

# IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE LIFESTYLE OF YOUTH

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Humans are naturally very social beings and the way we communicate is vital aspect of our lives. More importantly, communicating over long distances is something that people once struggled with, but thanks to recent advances in technology, it is much easier for us today. Where we once relied on smoke signals and even carrier pigeons, we have many more options now. During the 1800s, there was a rush among inventors to develop newer and better ways to allow long distance and mass communication. In the 1800's there was an explosion in the ways we communicated globally. Telegraphs, radio and telephones made a dramatic difference in how information can be conveyed. The continuous search for the innovative ways of communication lead us to the development of different social media. In recent years we have seen another boom in communication. With new technology we are now able to communicate across the globe (and even into space) almost instantaneously.

Social media is the interaction among people in which they create share or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks, Govender, et al(2013). Social media depend on mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content. They introduce substantial and pervasive changes to communication between organizations, communities, and individuals, Megan A.Pumper et al(2011). The increased use of the Internet as a new tool in communication has changed the way people interact. Recently, a new means of online communication has emerged with its own set of idiosyncrasies. This new communication style occurs through the use of social networking sites.

## 2. BACKGROUND REVIEW

*Kyriaki et al (2013)* examines the relationship of Social Networking Site (SNS) problematic usage with personality characteristics and depressive symptomatology. A sample of 143 young adults in Greece varying from 18 to 34 years of age completed four questionnaires on personality characteristics, depressive symptomatology, problematic SNS usage and socio-demographic factors. Problematic SNS usage is significantly and positively related to depression and Neuroticism, while negatively associated with Agreeableness. However, problematic use of SNS is not related to Conscientiousness, Openness to Experience and Extraversion, although the latter was found to be negatively associated with depression. Collectively, personality variables, depression and daily average usage account for about 33% of the variance in predicting problematic SNS usage.

In contrast to previous research findings, age and gender are not found to be related to either problematic SNS usage or depressive symptomatology. However, place of residence is associated with Neuroticism and Problematic Use, with participants from rural areas exhibiting higher scores than participants from urban areas. Finally, Neuroticism and the average daily use of SNS have been proven to be good predictors of problematic SNS usage. *Bahire et al (2014)* compared real-life friendships with friendships formed through SNS, in fulfilling the attachment needs of students at the English Preparatory School at the Eastern Mediterranean University. It was designed as a case study of English Preparatory School students at the Eastern Mediterranean University during the 2011 academic year. Of the 600 total students enrolled in the course, 100 (n = 77 female, 23 male) were selected using random sampling to participate in the study. They found statistically significant differences between attachments formed in real life and those formed through SNS.

Therefore, they determined that SNS play a significant role in satisfying the need for attachment among young people who are at the outset of their tertiary education. *P. Raghavendra et al (2013)* investigated the effectiveness of tailored one-on-one support strategies designed to facilitate social participation of youth with disabilities through the use of the Internet for social networking. Methods Eighteen youth aged 10–18 years with cerebral palsy, physical disability or acquired brain injury received support, training and assistive technology at their home to learn to use the Internet for building social networks. The Canadian Occupational Performance Measure (COPM) and Goal Attainment Scale (GAS) were used to evaluate objective changes in performance and satisfaction. Interviews showed that youth were positive about the benefits of hands-on training at home leading to increased use of the Internet for social networking. The Internet could be a viable method to facilitate social participation for youth with disabilities.

### 3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study has taken overall objectives of identifying the factors of social networking sites and its impacts on youth and examining whether the social networking sites influence the lifestyle of youth.

#### A. General objective

To identify impact of Social Networking Sites on youth in Chennai in Tamil Nadu.

#### B. Specific objectives

- To find out the usage of Social Networking sites among youth.
- To identify how Social Networking Sites benefitted to the youth.
- To know whether there is any negative effects on the personal life of youth by Social Networking Sites.
- To know the positive impacts created by Social Networking Sites among youth.
- To identify how Social Networking sites affect the lifestyle of youth.

### 4. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

#### A. Research design

In this study, design adopted is descriptive which includes surveys and fact- finding enquires of different kinds. The major purpose of descriptive research is to give a description of the state of affairs as it exists at present, because the researcher has no control over the variables and can only report as to what had happened or what is happening. It also attempts to discover the causes even when they cannot control the variables. The descriptive research design is considered as the ideal design to examine the impact of social networking sites on youth

#### B. Sampling

The researcher interviewed the young people both male and female. Samples are selected from students of different colleges and higher secondary schools and youth working in various companies and offices in Chennai in Tamil Nadu on the convenience of the researcher, because of the difficulties in meeting them and getting their co-operation. According to Leon G Schiff man& Leslie Lazar Kanuk, "Stratified selection cannot be executed unless the population members were identified with regard to the characteristics with which they are to be stratified." Since the present study is stratified on the basis of age, the sampling method in this study is stratified convenience random sampling. The sample size of the present study is determined to be 250 young people.

#### C. Source of data collection

For the purpose of this study, it was decided to collect the data with the help of a questionnaire. Structured random sampling method of questioning was adopted. The questionnaire was prepared on the basis of collected information and reviews about the social networking sites, youth and their lifestyle.

#### D. Collection of data

In this study, the researcher used questionnaire method as the tool. All the questions are structured on the basis of fulfilling the objectives of the study. A total of 250 respondents were chosen for the study in this area.

#### E. Pilot study

The researcher before launching into the collection of data from the respondents, the pre-tests were done through personal interviews. So that the interviewer can, note the respondent's reaction and attitude which cannot otherwise to be obtained. The questionnaire was distributed to some college students in this area. In the light of the responses obtained statements which were found to be ambiguous were restructured, overlapping statements were removed, sequence of the statements were checked and comments of the respondents were noted.

#### F. Tools of analysis

After collecting the primary data the researcher verified the collected data. Afterwards the data were edited and coded and master table summarizing all the collected information and graph showing the frequencies of responses towards information was prepared. Statistical tools like Man Whitney U test, Kruskal Wallis test, Jonckheere-terpstra test and Chi-Square test has been conducted to test the hypothesis.

### 5. HYPOTHESIS

The following hypothesis has been formulated to test some attributes of the respondents.

**H1:** There is no relationship between gender and positive impacts created by Social Networking sites.

**H2:** There is no relationship between marital status of youth and positive impact created by Social Networking Sites.

**H3:** There is no relationship between area youth live and positive impacts created by Social Networking Sites.

**H4:** There is no relationship between time spend in Social Networking Sites and the lifestyle of youth.

## 6. ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

### a) Starting day with SNS

The participants of this study were asked how they start the day with SNS.

**Table I. Starting day with SNS**

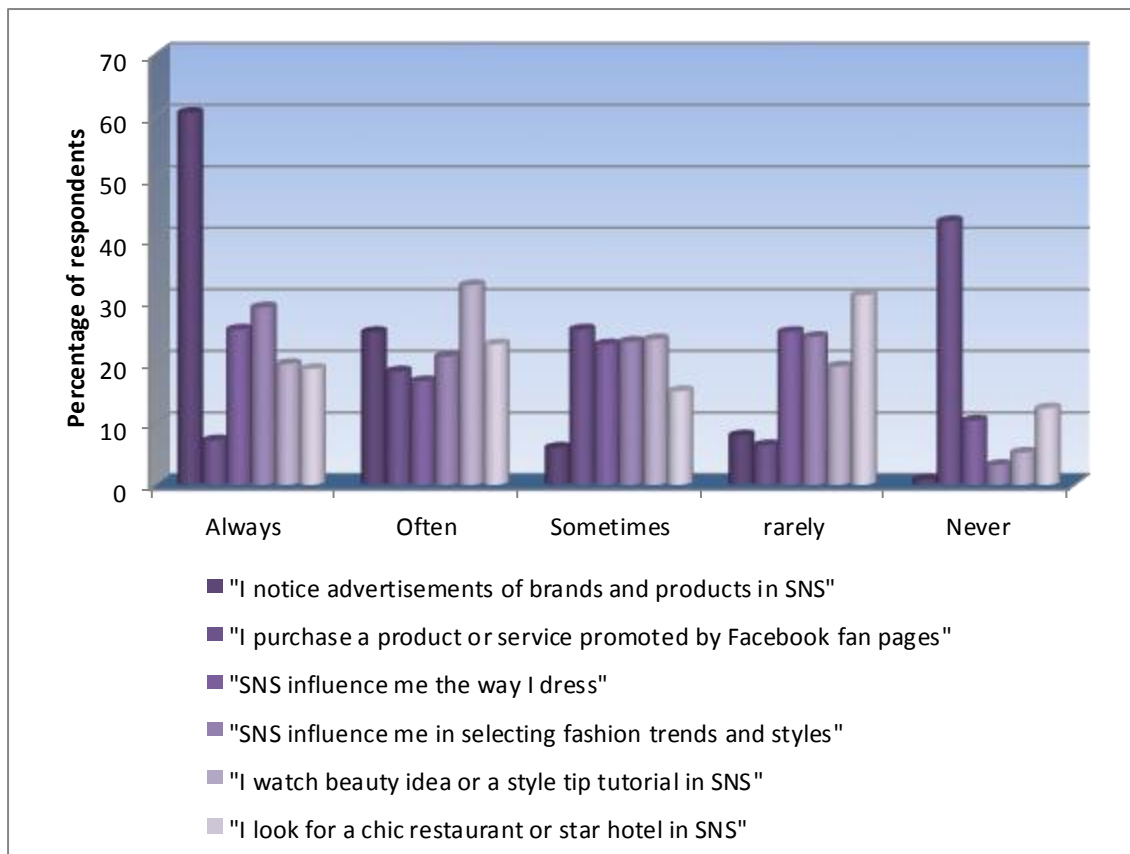
Activity	Responses	
	N	Percent
Updating the profile status	42	12.0%
Making comment on your friends post	49	14.0%
Playing game	22	6.3%
Listening music or video	54	15.4%
Check out what is going on with my friends	74	21.1%
None	109	31.1%
Total	350	100.0%

It is clear from the table I that most of them do not have a habit of starting the day with any of these activities on social networking sites. Among the 350 responses from 250 participants, 109 (31.1%) shows that they do not have a habit of starting the day with any of these activities on SNS. 74 (21.1%) of them were starting their day with checking out what is going on with their friends.

### b) SNS and choosing brands, products, styles and trends

Participants of this study were asked different questions to know whether SNS influences their lifestyle in any way. They were asked to rate the extent to which they agree with six statements regarding advertisements of brands and products, purchase of product, dress styles, fashions, trends, style tip tutorials, restaurants or star hotels in SNS on a five point scale with one being strongly agree and five being strongly disagree.

**Figure. 1. SNS in choosing brands, products, styles and trends.**



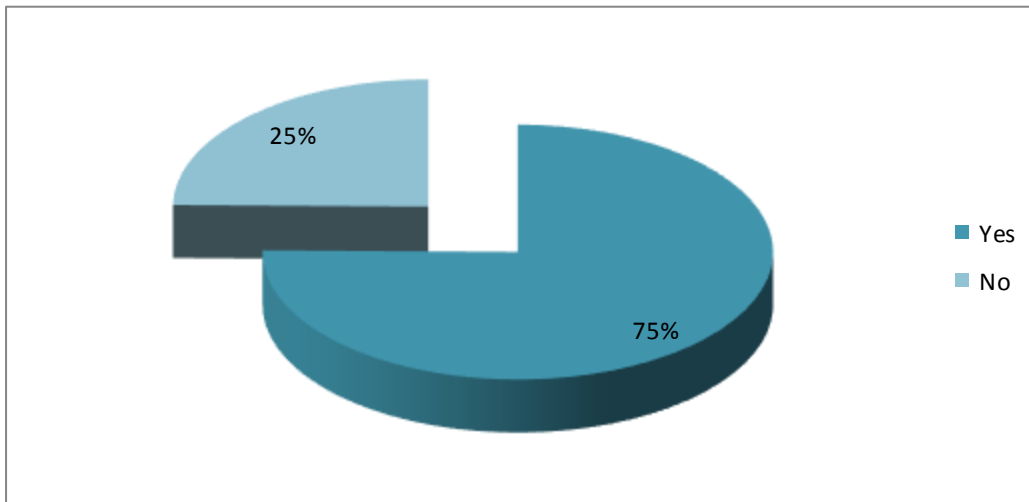
The above figure 1 participants are asked to rate the statement, "I notice advertisements of brands and products in SNS" 60.4% said "always", 24.8% "often", 6% "sometimes", 8% "rarely", .8% "never". When they asked to rate the statement "I purchase a product or service promoted by Facebook fan pages" 42.8% of them says that they never go for the product or service promoted by Facebook fan pages and 6.4% says "rarely". Among them, 25.2% were "sometimes" to the statement, 18.4% often go for the product and a 7.2% said that they always purchase the product promoted by Facebook fan pages.

Participants are asked to rate the statement, "SNS influence me the way I dress". Among the 250 respondents 25.2% of them said "always", 16.8% said "often", 22.8% said "sometimes", 24.8% were "rarely", and 10.4 said they never influenced by SNS in the way they dress. Again they were asked about fashion and trend with a statement, "SNS influence me in selecting fashion trend and style". Out of the 250 respondents, 28.8% they always influenced by SNS, and 20.8% were often, 23.2% were sometimes, 24% were rarely, 3.2% were never influenced by SNS in fashion, trend and style.

**c) Fan pages for brands and products**

The participants were asked whether they are member of fan pages for products or brands in SNS.

**Figure. 2. Fan pages for brands and products**

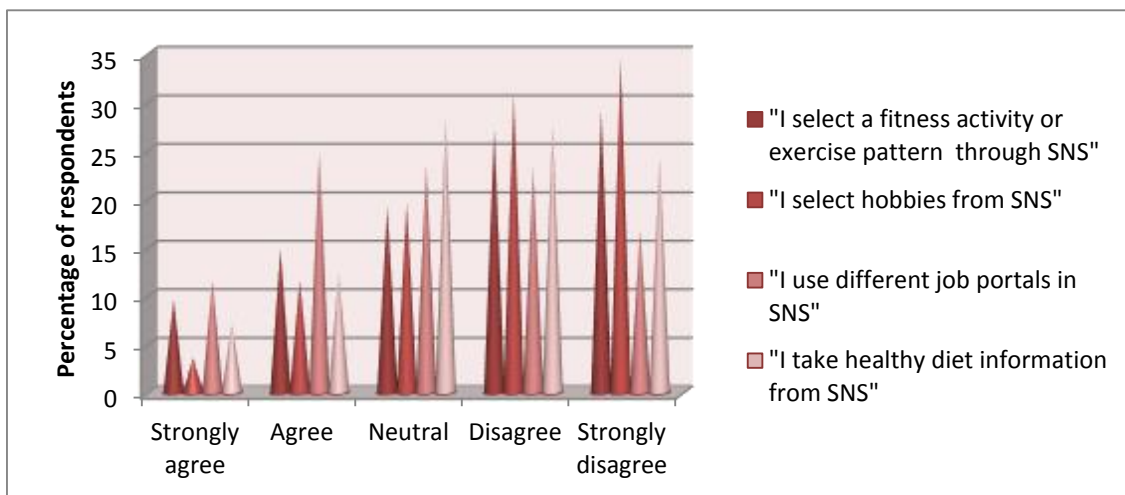


The above figure 2 consist of 250 respondents, 188 (75.2%) were members of Facebook fan pages and 62 (24.8%) were not member of any Facebook fan pages. Majority of the participants were members of Facebook fan pages.

**d) Fitness activity, hobbies, diet information, job portals through SNS**

Participants were given some statements for which they had to rate the extent to which they agree with the statement. The statements regarding selection of fitness activity, hobbies, diet information, searching job portals etc. through SNS on a scale of one to five, with one being strongly agree and the five being strongly disagree.

**Figure. 3. Fitness activity, hobbies, diet information, job portals through SNS**

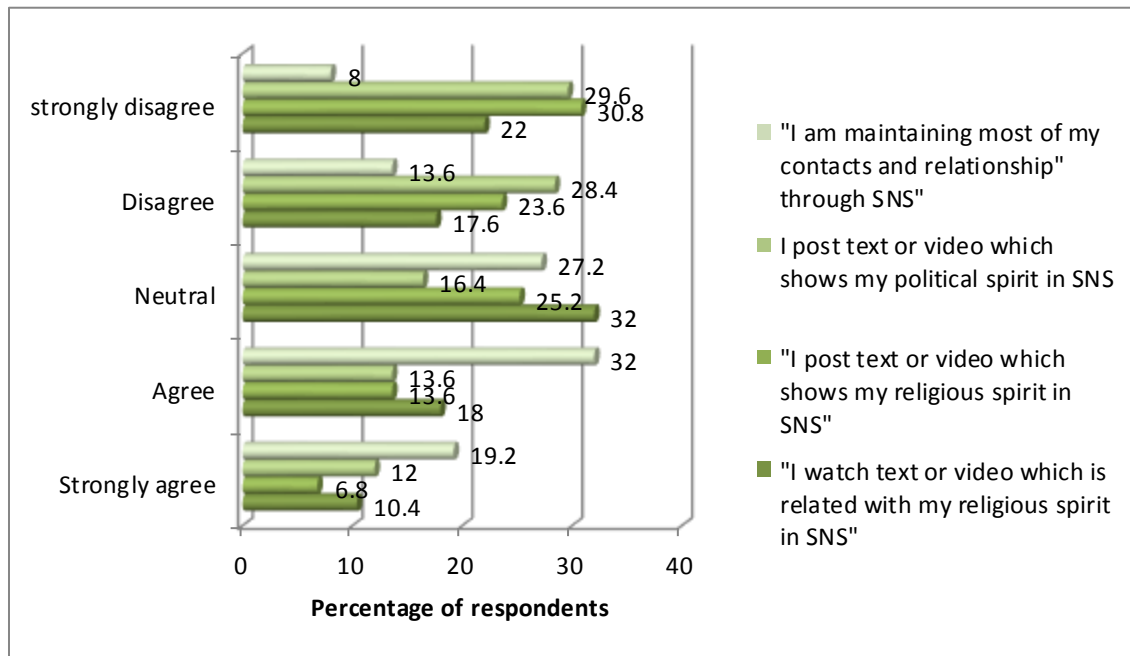


The above figure 3 analyses to the rate of extent to which they agree with the statement “I select a fitness activity or exercise pattern through SNS” 9.6% among the total respondents were strongly agreed, 14.8% were agreed, 19.2% were neutral, 27.2% were disagreed, 29.2% were strongly disagreed. Participants were asked to rate their opinion regarding the statement, “I select hobbies from SNS”. Among them, 3.6% were strongly agreed with the statement and 11.6% were agreed with the statement.19.6% were neutral and 30.8% were disagreed to the statement. The larger numbers of participants (34.4%) were strongly disagreed to the statement.

**e) Religious and political spirit and maintaining contacts through SNS**

Participants were given some statements for which they had to rate the extent to which they agree with the statements. The statements regarding watching and posting texts and videos which are showing their religious and political spirit and maintaining contacts through SNS on a scale of one to five, with one being strongly agree and the five being strongly disagree.

**Figure. 4 Religious and political spirit and maintaining contact through SNS**



The above figure 4 Participants were asked to rate their opinion regarding the statement, “I post text or video which shows my religious spirit in SNS”. Among them, 6.8% were strongly agreed with the statement and 13.6% were agreed with the statement.25.2% were neutral and 23.6% were disagreed to the statement. The larger numbers of participants (30.8%) were strongly disagreed to the statement.

**f) Relationship between time spend on SNS and impact on the lifestyle of youth**

**Hypothesis:** There is a relationship between time spend in social networking sites and the lifestyle of youth.

**Null Hypothesis:** There is no relationship between time spend in social networking sites and the lifestyle of youth.

**Table II. Relationship between time spend on SNS and lifestyle of youth**

	Parameter	High		Medium		Low		Total	
		Frequenc y	Per Cent	Frequenc y	Per Cent	Frequenc y	Per Cent	Frequenc y	Per Cent
Time spend	Do not access every day	2	4.9%	33	80.5 %	6	14.6 %	41	100 %
	Less than 10 mts	5	15.2 %	21	63.6 %	7	21.2 %	33	100 %
	10-30 mts	17	19.1 %	60	67.4 %	12	13.5 %	89	100 %
	30mts-1 hr	15	30%	32	64%	3	6%	50	100 %

	More than 1hr	5	13.5 %	31	83.8 %	1	2.7 %	37	100 %
	Total	44	17.6 %	177	70.8 %	29	11.6 %	250	100 %

The above Table II represents the cross tabulation over time spend in social networking sites and lifestyle of youth. Lifestyle includes factors like starting day with SNS, choosing brands products styles and trends, fan pages for brands and products, fitness activity, hobbies and diet information in SNS, religious and political spirit, trip and travel related information in SNS etc. From the table, a majority of 30 per cent of the respondents who were spending 30 minutes to one hour were found to have highly influenced by SNS in their lifestyle whereas only 13.5 per cent of the respondents who were spending more than one hour in SNS were found to be having higher impact created through Social Networking Sites. Among them, 19.1% of respondents who were spending 10 to 30 minutes in SNS, 15.1% of respondents who were spending less than 10 minutes, and only a 4.9% of respondents who don't access it every day were found to have higher influence on their lifestyle. In order to find whether the life style of youth were influenced by social networking sites a **Chi square test** was conducted by the researcher. The *p* value was found to **0.022** which is significant. *Since the value is significant the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Thus there is a relationship between time spend in social networking sites and lifestyle of youth.* The study reveals that youth who are spending 30 minutes to 1 hour in SNS is highly influenced by SNS in their lifestyle than others.

### 7. FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

This study presents the results of data analysis together with the findings in relation to hypothesis that were formulated for the purpose of investigation and also the suggestions based on the comments of respondents.

#### Findings of the study

- ✓ According to the details of this study, Social Networking Sites benefitted the youth in many ways. Most among the benefits are :
  - They were able to connect with existing friends (136)
  - They found it as a great way to enjoy (108)
  - They are able to link with prospective employers and recruiters.(82)
  - SNS enable them to show their talents and creativity (80)
  - It helps them to choose brands and products (74)
- ✓ Youth describes positive effects of SNS on their personal life than the negative effects. Majority of the participants says that, they can be more creative, more outgoing and more popular with SNS.
- ✓ Many of the respondents (21.2% say yes and 34.4% says sometimes to the statement) have been exposed to undesired image or content over the net through SNS. Majority of them exposed to the images related with sex over net through Social Networking Sites.
- ✓ Most of the respondents have got into websites which is dangerous or inappropriate. Even though they get into such websites, many of them do not think too much about it.
- ✓ Majority of the respondents (109) do not have a habit of starting their day with an activity in SNS. Even then 74 among them start their day with checking what is going on with their friends in SNS and 54 with listening music or watching a video in SNS.
- ✓ Most of the respondents always notice advertisements of brands and products in SNS. 75% of the respondents are members of Facebook fan pages. Among the total respondents, only a smaller portion is purchasing the product or service promoted by Facebook fan pages. Majority of the respondents are influenced by SNS in the way they dress.
- ✓ A larger portion of the respondents influenced by Social Networking Sites in choosing fashion, trend or style. Only a few respondents were having a habit of looking for a chic restaurant or star hotel in SNS. A smaller number of respondents were selecting an exercise pattern or fitness activity from SNS in their daily life.
- ✓ Many of the respondents (11.6% strongly agreed, 24.8% agreed, 23.6% neutral) using different job portals through SNS. A smaller number of respondents are taking diet information in their daily life through SNS. Many of the respondents watching or posting text or video which shows their religious and political spirit in SNS.
- ✓ Half of the respondents are maintaining their contacts and relationship through SNS. Majority of the respondents do not have a habit of searching for travel related information through SNS. But a smaller number of respondents are searching such information in SNS. Majority of the respondents shared that the negative review or bad experiences about the destination in SNS will change their travel decision.
- ✓ Most of the respondents upload photo or share experiences in Social Networking Sites after trip. Respondents who are spending 30 minutes to I hour in Social Networking Sites is highly influenced by SNS in their lifestyle than others.

## 8. SUGGESTIONS

Since the Social Networking Sites key spaces for young people's personal and social development, some more suggestions need to explore its full potentialities and to remove its drawbacks. In this chapter the research brings out some suggestions to improve the service of Social Networking Sites and to use Social Networking sites in a better way.

- ✓ Even though the scientists started to investigate the problems associated with overusing of Social Networking Sites recently, several ways of their solutions have been proposed. Since the loss of time is the major negative effect faced by youth in SNS, the time they spend on Social Networking Sites has to be controlled.
- ✓ Loss of privacy is another negative effect on the personal life of youth by Social Networking sites. In order to overcome this draw back, make sure that your privacy settings that limit access to who can view your online profile. Beyond this Social Networking Sites companies themselves has to develop some measures to prevent such problems.
- ✓ Social Networking Sites have to give restrictions in viewing or sharing of dangerous or inappropriate images or links of sites which are related with sex, crime and violence. Moreover the young people have to give an awareness of such problems and they have to be well educated with negative and positive impacts of Social Networking Sites.
- ✓ Explore the ways of Social Networking Sites to encourage the young people to build a value based new generation by sharing thoughtful messages or videos.
- ✓ Social Networking Sites already provide a platform for expressing individual's talents and creativity and to be recognized by the world. Improve this service with its maximum possibilities and the whole youth has to explore this opportunities.
- ✓ Social Networking Sites enables the people to raise their voice against social issues which is an important right of the people in a democratic society. Provide maximum possible ways for this service. All the youth should be aware of their right and explore the opportunities provided by Social Networking Sites in this respect.
- ✓ Provide a platform in Social Networking Sites to do something good for the society or for the welfare of the society. Encourage youth to do so and appreciate them in such activities.
- ✓ Since the lifestyle of youth is affected by Social Networking sites, the companies and brands can give their advertisements in SNS in more attractive way to attract youth. Creative and talented youth can also utilize this opportunity by developing their own creative products and opening new fan pages for such sites in SNS.

## 9. CONCLUSION

In fact, Social Networking Sites are fast emerging as powerful and unparalleled tools to share information, shape opinions, connect people across domains and cultures, bring participation, and above all to communicate as never before. This is just the beginning. Social Networking Sites are still at a very nascent stage and communities across the world are just beginning to understand the potential of this medium to impact discourse and communication. This study viewed benefits, positive and negative impacts of social networking sites and how the social networking sites influence youth in their lifestyle. Social Networking Sites enable youth to raise their voice against social issues and share or upload information for the welfare of the society. Since Social Networking Sites can provide all the ways and means to develop personal and social aspects, the young people have to explore the potentialities of these sites. Even though it creates a few negative impacts on youth, we cannot think of a world without these sites today. So, corrective and preventive measures should be taken towards these negative effects and the young people should be well educated and must have proper awareness regarding such problems of Social Networking Sites. Social Networking Sites influence the lifestyle of youth so that the brands and companies can exploit the space of Social Networking Sites to create loyalty among youth. If the Social Networking Sites promote a healthy life style through its posts, videos and messages, that will help to develop a healthy young generation.

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