevent fake news in most of the WhatsApp groups.

Yash Tiknayat, 24 years, Yavatmal

I think I totally agree with the fact that social media platforms & internet has its own disadvantages to it. Children and teenagers whose bodies and minds are growing rapidly should be proactive more physically and should indulge themselves into sports activities & socializing. But it’s sad that most of the young lads are proud of having a 1000 friends & followers online on Facebook, Instagram & twitter rather than having friends.

Alankrita Turaga, 21 years, Hyderabad

I don’t know if this qualifies as cyberbullying, but once I commented my honest opinions and views regarding some film on a post on Facebook and random people started replying to me. Some of them mocked me and abused me verbally and yes it was obviously very much embarrassing and humiliating on a public platform. People reacted to my comments with laughs... I gave it back to all of them by replying but I couldn’t take it when I constantly got notifications of laugh reactions and people replying to me. So, I deleted my comment altogether. It was a bad experience, but I think all of them were cheap in their character and not educated which was clear in their profiles. I think people should just give it back to the person/people who indulge in cyber bullying because tit for tat is the best possible solution for this problem as it’ll give those jerks a taste of their own medicine. And we should report such stuff immediately and website authorities in charge will investigate the matter effectively. And more over we should feel sorry for those bullies, we should pity them and their mundane lives because they are filled with so much of negativity, hatred and insecurities. They really don’t have a job or nothing to do in their lives. Karma will work.

Alankrita Turaga, 21 years, Hyderabad

Nothing in the world is purely good or bad and the same goes for social media. Social media can be addicting, and it can have several negative impacts on people. Most people only show the happy sides of their lives on social media and this may lead to other people looking at their own lives and wondering why they’re not so happy. Social media can be overwhelming. Cyber bullying is another issue that needs to be dealt with. Bullies easily hide behind their screens and spew a lot of negative words without considering the impact on other people. People need to learn how to effectively deal with cyber bullies.

Monisha Gowda, 21 years, Bengaluru

Of course, there are many inevitable risks beneath using social media. Online harassment should be prevented at any cost. Blocking and report option available in all social media and all those social organization should be obliged to take necessary action to stop cyber bullying and online harassment.

PM Karthick, 23 years, Trichy

There are risks of using social media as people really get addicted to this kind of stuff. Along with this, people’s life style has been changing gradually which in turn has a great impact on their physical and mental health. It is important to govern social media with strict rules, like opening an account with face detection, fingerprints etc.

Shama Ansari, 21 years, New Delhi
People are getting addicted to social media. There are fake people and organisations that loot the people through social media by creating a fake profile.

**Akshat, 21 years, Gurgaon**

Well personally I haven’t faced any such reaction from any of the friend on the social media. But if anything as such happens, people should stand up together and fight against such reaction against the person doing it, rather than liking the pages or ignoring it. Well in the younger generation of today’s world people are more into uploading what he/she is doing, sharing personal information and commenting what is not appropriate rather than sharing relevant information. Such activities should be discouraged example like sharing nude pictures and videos, dirty comments and so on.

**Loli Kaikho, 22 years, Senapati district.**

Using social media with responsibility involves many things. Firstly, a lot of us share only our happy moments on social media, creating this false facade that our life is perfect. This should be avoided, and I think, we need to celebrate our failures as well. Secondly, we must all try to motivate each other and spread more love and positivity across social media, instead of trying to pull others down or trash people we do not like. Thirdly, we must know how much is too much before posting information about ourselves on social media.

**Shreya Rangarajan, 20 years, Chennai**

“‘The world now has social media. this innovation allowed us to access the world at our fingertips one click is all we need, and we can now know the latest happenings in the world share our opinions and views for everyone to see and even update our friends and relatives.

Social media is all about sharing, and since media as a tool to send good vibes and positive stories. Bashing, bullying, ranting? leave all those behind. let us make this world a better place to live.

While social media provides us a way to reach out and tell our stories, please remember that our life does not depend on it. too much social media is a form of addiction is not good. Take some time off online and on productive activities that will help us become the best version of ourselves.

While click on anything on social media we should think before it because any popular campaign slogan that promotes responsible actions on social media website by forcing the public to reflect upon their decisions and how they affect others .while we are given the freedom to say whatever it is that we want ,We should always take into consideration the effect of our post to ourselves and others .so before posting ,take time to think to first.

last but not the least social and web are all for public’s consumption. this means that all information that a person shares on his/her page is for everybody’s viewing, including those who do not mean well. so, we should understand privacy
part of it.

**Nisha Panwar, 35 years, Jodhpur**

I believe that social media should be used carefully. Although I disagree that education of its uses and caution should be restricted to merely young people. I believe that such education should be inculcated in adults as well. As I have seen many adults’ forward messages through WhatsApp whose content would be suspicious. Similarly, the sharing of photos by young people on social media is also a widespread criticism.

My college doesn’t indulge in such education. Although lately it has become common knowledge of its danger, something which was not so widespread few years ago. Thus, explicit classes are not necessarily for our generation, although avenues to deal with repercussions of social media is important.

**Sushil Ayyadurai, 19 years, Chennai**

Youth should be taught to use social media responsibly. School and college should provide guidance on using social media responsibly. I believe that teenagers should start using social media responsibly. Hateful remarks should never find their way into places that were created to be useful sources of information and fun pastimes. Users should remove anonymous settings from sites that offer them to decrease the amount of hate that comes from them. Teens should stop hiding behind smart phones and plotting to take down their next innocent victims. Bullying is not a joke, whether it takes place in person or behind a keyboard, and it’s time for teens to begin acknowledging that.

**Saurabh Basu Chowdhury, 22 years, Gautam Buddha Nagar**

For me responsible use of social media is very important. The way usage of smart phones are getting momentum and with the data availability at cheaper rates, the youth may totally engage in social media (I am already seeing money). It is important for the youth to know, that social media is a part of life and we should not put our entire team liking and giving comments as well as sharing our pictures. We must also try to put in our thoughts and share information/achievements on social media for the good whereas also keep informed of what is happening around. We must contribute to our society using the social media tool.

**Srishti Singh, 29 years, Ahmedabad**

There is no hard and fast rule of responsible usage of social media. You must be mindful that what you do online is going to stay somewhere in the public domain. Knowing the risks well is half-job done! ‘Training students’ would be the wrong interpretation because you can’t really predict what would happen online and thus, you can’t train. I would rather say that its time educational institutions ‘spread awareness’ of these risks among students. Unfortunately, the educational institutes I have studied in did not take a step in that direction back then, and even now.

**Saundharaya Khanna, 21 years, Ambala**

No one at school or college provides us guidance on using social media responsibly. I think there should be guidance on safety measures and ethical practices on social media. How to identify a spam and a con account. Responsible use of social media includes not posting content that violates the beliefs and image of a person, religion, region, community etc. Not posting someone’s private details and data. Ethically following the values of the society while conducting anything online. Keeping a happy and respectful atmosphere virtually.

**Bhavika Mehta, 18 years, Mumbai**

I think that the responsible use of social media is to use it in a controlled manner. While social media provides us a way to reach out and tell our stories, we must remember that our life does not depend on it. Too much social media is a form of addiction, and we all know that addiction is not good. We should take some time off online and do other productive activities that will help you become the best version of yourself.

**Anuj Arora, 21 years, Delhi**

According to me responsible use of Social Media means a proper time regulation over the use of social media. Students should use social media sensibly for knowledge sharing and gathering purposes. The sites that children visit must be properly monitored by the parents. People should be taught to refrain from activities like hacking
and cyber bullying. Every educational institution must provide adequate knowledge to the students regarding the use of social media.

_Muskan Kumar, 19 years, New Delhi_

A responsible use would be not spamming or spreading false rumours about things, not hurting anybody’s sentiments, not making derogatory statements about their personal life or religious preferences. Be careful of not sharing any sensitive information online such as your bank details etc. We should not involve ourselves with illegal activities as well. Along with that it is essential that we don’t get addicted to social media such that we end up neglecting our other priorities like school or work or our personal development.

_Shruti Rao, 23 years, Bangalore_

Responsible use of social media is constituted by, but not limited to, being factually accurate, emotionally unbiased and socially acceptable when posting over social media sites. I wasn’t provided with any guidance per se on how to act over the internet. I don’t think that educational institutions should meddle in personal affairs like social media. If right values of courtesy, respect and veracity of thought are inculcated from an early age then I don’t think that any extra guidance would be necessary.

_Bhaskar Mehra, 20 years, Central Delhi, Delhi_

People should be taught to use social media responsibly. As teenagers in India nowadays don’t fully know about it and misuse its usage unknowingly. Therefore, it is important to teach children about its advantages, disadvantages and how to use it. Teachers and parents should teach children to use social media for the good cause by spreading useful information such as social participation for a good cause. This would enhance the cognitive and emotional activities amongst children.

_Nandini Jain, 19 years, Faridabad_

I agree that youth should be taught to use social media responsibly but not by threatening or scaring them. We should explain the dangers lurking in social media and how to prevent them so that it spreads awareness among people. My school did provide very useful guidance on social media by talking to us about the pros and cons, telling us how to maintain our personal details personal etc. They also taught us about cyber bullying and social media hackers.

_Spandana Kantam, 20 years, Hyderabad_

According to me, responsible use of social media is to use it for the right purpose rather than using it for the wrong purpose. Many kids are using Internet or social media to spread rumours or doing cybercrime, etc. The parents of such kids should allot the timings for these kids to use Internet or social media. School should make their parents aware of the facts. Patents should allow their kids to use their Internet for the good purpose.

_Gauri Sharma, 18 years, Jaipur_

Responsible use of social media includes prioritising your work and what you can want to achieve daily. If there’s anything that I’d want to achieve, and social media is being a hinderance then I’d know that social media is the thing that I should cut. Also, sharing a bit too much of your personal life is irresponsible on someone’s part as internet is a black hole where anything that enters never returns.

_Neha Aggarwal, 19 years_

According to me responsible use of social media is using it moderately and not indulging in cyber bullying and crimes. We should use it for good purposes. And I think we should use the most out of it in a proper manner. I didn’t get any guidance or training for using social media responsibly. But I think every school and college should conduct seminars and workshops on such useful and helpful topics for the youth.

_Alankrita Turaga, 21 years, Hyderabad District_

The responsible use of social media currently should be taught regarding the spread of fake and propaganda news that spreads across the social media like wild fire even though it is not confirmed by any third person. People should be taught to be emotionally stable and be tolerant to any news, either fake or true, that occurs daily and do not use social media as a tool to spread hatred among the citizens.

_Nitish Lakhanpal, 22 years, New Delhi_
According to me, social media should be used to get information about what is going in the world with related to environment majorly, politics, issues etc. And, to stay connected with the people which live far away but for a limited time only. No, they don’t provide such in depth guidance to usage of social media. They do provide sometimes but it’s up to us whether we want to take it or not.

Chahat Yadav, 19 years, Mumbai

Responsible use of social media means -- people need to be aware of the content they are sharing. The amount of details to be shared and to whom. My college does not provide any such guidance. I don’t think it is particularly the job of colleges because social media is more personal. Details about these should more be the responsibility of the parent or guardian.

Chakshu, 20 years, Mumbai

Responsibility is a priority for the proper functioning of anything in existence, which is why rules, regulations and limitations exist. Social media usage is yet to set those boundaries and is in experimental phase of being labelled as something definitive and concrete. It may happen real soon, we just must wait for that moment to come.

Nirmiti Y Pandit, 18 years

We must know how and when to use social media and use it judiciously. Like schools and colleges include sex education as a part of the curriculum similarly mass media education must also be made available to everyone so that we can know the basics and know what to post and how to post information and not get harassed.

Sweta Basu, 21 years, Kolkata 'spread awareness' of these risks among students. Unfortunately, the educational institutes I have studied in did not take a step in that direction back then, and even now.

Saundharaya Khanna, 21 years, Ambala

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Responsible use of social media includes prioritising your work and what you can want to achieve on a daily basis daily. If there’s anything that I’d want to achieve, and social media is being a hinderance then I’d know that social media is the thing that I should cut. Also, sharing a bit too much of your personal life is irresponsible on someone’s part as internet is a black hole where anything that enters never returns.

_Neha Aggarwal, 19 years_

According to me responsible use of social media is using it moderately and not indulging in cyber bullying and crimes. We should use it for good purposes. And I think we should use the most out of it in a proper manner. I didn’t get any guidance or training for using social media responsibly. But I think every school and college should conduct seminars and workshops on such useful and helpful topics for the youth.

_Alankrita Turaga, 21 years, Hyderabad District_

The responsible use of social media currently should be taught regarding the spread of fake and propaganda news that spreads across the social media like wild fire even though it is not confirmed by any third person. People should be taught to be emotionally stable and be tolerant to any news, either fake or true, that occurs daily and do not use social media as a tool to spread hatred among the citizens.

_Nitish Lakhanpal, 22 years, New Delhi_

According to me, social media should be used to get information about what is going in the world with related to environment majorly, politics, issues etc. And, to stay connected with the people which live far away but for a limited time only. No, they don’t provide such in depth guidance to usage of social media. They do provide sometimes but it’s up to us whether we want to take it or not.

_Chahat Yadav, 19 years, Mumbai_

Responsible use of social media means-- people need to be aware of the content they are sharing. The amount of details to be shared and to whom. My college does not provide any such guidance. I don’t think it is particularly the job of colleges because social media is more personal. Details about these should more be the responsibility of the parent or guardian.

_Chakshu, 20 years, Mumbai_

Responsibility is a priority for the proper functioning of anything in existence, which is why rules, regulations and limitations exist. Social media usage is yet to set those boundaries and is in experimental phase of being labelled as something definitive and concrete. It may happen real soon, we just have to must wait for that
Social Media and Volunteerism

I agree that social media can be used as a medium for constructive purposes like spreading volunteerism or awareness for a good cause. Since we are surrounded with everything digital, social media can be used to share constructive messages on society conservation, promoting humanitarian activities and sharing stories where society has been benefited by the good efforts of humans.

It can be done by sharing messages and posts on social media handles, joining hands and becoming online media partners of institutions working towards safeguarding the society and by spreading awareness on the role of nature so that people realize their duties and emerge as leaders of the society so as to build resilient communities.

I previously worked as an online volunteer with NASSCOM Foundation where the agenda was to aware the society on topics like women empowerment, child rights, care of old age people, educating old age the digital devices and so on.

My experience was good as I learnt about how important it is to spread awareness among the society about such happenings of life which we see and observe in our lives and prefer to stay calm, how important it is to raise our voices and fight against the odds, how important it is to ensure that people get justice. All this hence helps to build a resilient community.

Honey Sharma, 20 years, Jaipur

Volunteerism and public service is something that I have had the opportunity of getting involved in, all thanks to social media. Volunteering on-ground has a limit, given that you can’t be there serving many NGOs at once. Virtual volunteering or social media-run campaigns have no such restrictions. One experience that will always stay with me is of assisting Ukrainian Philanthropists Forum (UPF) as a virtual volunteer for their training programs. It was heartening because I could go past language-barrier (I don’t speak Ukrainian at all) and geographical distance to help for a cause I connect with. I used Google Translate many a times to learn about them better from their website. I also searched their social networks to understand their posting and it helped significantly in delivering up to the mark.

Saundharaya Khanna, 21 years, Ambala

I strongly believe social media can help spread volunteerism and public service. Same age group people can better convince each other on what’s right thing to do and what’s not. People

We must know how and when to use social media and use it judiciously. Like schools and colleges include sex education as a part of the curriculum similarly mass media education must also be made available to everyone so that we can know the basics and know what to post and how to post information and not get harassed.

Sweta Basu, 21 years, Kolkata

Social media can be used for community service. Now a day’s people spend most of time on social media being unproductive. With the implementation of good programs people can spend their time in some useful stuff. I feel proud to be a part of United Nations volunteers. I’m connected with them over Facebook.

The main objective of this campaign is to spread the word volunteerism. On Facebook there are approx. 5k people connected with UNV and it’s an awesome time with them. I learnt a lot about social media and their positive use by their campaign. Also, I tell others to the better use of media by quoting my example. We create lots of posters for international volunteers’ day. And spread them with the power of social media.

We use # tags for showing impact of this campaign and I am sure we have created a stock of good messages by these tags.

I love to work with UNV and wanted to work with them in future.

Shubham Jain, 22 years, Delhi

Nirmiti Y Pandit, 18 years

Social Media for Youth & Civic Engagement in India
Social Media can be used for spreading volunteerism. People interested in such activities contact you once the word is spread and this chain goes on. I have been a part of UNV’s IVD2018 online volunteering campaign. It basically works on the principle of sharing as much stuff as possible on the said theme and volunteerism. Awareness is spread, and people start volunteering in various activities and improve the society. It was an amazing experience. It gives you an idea about how uninformed and ignorant we are about other people. It feels amazing to be a part of something that intends to change the society for good. When we help other, we are helping ourselves becoming a better person. After all a good society constitutes of good people.

Pranav Sarode, 20 years, Thane

Social media is used to do constructive purposes. Online volunteering is a platform where we can spread awareness not only to our area but to entire world. Moreover, social media plays a key Role to volunteering by adding different people from different places of world.

Speaking about my online volunteering I got to know many things I got different contacts across the nation moreover many people got to know what is resilient communities is and how it works From me my friends got to know what is online volunteering is they would say to their friends what is online volunteering like so one day everyone would be volunteers and India would be developed country soon

Namratha Rao, 19 years, Anantapuram

Social media channels are a great tool for raising awareness. They can spread the word about our initiative with a lot of people. This is also a crucial way to further open the lines of communication with the community for new ideas. It’s also a great source of free infrastructure for event scheduling. Over the time it is helpful to maintain contact with partners and citizens who volunteered. I have been a part of an NGO through online community, where I was responsible for spreading awareness about digital literacy and its impact in lives of children on various social media channels.

Anuj Arora, 21 years, Delhi

It’s a great way to use social media for constructive purpose like spreading volunteerism or public service. It can be done through proper use and proper guidance. I have done online volunteering for various NGOs like United Nations Volunteer, ERIDE NGO, Young Thinker’s Forum, International Centre for Culture & Education etc. These were Online program so all we communicate with a common online platform to coordinator, participants and organizers. For spreading the word, we all use our social media channels individually. It was amazing experience for me and I learned a lot during my task. I learned that how volunteers work together to make their gold possible. I got the exposure of real working culture with real professionalism.

Shubham Soni, 22 years, Sagar

Social Media can be used for spreading volunteerism. People interested in such activities contact you once the word is spread and this chain will continue and spread. Yes, I am a part of 2 online Volunteering communities. It works by assigning and keeping us updated with the day to day activities and our individual responsibilities. Sometimes I must write reports, blogs, conduct e-polls, circulate e-posts etc. and spread the message of the theme and agenda of the group. At other times we may have to make calls, connect with people, invite them over for speeches, collect funds and involve youth in such activities.

Ananya, 19 years, Bangalore

I think any online campaign goes hand in hand with a real-life event as well, as people can see the actions of the words. As far as awareness concept is concerned, social media is a powerful tool and can be used to gain the support of millions. And yes, I am a part of United Nations Volunteers community of Facebook as well as on Instagram. Basically, they assign us different tasks revolving around a deadline, within which we are expected to use our social media handles to arise and gain support regarding the same. It was my first time into social and digital media marketing, so it was a great experience. The greatest part of this volunteer program was when it got effective. Like my peers and colleagues were asking me about the program and how could they contribute to it and be a part of it.

Shivani Lal, 19 years

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Shubham Soni, 22 years, Sagar
Yes definitely. As I’m online volunteer for UN India, I express and post my ideas for several major global problems. By using WhatsApp and Facebook, lots of people in your circle will get to know what we post or talk about in social media. Not all, but few will come forward and give ideas/suggestions for the problems and/or will forward those messages to their social circles. Hence it would reach millions of people and several actions might be done necessarily to restore belief in social circles. **PM Karthick, 23 years, Trichy**

Social media is a great tool to spread volunteerism or other public services. Lot of online volunteers are coming up now a days and contributing their time and skills online. The people who live in rural areas lacking resources are also involved in lot of social activities online. Just by sitting in their houses people are working for the social causes. Social media can create a huge impact on present generation. **Mohammed Tanveeruddin, 21 years, Vikarabad**

Nowhere else we are going to find human populace in such large numbers than social media. The major reasons for some of the most complex world problems today is the lack of awareness in people. Social media can serve as a mediator to fill for that lack of awareness providing people with information about what change as an individual as well as a community they can bring to the world and what impact can they on their future generations. It can help them to see what can their actions do. **Rishabh Kumar Saxena, 21 years, Ghaziabad**