Impact of Social Networking Sites on Women in Contemporary Indian Society

Archana Sahare
Associate Professor,
Deptt. of Sociology,
Govt. Arts Girls' College,
Kota, Rajasthan

Abstract

The twenty first century is proving itself to be a revolutionary era. It has brought about a tremendous change in the social system at large. The most notable gift of the century is advanced technology which seems to have changed everything. The advanced technology is working in every field whether agriculture, transport, architecture or communication. With the introduction of the advanced information communication technology, the world seems to have turned globalized with an easy access to the people living in the other parts of the world. It has enabled the people not only to connect to others living across the world, but also allowed them to peep into the caverns of their minds and hearts. The transformed social scenario witnesses a special care for the strangers and an absolute indifference to those who are living in close association. The Indian society where more than 60% of the total adults are reported to be linked with the social networking sites, is now all changed and coloured in the advanced communication technology. Like most other things, it too has both positive and negative aspects. The positivity lies in the fact that it has globalized the world bringing the people at the one platform where they are able to link up with others through the social networking sites, while the negativity lies in the fact that it has give rise to the various unknown cyber problems. At present there seems to be a mania for the use of the social networking sites all over India. Now they are within the reach of every one including the women and children. Generally they are not used for the purposes they are actually meant for, but for the undesirable purposes, that is why, they are now taken as a severe threat to the ancient Indian culture.

The paper is a theoretical study based on the content analysis, and surveys both the positive and the negative aspects of the use of the social networking sites by the girls and women in India.

Keywords: Networking, Sites, Contemporary, Scenario, Information Communication Technology, Grip, Modernization, Westernization, Globalized World, Entertainment.

Introduction

With the introduction of the social networking sites and an easy access to them by all, there is now a revolution in the world. India too is not untouched and unaffected by this revolution. At the prime of the information communication technological revolution, only the males were inclined to it and used it for the purpose of receiving and sending important information joining various social networking sites. Later it became a good source of exchanging ideas and making comments on the important issues and statements. Now it being accessible to all in villages and cities across

India, the social networking sites have become an important part of life which seems to have engripped everybody.

Use of social networking sites is both advantageous and disadvantageous. Its advantages lie in its righteous and controlled use for searching educational stuff relating to several available courses, trade and commerce, seeking career and job opportunities through them and for linking up with the world at large for noble purposes. On the contrary, its disadvantages lie in its uncontrolled use for the purpose of time killing, social chit chat with strangers, addiction to chat, joining the people without knowing about them, and in using them for illicit and undesirable purposes. In the present context, it will not be an exaggeration to say that the social networking sites are within the reach of even children who unknowingly the evil consequences of the things, fall prey to various cyber activities. They use them hardly for any fair purpose. They are found wasting time on them.

Women are big users of social networking websites because of their innate tendency to connect with people, share and build relationship with others. With time, the status of women in India has improved with respect to equal rights, thanks to the efforts of many reformers through the century. In this modern era, women in India have held high offices, including the positions of The President, Prime Minister, Speaker of Lok Sabha, Top Management Positions, as an Entrepreneur etc. India as a nation is moving forward with great success, and can't afford to ignore women empowerment. Today, technology directly impacts women's development and has enabled their voice to reach out and be viewed globally.

The social networking sites are boon and curse to the housewives. It is boon so long as they use them for the sake of entertainment keeping a balance in their domestic duties. As it is known, the Indian housewives lead a type of life which keeps them limited to their narrow world which knows nothing beyond the home management and child care. The social networking sites have made them free from their tedious life through several entertainments. Through the sites it is possible for them to raise their voice against any issue they disapprove, find recipe for anything they wish to cook and relish, find several items of home decoration and even make online shopping of the things they want at their door.

However, the negative aspect of the use of the social networking sites cannot be ignored. Negatively speaking, the social networking sites are a severe threat to the ancient Indian culture which demanded all the members of the Indian society to be morally strong, rich in values and balanced in personality. As a result of the women's inclination to them, the family and marriage system are passing through hard times. Arranged marriage has been replaced by Love-cum-arranged marriage with the partners searched through facebook. Matrimonial sites have played a dominant role in bringing about the change in search for the suitable match for marriage.

Now a majority of the Indian women are not ready to adjust and live in joint families. The cases of divorce are increasing fast. They are not adjust even with the husbands in nuclear families. Premarital, post marital and extra marital relations are very common. Facebook has widened the circle of friends to such an extent that they have no time to their own family members and kinsmen, but without fail they are in touch with the facebook friends they have not seen even once. They have no time for their husbands and children, but they spare time anyhow to put their status on whatsapp or facebook. The increasing number of cases in family courts, sexual crime and violence are the result of the excessive use of the social networking sites. Depression, anxiety, cyber bullying, fear of missing out, unrealistic expectations and negative body image are some of the negative results of the use of the social networking sites.

Review of Related Literature

Dr. Biswajit Das & Jyoti Shankar Sahoo (2010) in Social Networking Sites in: A Critical Analysis of Its Impact on Personal and Social Life observe that the growth of social networking sites shows a significant change in the social and personal

behavior of Internet users. SNS has become an essential medium of communication and entertainment among the young adults. Though it has started to affect the daily activities of normal human beings, the popularity of SNS is not going to reduce in near future. Everything in this world can be used for a bad purpose as well as for good. It's us who can make the difference and utilize social networking sites wisely for the benefit of developing social bonds across the geographical borders. However, nefarious act of cyber criminals discussed in the article has to be brought to the fore and stringent measures should be taken to curb the menace. Cyber laws have to be fortified with advancement of rules as if violators cannot escape committing a crime, at the cost of societal values.

Titto Varghese, Dr D Nivedhitha, Dr. Pradeep Krishnatray (2013) in the paper 'Teenagers' Usage of Social Networking Media in a South Indian State' find that the favourite activity for the Kerala teenagers even today in the Social Networking Era is watching television when they are alone at home. More time in internet is spent on Social Networking sites compared to the time they spend for educational needs. The gratifications obtained from the usage of social networking sites are factor analyzed to a four factor structure, namely Communication, Connectivity, Relaxation and User friendliness.

Narasimhamurthy N (2014) in the article entitled 'Cultural Impact and Gender on Indian Young Adults in Using Social Networking Sites' observes that In India social networking sites like Facebook, YouTube, Orkut are more popular sites and also become part of daily life of Indian adults. There is no doubt these social networking sites have provides employment, marketing, personal growth, sharing of information, and entertainment. Yet little know about the impact of culture and gender on Indian adults. The present study found that consistently interdependent self-construal can predict the four motives for Indian young adults to use social networking sites: socialization, entertainment, self-status seeking and information seeking. The study also found that the gender difference in information seeking and self-status seeking; with male adults being higher in self-status seeing and female adults higher in information seeking.

Nishi Misra , Shivani Dangi , Sanaya Patel (2015) in their study entitled 'Gender Differences in Usage of Social Networking Sites and Perceived Online Social Support on Psychological Well Being of Youth' indicated a negative relationship between the usage of social networking sites and the psychological well-being while positive relationship existed between online perceived social support and psychological wellbeing. Certain gender differences were also found among the variables like perceived social support and attraction towards social networking sites.

Ramaswamy Velmurugan (2015) in the study entitled 'Implications of Social Media Among Working Women in Coimbatore(Wrt Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Skype, LinkedIn and Whatsapp) observes that women are much more active than men across major social media platforms such as Facebook,

Twitter, YouTube, Skype, LinkedIn and WhatsApp. Women have stronger attachment towards social network. They send aspirational messages which results in negative impact at times. Due to this risk, the users may cause problems. Such as breach of privacy that is unauthorized use or distribution or disclosure of personal information like medical records, sexual preferences, and financial status. Other's such as Cyber stalking which involves following a person's movements across the Internet by posting messages (sometimes threatening) on the bulletin boards frequented by the victim, entering the chat-rooms frequented by the victim, constantly bombarding the victim with emails. In general, the harasser intends to cause emotional distress and has no legitimate purpose to his communications.

Geetika Shree (2016) in her Ph. D. thesis entitled 'An Empirical Study of Effects of Online Social Networking on Well-being of Indian Users ' observes that firstly, there is a positive relationship between Facebook usage and communicative virtues that form ones well-being. Secondly, out of the two independent variables (Attitude towards Facebook & Facebook Intensity) users' Attitude Towards Facebook is positively predicting the communicative virtues online and not the Facebook Intensity of users. Thirdly, amongst the gender differences, Facebook intensity of users, exhibition of tolerance of disagreement and Trust viii significantly differ amongst men and women on Facebook. The results also show that Facebook Intensity is higher in the younger generation (18-24, 25-34yrs) as compared to the older ones (35-44yrs) and exhibition of empathy and reciprocal communication is found to be higher amongst the older generation (35-44yrs) as compared to the younger lots.

Jesse Fox & Jennifer J.Moreland (2016) in their jointly written article entitled 'The dark side of social networking sites: An exploration of the relational and psychological stressors associated with Facebook use and affordances' observe that although Facebook users often experience negative emotions, they feel pressured to access the site frequently due to the fear of missing out and to keep up with relationship maintenance demands.

Report of the Internet and Mobile Association of India (2016) says that for many connected users in India, access to the Internet is primarily for accessing social media networks. 66% of the 180 million Internet users in urban India regularly access social media platforms. The most popular activities on social media include maintaining one's own virtual profile on the likes of Facebook and Twitter, posting and sharing an update as well as replying to something a friend has posted. While college students (33%) form the largest demographic of active social media users in India, working women and non-working women register just 7% and 11% respective share in that user base.

Hajra Waheed, Maria Anjum, Mariam Rehman, and Amina Khawaja (2017) in their jointly written paper entitled 'Investigation of user behavior on social networking sites' find that Social networking sites (SNS) are used for social and professional interaction with people. Social networking sites (SNS)

are virtual communities that allow people to interact and connect with each other by making profiles and sharing and uploading of photos and statuses. The use of SNS is not only a mere trend, but has become part of every person's life. This is evidently shown by the many millions of users of SNS, and with every passing day, the number is increasing.

Dr. Savita Gupta & Liyaqat Bashir (2018) in Social Networking Usage Questionnaire: Development and Validation in an Indian Higher Education Context find that social networking usage can be decomposed into four factors: academic; socialization; entertainment and informativeness. Social media allow students to get together outside the class to collaborate and exchange ideas about their assignments and projects. Social networking and media can provide rich tools for teaching innovation and compiling ways to engage students effectively.

Objectives of the Study
1. To explore the various means of recreation of the modern Indian women
2. To highlight their accessibility to the advanced means of communication
3. To brood over their inclination to various networking sites
4. To find out the popular networking sites among the women
5. To attempt to find out the causes of their over inclination to the networking sites
6. To enumerate the effects of the excessive use of the networking sites by the women
7. To study the positive and negative impact of use of social networking sites on family life of the Indian women

Formulated Hypothesis
1. Everyone in India is eager to join the globalized world
2. Networking social sites help the people link up with the people belonging to the four corners of the world
3. There is a mania of being active on the various networking social sites for the various purposes in India
4. The use of such sites is not limited only to men but open to women and children as well
5. Women go for the social network sites for various purposes- the girls use them for playing games; the adolescents use them for getting study material and for entertainment through movies and games; the teenagers and young girls use them for the sake of linking themselves with the people around the world; the housewives use them for the sake of entertainment; the working women use them for the sake of keeping in touch with friends, relatives and friends.
6. Women's being active on the social networking sites detaches them from the fulfillment of liabilities
7. Social networking sites are a threat to the long age Indian traditions and family and social values
8. Excessive use of the social networking sites by the women both in cities and villages makes them anti-traditional

9. The excessive use of social networking sites is responsible for the increasing rate of divorce cases, corruption, anomie among the women

Methodology
Drawn from the personal observation of the girls and women of the various sections, and written primarily on the basis of the secondary data collected from the various modern sources of supplying information on the theme and subject, the paper is a theoretical study aiming at producing the scenario of the modern Indian urban and rural women who are in the grip of the various social networking sites. The study is relevant as at present, with the exemption of a very few, most of the women in the country are active on one or the other social networking site for various purposes. The method adopted for the study includes personal observation of the girls and women using the various social networking sites, brooding over the issue in the context of the Indian social system, deciding to study the issue scientifically, making a search for the sources that supplied the author the required stuff to prepare a draft, selection of the articles on the issue, going through the selected related literature, content analysis keeping into consideration the various aspects associated with the problem to be studied, applying own observations and perceptions to the contents, interpretation of the contents in the context of the Indian society that seems to be facing a severe threat because of the excessive use of the various social networking sites by the women of different age groups. With an inductive and analytical approach, the study was made, and for the sake of keeping up the scientific spirit of work, all the steps of social research, particularly the ones suggested for the theoretical studies were adopted and exercised. An objectivity was observed throughout.

Findings, Summing Up and Suggestions
1. The modern Indian woman wants to be free from the image of being helpless or dependent
2. She is eager to pace with the world by joining the various ongoing social processes that can help and encourage her to prove her worth in all the fields that have been limited only to man
3. The Indian woman has undergone several phases of existence through the Pre-vedic, Vedic, Medieval and Modern ages
4. At the prime of her existence, that is, in Pre-vedic and Vedic ages, she was free from the curse of gender discrimination, and that she was at liberty to do and say as she pleased
5. The medieval period with the arrival of the Mughals in India, imposed several restrictions upon her narrowing her existence to the four walls of house where she had to confine herself as a child-birth giving machine and a house maid spending all her time in cleaning, washing, cooking and looking after the children and the other members of the family.
6. The urban and the rural Indian women differ in their life style and modes of living
7. The modern Indian woman is lurking between traditions and modernity

8. The rural woman finds herself more inclined to the long age traditions than the urban woman
9. In the modern age, both the rural and the urban women irrespective of caste, creed or religion, are in the grip of modernity and westernization
10. The twenty first century has several blisses to the women
11. Advanced communication technology has brought about a revolution in the life of the Indian women
12. Owing to an easy accessibility to the social networking sites, more than 50% of the women in the country spend their time on various social sites
13. Some of the purposes of using networking sites are- being in touch with friends, relatives and family members; seeking recreation through online youtube channels and movies; making online shopping; making public interaction etc.
14. The popular networking sites, apps and tools with the urban Indian women are- facebook, whatsapp, twitter, business sites, employment sites, knowledge stuff supplying sites and other entertainment sites
15. The popular networking apps with the rural women are whatsapp and facebook.
16. The information communication technology has changed the scenario of the traditional Indian society
17. The use of Android phone is made by more than 70% of the women in India
18. From the women belonging to the royal families to the women working as maids or labourers are now maintaining mobiles and android phones and find the various networking sites quite accessible
19. Increasing sense of awareness, inclination to modernity, impact of westernization, sense of liberty and equality, individualism and readiness to go against the traditions are some of the causes of the modern Indian woman's inclination to networking social sites
20. The effects are both positive and negative. They are positive as they make her free from her isolations by keeping her engaged in chat, watching movies, making online shopping and in exchanging pleasantries and ideas through the various social sites like facebook
21. The worst negative result of the use of the social networking sites by women is their falling a prey to depression and their indifference to their family obligations.

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