## **Impact of Social Networking Sites on Society**

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#### **Abstract**

Social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter are amongst the most popular destinations on the web. No doubt in some cases this has contributed to Internet Addiction Disorder, but have they on the whole had a positive effect in our lives? Some believe that the benefits provided by social network sites such as Facebook have made us better off as a society and as individuals, and that, as they continue to be adopted by more diverse populations, we will see an increase in their utility. Anecdotal evidence of positive outcomes from these technologies — such as political activities organized via Facebook or jobs found through LinkedIn — is well-known, but now a growing corpus of research on social networks sites supports this view too. Social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter and MySpace are examples of communication tools available online. With proliferation of social networking online comes impact on society; a difference in what people do and how they do it. Changes in society are simultaneously useful and negative and this is the case with the impact of online social networking. This paper aims to look at the positive effect that interaction through social networking sites has on today's society in relation to the modern media concept of greater interaction.

### **Keywords**

Social Networking, positive effects, pros and cons, Changes in Society, crime, improve relationship

#### I. INTRODUCTION

Social Networking Sites (SNS - Facebook, Myspace, ibibo etc.) are, in one way, great for unity. They at the very basic level, help you to stay in contact with people, especially, for example, friends from home while you're away at university, and vice versa. They also allow you to allow you to celebrate and remember past experiences (photos of school proms or grad balls). However, in some ways they help to perpetuate divisions between people and even within groups of friends, marginalizing some people. For example, a wall post about the hilarity of a drunken friend being thrown out of a nightclub which receives several comments from other people who were present, can be quite isolating to members of the group who were not present, and are therefore left out of the in-joke.

SNS can also both overcome and perpetuate divisions between wider groups. There are currently, or have been at one time, several quite radical groups on Facebook (anti-Islam groups, misogynistic anti-women groups, etc.) and these obviously help to foster dislike and even hatred of certain social groups. Clearly, when these views are being widely disseminated through the medium of SNS, they do have the potential to have a very negative impact on society.

However, on the other hand, some groups and movements found on SNS can have a positive (or at least a neutral) impact. An obvious example would be the Facebook movement to get Rage against the Machine to the 2009 Christmas #1 chart position in the UK. That is a very obvious example of how SNS are having a very big impact, and that they can sometimes be used to exact change. Obviously, this didn't change laws or stop wars, but it is perhaps a taster of what grassroots movements on SNS can do.

SNS cannot necessarily affect our society in huge ways, but they do have the potential to have an impact... Let's just hope they are used for good, rather than to help spread hatred.

### II. METHODOLOGY

The best way is to go to the grass root level. We have used questionnaire with some closed ended and some open ended questions. Stratified samples of different persons in Haryana and Punjab were collected to understand the impact of Social Networking Sites in society. The data collection has been done in primary form by the investigators. The size of the sample is 150.

#### III. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Various responses to the questions were statistically studied and then analyzed. Some of the important findings were as follows:

- As expected, almost everyone believes that Social Networking Sites have positive impacts on society.
- Almost 99% people of society in the age group of 15 to 30 yrs surf internet.
- Ratio of male and female using internet is 50%-50%.
- The age distribution of internet users is as following:

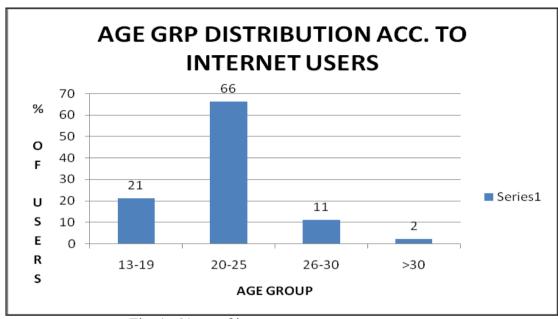


Fig. 1. %age of internet users acc. to age group

Out of those who surf internet, 94% people are aware about the concept of social networking sites.

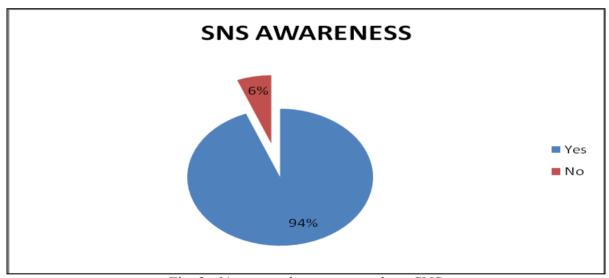


Fig. 2. %age people awareness about SNS

- 90% people have accounts on social networking sites (from those who are aware about social networking sites)
- Facebook is the leading social networking sites with maximum no. of accounts as compared to orkut, twitter and others.

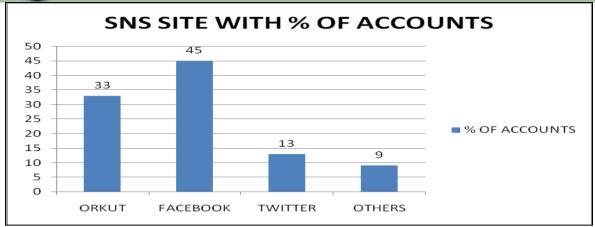


Fig. 3. SNS with % of Accounts

• Facebook is the most popular Social networking site preferred by 83% users, followed by orkut and twitte

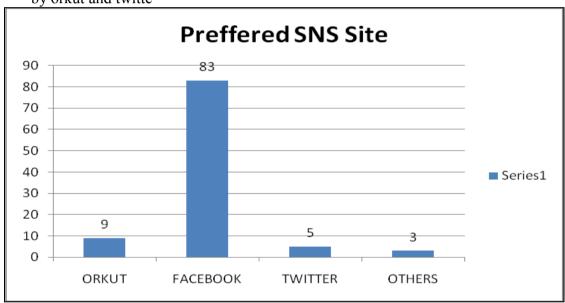


Fig. 4. Most Preffered SNS Site

- According to the survey 62% users surf the social networking sites from home, 27% from institute/office and only 6% from cyber café.
- 60% of college/institutes have imposed ban on using social networking sites in premises, whereas only 40% institutions/colleges allow the access of social networking sites.
- 39% users agree that these social sites have negative impact on teenagers and 61% agree that it helps in making friends and maintaining relationship.

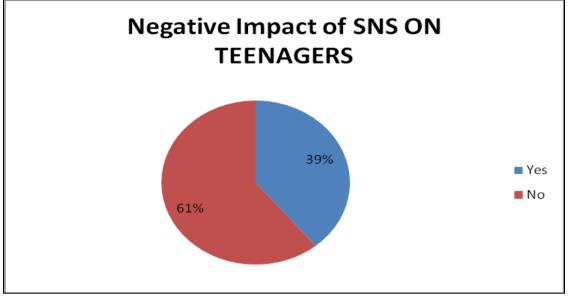


Fig. 5. Negative Impact 'As' (in %age of respondents)

- Social networking sites are primarily used for:
  - ✓ Make new friends (25%)
  - ✓ Get in touch with old friends (49%)
  - ✓ Sharing files (upload photos & videos)
  - ✓ Create groups

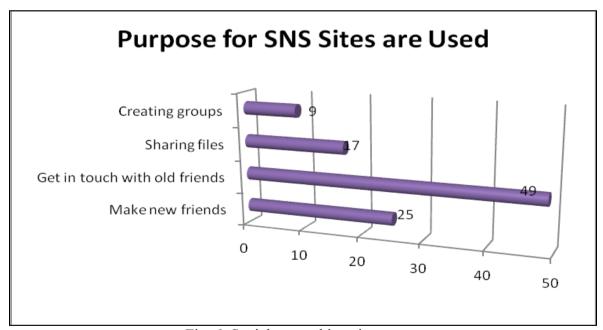


Fig. 6. Social networking sites usage

• As users are aware about the negative impacts of social networking sites. They believe that the most harmful effect of social negative site is that it makes the user tensed. The other negative impacts are evident in the chart given below.

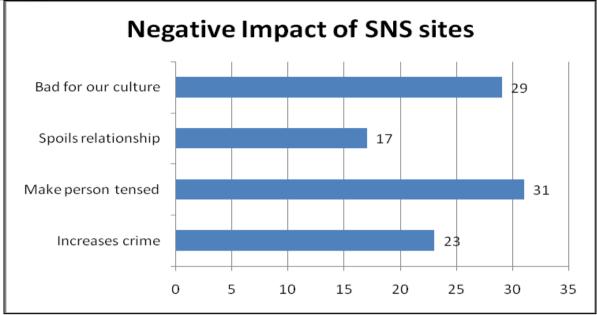


Fig. 7. Negative impact of SNS

• In spite of all the above negative impacts of social networking sites on society, 82% users says that social networking sites should not be banned. As YouTube, twitter and other websites are banned in China.

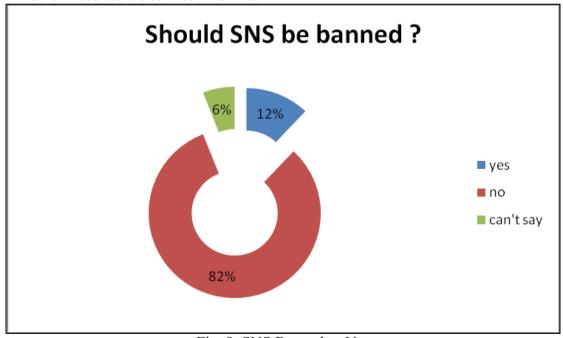


Fig. 8. SNS Banned or Not

- In response to the question asked why social networking sites should be banned the users stated the following reasons in support to their answers.
  - ✓ Spoiling the society and culture
  - ✓ Harmful for national security
  - ✓ Effect students study
  - ✓ Misused by bad elements of the society

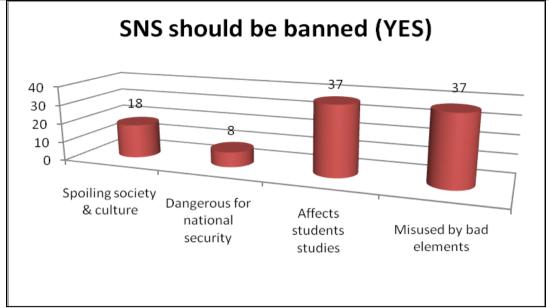


Fig. 9. Why SNS should be Banned

- In the view of 12% of the users, the social networking sites should not be banned as these sites are
  - ✓ Useful for students
  - ✓ Useful for maintaining relationship
  - ✓ Useful for sharing files and information.

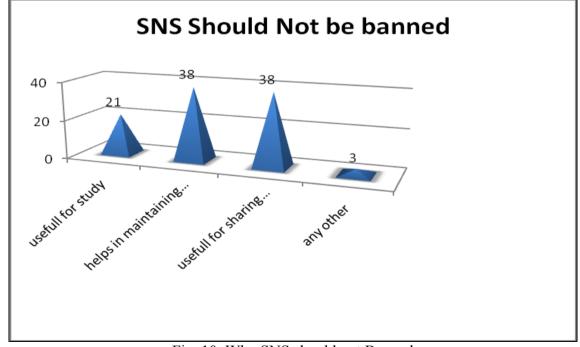


Fig. 10. Why SNS should not Banned

# IV. CONCLUSION

TODAY, WE are flooded with numerous social networking sites on the Internet like Orkut, Facebook etc. These social networking sites create a virtual world with the opportunities for making friends, chatting, sharing moments etc.

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We see variety of people on these sites. We have freedom to categorize them, freedom to pick and choose them as our friend, as we do in our real life. But there is a big difference; we do not actually meet them.

Nevertheless, these virtual friends provide us with a platform where we can, without hesitation, share our feelings, which otherwise we would not have discussed face to face.

Moreover, in today's fast world, we have paucity of time; these sites furnish us with flexibility of time. We can contact our friends at our convenience and vice-versa.

Also, these sites breach the regional, national, cultural, social boundaries for making friends, knowing them, understanding their culture, tradition and providing us the opportunity for cultural synthesis.

However, the above said depicts only one side of the coin. If we are surfing on these social networking sites and putting our personal details on it, there is a chance of its misuse. In the past, we have heard of numerous abuses on these sites like morphing of photographs etc.

Also, most of the information put on the social networking sites is fake, concocted or half truths. While going through these information's we feel annoyed on one hand and also develop the same habit of posting misleading information on the other. This way it adds negatively to socio-psychological behavior of the human being. The people are getting addicted to these sites day-by-day. The numbers of users is on the rise. This proves that eworld is taking its toll over the real world. The people are getting secluded. For the sake of numbers, they have lots of friends, but in reality they are devoid of good friends. This again, affects human behavior. People are becoming individualistic. Social values are vanishing.

In the end, we must reiterate that, we must not develop this opinion that social networking sites are inherently not good. Indeed, they are good, but we should take personal care that these sites should be used judiciously. We should post relevant information only and not very personal ones, so that, in future we do not regret it. Also, information posted should be authentic, so that it becomes a source of awareness not sensation. Finally, we must be vigilant that e-world cannot be a substitute for the real world. So, we need to learn to respect the real people...and real life.

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