

Influence of Social Networking Sites on Youth of Jammu Region, J&K, India.

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Abstract:

Over the past few years, technology has advanced at a very fast pace and internet has become an inseparable part of our lives. Along with internet came social media, which is used by everyone, especially youth. Social media has created both significant new challenges and exciting opportunities. However, frequent usage of social media often has behavioral and psychological effects on the youth which may be beneficial or harmful for them. In addition to providing information and being a source of entertainment for many people, social media has some disadvantages as well. Addiction to social media is a major cause of concern along with cyber crime and various health problems. The present study was conducted to test the impact of social networking sites on the youth and various problems associated with it.

Key Words: Social networking sites; Social Media; Youth; Jammu; Influence.

Date of Submission: 11-07-2020

Date of Acceptance: 27-07-2020

I. INTRODUCTION

Social network services are defined as 'web based services' which allow individuals to construct a public or semi public profile within a bounded system, communicate with users and view the pages and details provided by other users within the system (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). 'Six Degrees' was the first social networking site to be launched (founded by Andrew Weinreich in May 1977), that has paved way for present day social networking sites like Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter etc. (Bedell, 1998)). Facilities available on internet are just like a big ocean which contain countless options and it is entirely up to the youth while scanning this big water body what to pick up, pearls or pebbles as both exist in plenty.

Social media has brought both good and bad aspects into the lives of the young. Although, the use of internet by youth is a burning need of the time, social networking sites have created a very strong impact on the thinking and working of youth.

It may take months and years researching to collect desired material for any kind of work but with the help of social networking sites, things get completed within hours and minutes. By using video conferencing and other visual communication platforms, suggestions, decisions, teaching, counseling and assessments etc. can be conducted effectively (Abhani, 2019). Social networking sites have also led to an increase in voter turnout in the elections as sometimes youngsters vote in elections by getting encouraged by their friends' posts. Some sites like Pinterest provide youth with creative and stimulating ideas and help them explore various images, GIFs and videos for their projects (Singh and Guruprasad, 2019).

Apart from being user friendly, social networking sites also provide an inexpensive way of keeping in touch with friends and relatives (Khurana, 2015) These sites help in communicating with each other, overcoming distress, studies, learning new skills, chatting, sharing videos and photos, entertainment, job opportunities and many more (Parvathy and Suchithra, 2015).

Social networking sites have both positive and negative impact on the minds of young people. They are getting addicted to these sites and spend a lot of time in useless activities and unnecessary chatting. Information shared is misused by some people. They suffer headaches, eye problems, postural deformities and insomnia. Fashion influencers on social networking sites have set up unrealistic beauty standards for youth due to which they fall prey to the vicious cycle of anorexia and bulimia. (News Article 2012) They may fall victim to cyber crime due to lack of privacy (Das and Shankar, 2011). Social media also serves as a vortex of false information and rumors which may prove harmful to the uninformed.

II. AIM OF THE STUDY

- To outline the usage of specific social networking sites by the youth.
- To study the reliability of the information received from social networking sites.
- To understand the pros and cons of social networking sites known by the youth.
- To observe the impact of social networking sites on the personal and professional life of the youth.

III. PROPOSITION OF THE STUDY

- Social Networking sites are regarded more of a hindrance as compared to their benefits if both the parameters are evaluated.
- The youth is rather more disposed towards fields of entertainment than gathering pertinent information derived sources.
- The involvement of youth is indiscernible in social gatherings due to over-indulgence in social networking sites.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study, involving the youth of Jammu region, incorporates both quantitative and qualitative approach to study the research objectives. Sampling has been done effectively and the tool employed to work on the data collection is particularly questionnaires constructed on Google forms; all questions were closed ended.

The survey was conducted for 119 students between the age group of 15-24 years. The technique used is the normative survey approach and evaluation, which is commonly used to explore opinions according to respondents that can represent a whole population. The survey is appropriate in this study because it enables the researcher in formulation of generalizations.

Sources of Data:

1. **Primary data:** Collected through questionnaire, discussions and interview schedules.
2. **Secondary data:** Collected from various journals, periodicals, websites and reports.

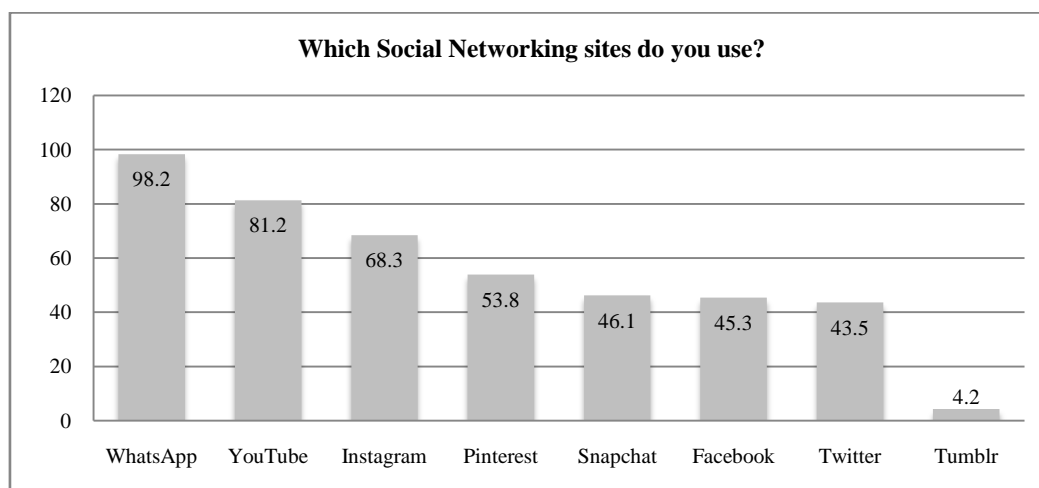
V. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This discussion is done based on the survey conducted, to analyze the impact of social media on youth. The questions asked and responses generated are illustrated below with usage of tools like bar and pie charts for easy comprehension.

The questions used for the purpose were taken from the Survey monkey and Ph.D programme of Manjunatha S. titled "A Sociological Study on the Influence of Social Networking Sites on the Interpersonal Relationships of College Students in Bangalore and Mysore Cities" (appendix) with slight modifications.

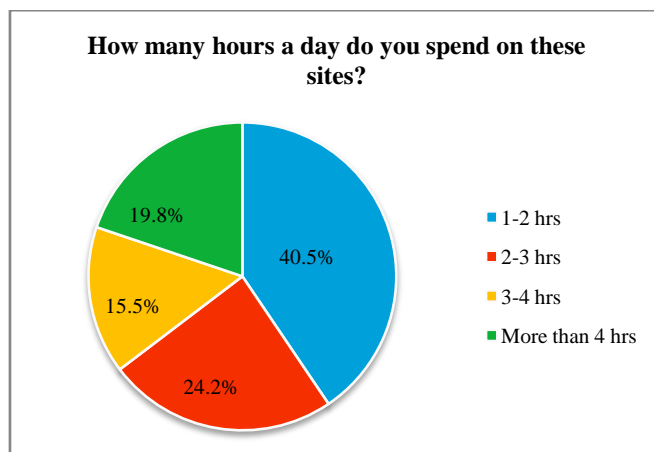
1) Social networking sites used

Maximum youngsters use WhatsApp (98.2%) followed by YouTube (81.2%), Instagram (68.3%), Pinterest (53.8%), Snapchat (46.1%), Facebook (45.3%) and Twitter (43.5%). Tumblr had the least percentage (4.2%) of users.



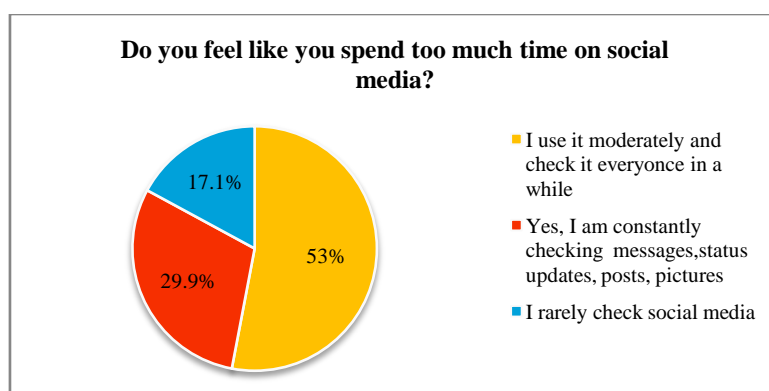
2) Time spent on social networking sites

A percentage of 40.5% spend 1-2hrs on social networking sites, 24.2% spend 2-3hrs, 19.8% spend more than 4 hrs and 15.5% spend 3-4hrs.



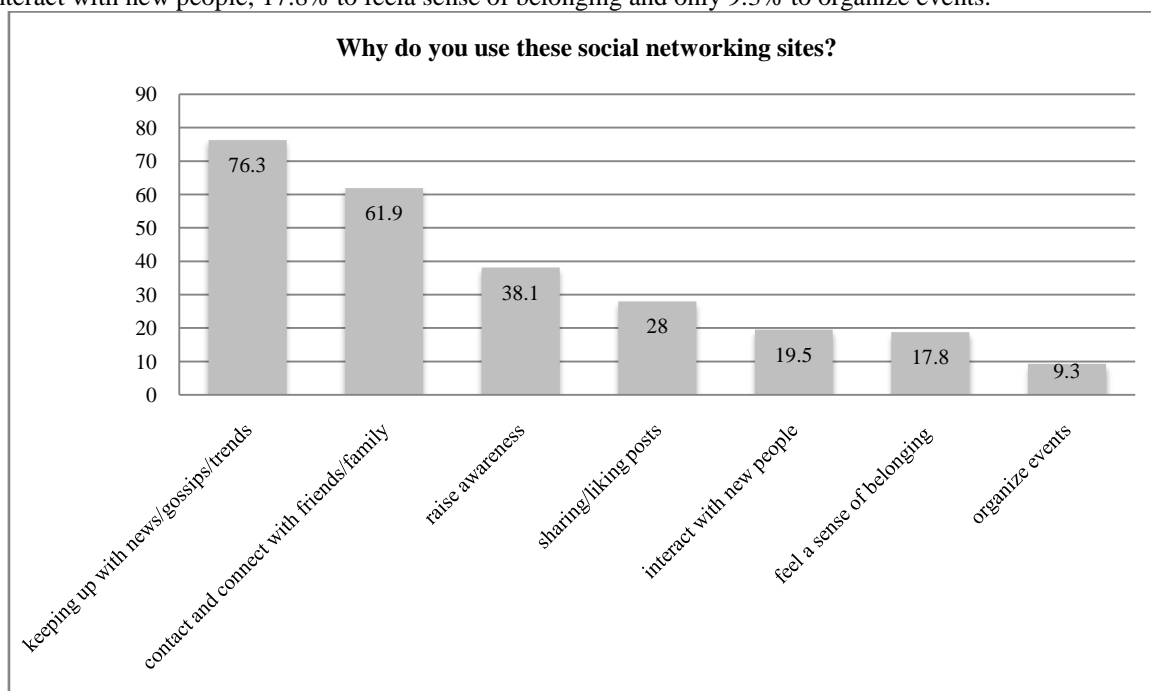
3) Self analysis on time spent on social networking sites

According to the survey 53% of youth use social networking sites moderately and check it every once in a while, 29.9% check social networking sites constantly and 17.1% check social networking sites rarely.



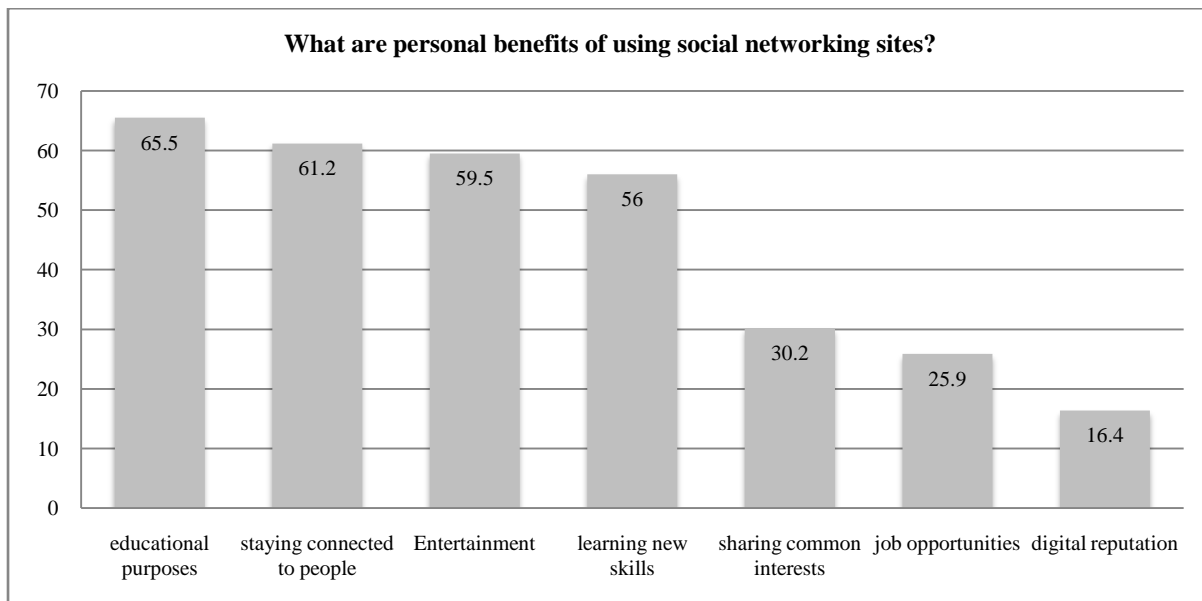
4) Purpose of using social networking sites

A maximum of 76.3% youth use social networking sites for keeping up with news/gossips/trends, 61.9% use it to contact and connect with friends/family, 38.1% to raise awareness, 28% for sharing/liking posts, 19.5% to interact with new people, 17.8% to feel a sense of belonging and only 9.3% to organize events.



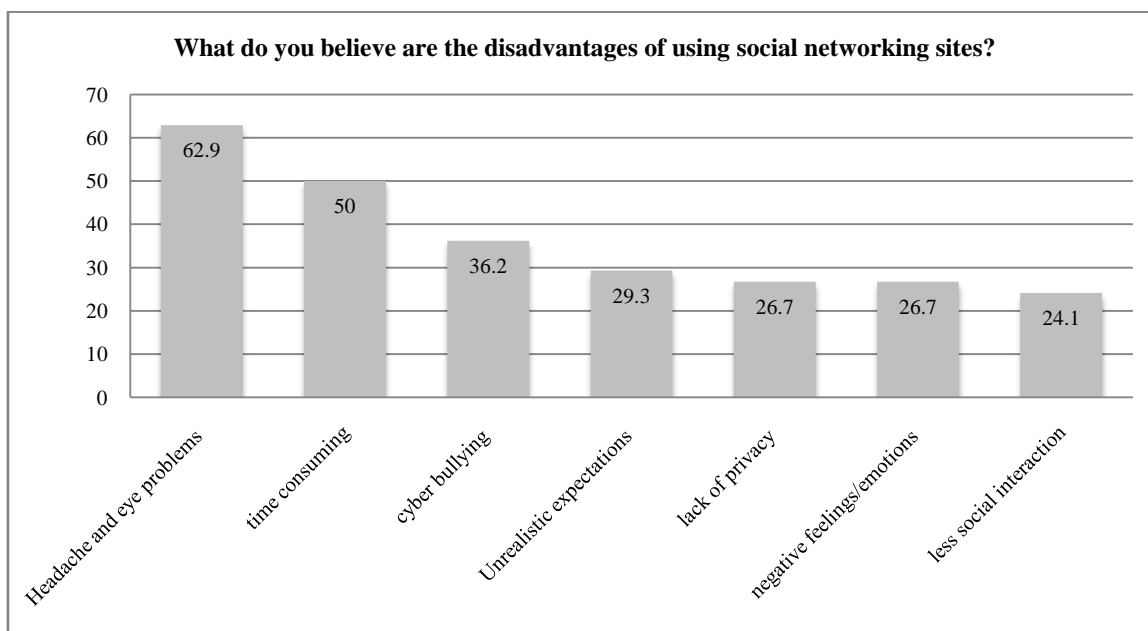
5) Personal benefits

The survey revealed that 65.5% of the youth use social networking sites for educational purposes, 61.2% use it for staying connected to people. Entertainment and learning new skills were chosen by 59.5% and 56% of youth respectively while sharing common interests, job opportunities and digital reputation were the benefits for 30.2%, 25.9% and 16.4% respectively.



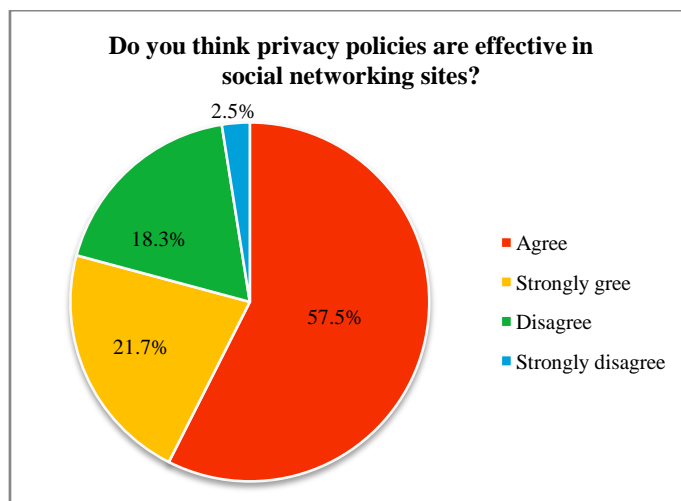
6) Disadvantages

Headache and eye problems was selected as a major disadvantage by 62.9% of the youth. 50% consider it as time consuming, 36.2% feel that cyber bullying is amongst the negative aspects. Unrealistic expectations was selected by 29.3% and lack of privacy and negative feelings/emotions shared a percentage of 26.7% each. Only 24.1% consider less social interaction as a drawback.



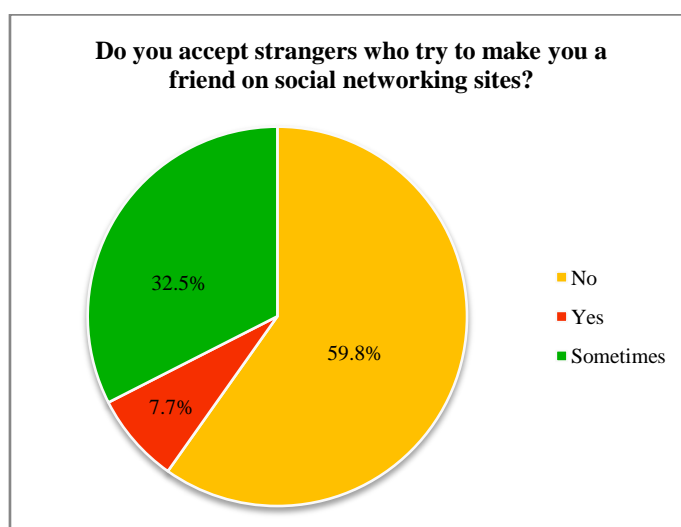
7) Efficiency of privacy policies

A high percentage of youth that is 57.5% agree that privacy policies are effective in social networking sites, 21.7% strongly agree, 18.3% disagree and 2.5% strongly disagree.



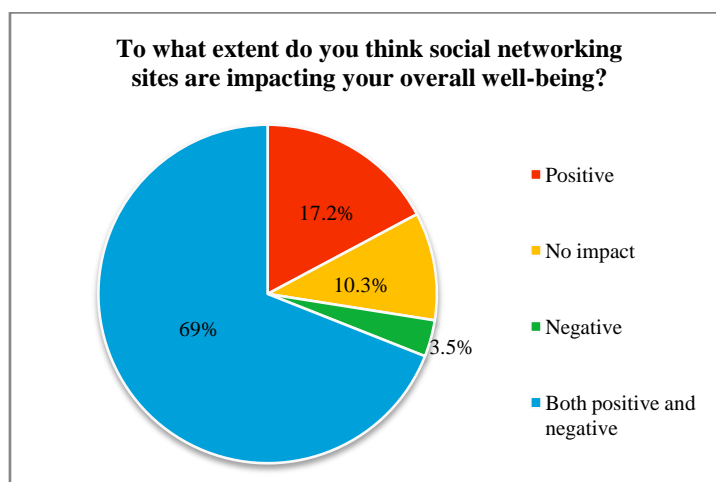
8) Accepting strangers' requests

59.8% of youth do not accept strangers' requests, 32.5% chose sometimes as their answer and 7.7% said yes.



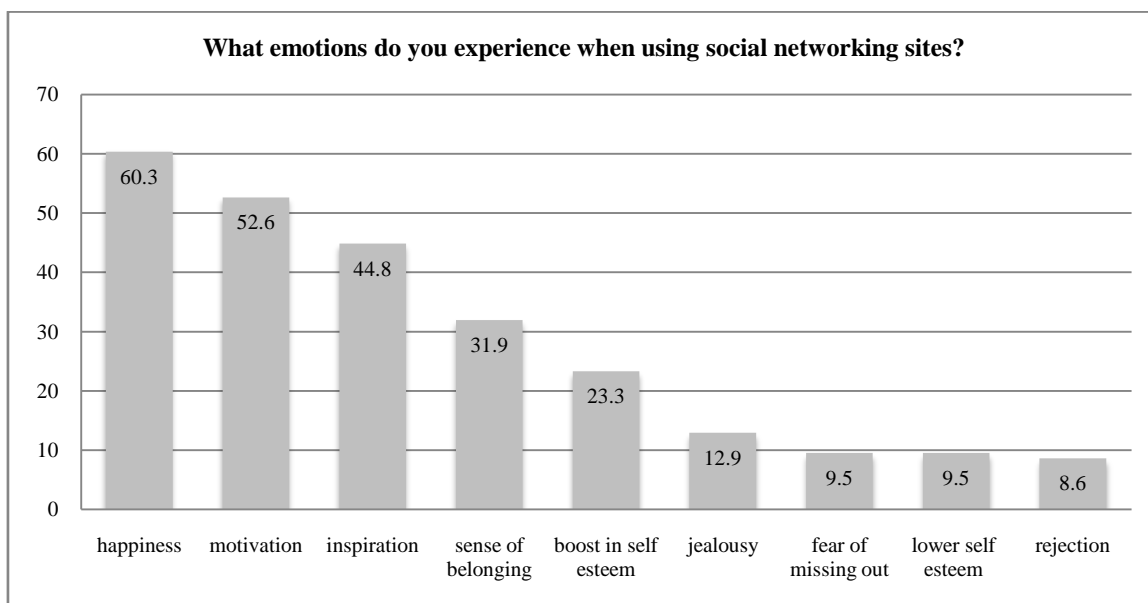
9) Impact on overall wellbeing

It was found that 69% of youth agree that social networking sites have both positive and negative impact, 17.2% agree to social networking sites having a positive impact, 10.3% to having no impact and 3.5% having a negative impact.



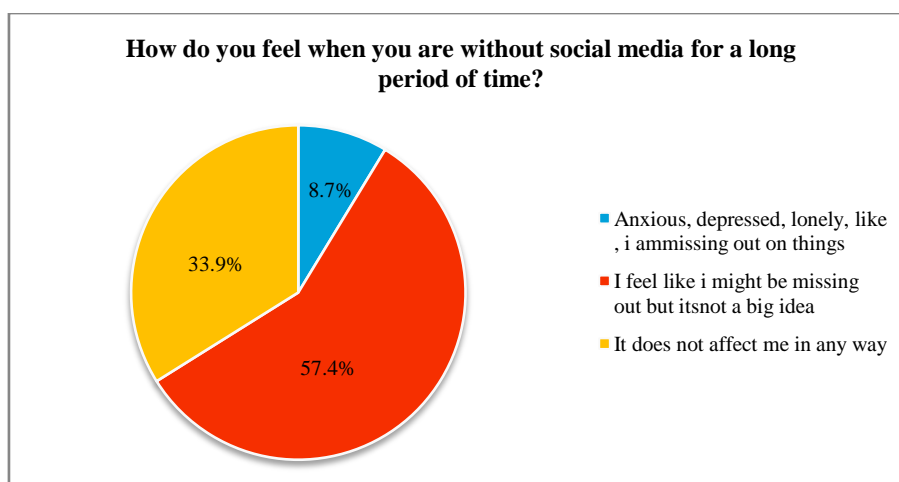
10) Emotions experienced

60.3% of the youth feel happiness, 52.6% feel motivated, 44.8% feel inspired, 31.9% feel a sense of belonging, 23.3% feel a boost in self esteem, 12.9% feel jealous, 9.5% was shared by both fear of missing out and lower self esteem and 8.6% feel rejection.



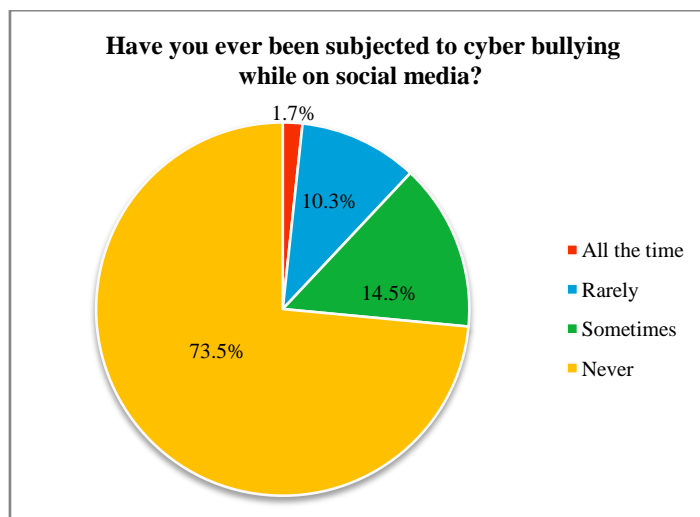
11) State of mind without social networking sites

57.4% of the youth feel that they might be missing out on some things, 33.9% are unaffected and 8.7% are anxious/depressed/lonely without social networking sites.



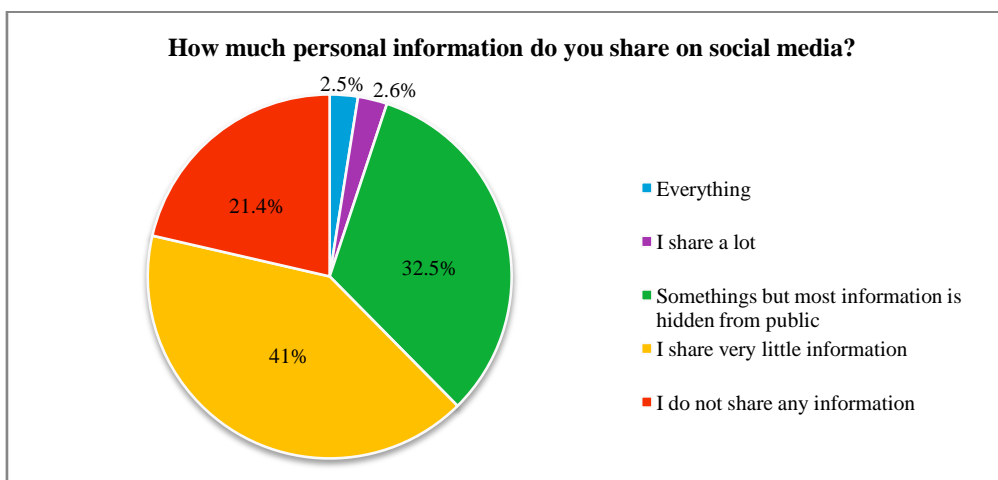
12) Cyber bullying

73.5% of the youth have never been subjected to cyber bullying, 14.5% chose sometimes, 10.3% chose rarely and 1.7% of the youth chose all the time as their answer.



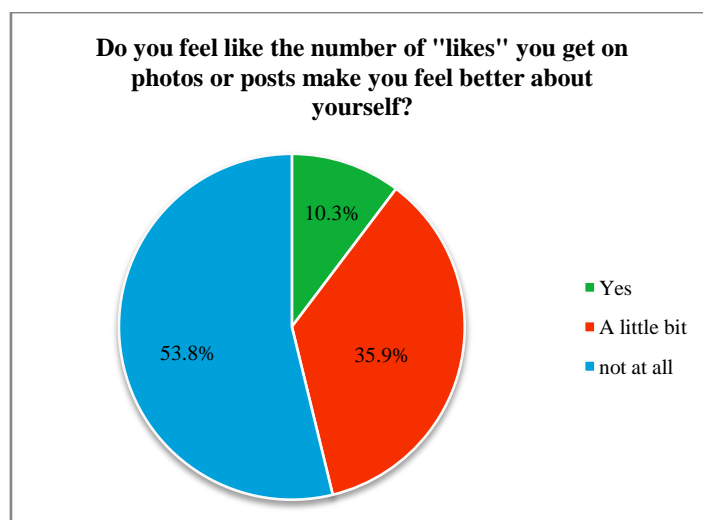
13) Personal information shared

The survey revealed that 41% of the youth share very little information, 32.5% keep most information hidden from the public, 21.4% do not share any information, 2.6% share a lot and 2.5% share everything.



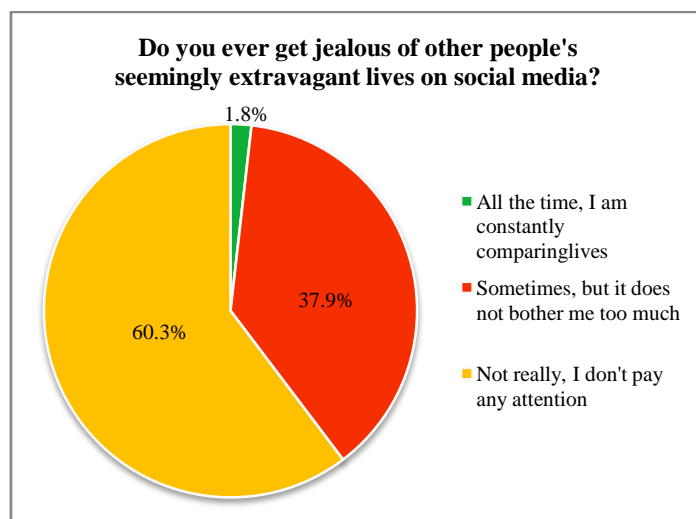
14) Effect of number of likes

It was found that 53.8% of youth does not get affected by the likes on photos or posts, 35.9% feel a little better and 10.3% feel that the number of likes make them feel good.



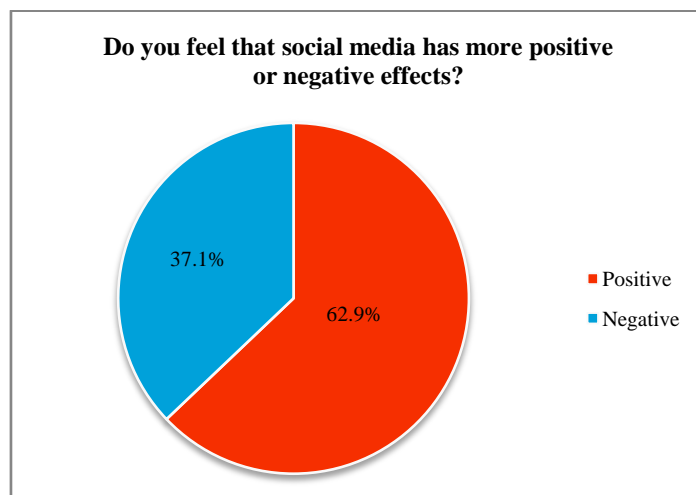
15) Comparing lifestyles

A maximum percentage of 60.3% youth don't pay attention to other people's lives on social media, 37.9% responded sometimes but it does not bother them and 1.8% constantly compare lives.



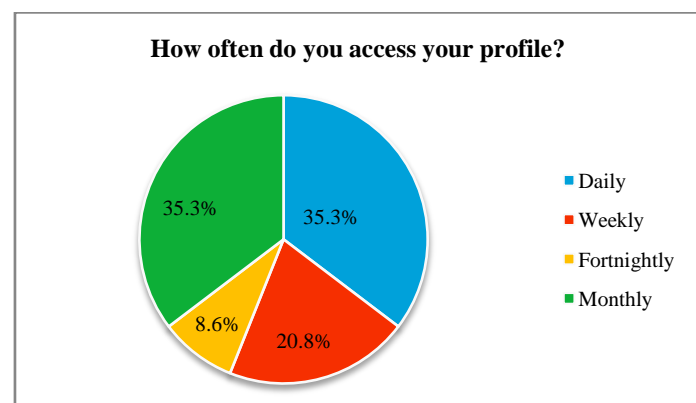
16) Positive or Negative effects

Social media has both positive and negative effects. 62.9% youth are in favor of social media and 37.1% are against the same.



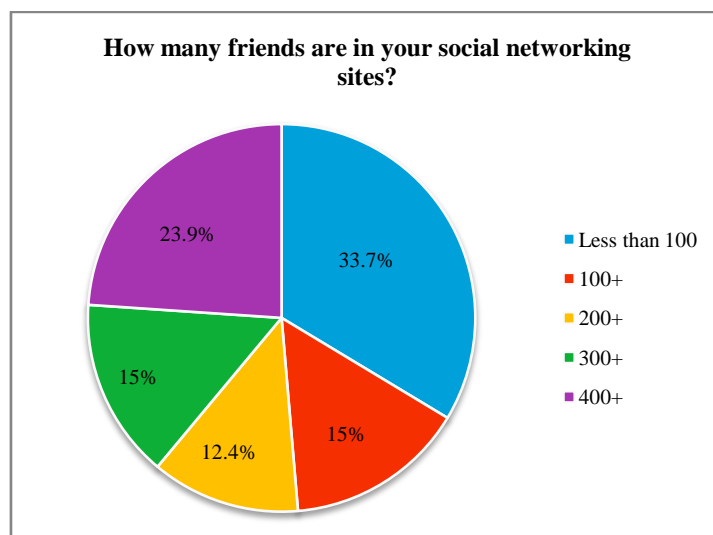
17) Frequency of accessing profile

A percentage of 35.3% was shared by users who access their profiles daily and those who did monthly, 20.8% access weekly and 8.6% access fortnightly.



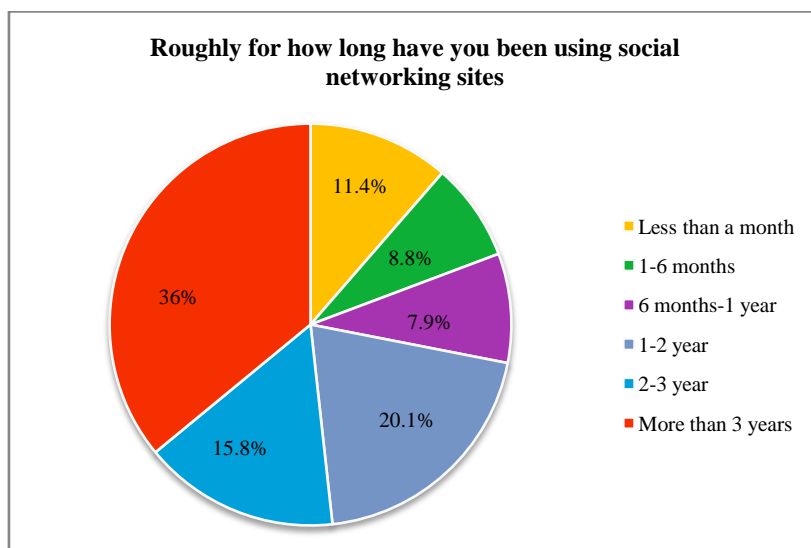
18) Number of friends

According to the survey 33.7% of youth have less than 100 friends, 23.9% youth have 400 and above, 15% have more than 100, 15% have more than 300 and 12.4% have more than 200 friends on social networking sites.



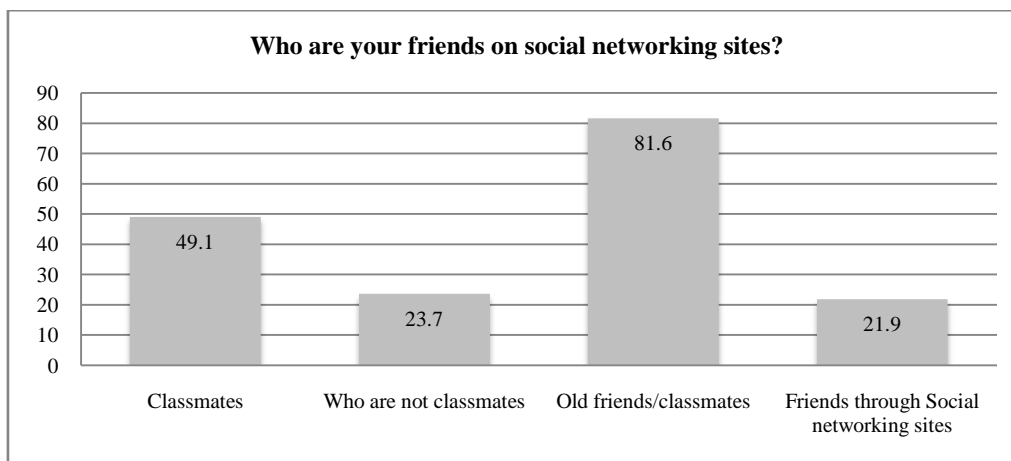
19) Duration of using social networking sites

The survey revealed that 36% of youth have been using social networking sites for more than 3 years, 20.1% for 1-2 years, 15.8% for 2-3 years, 11.4% for less than a month, 8.8% for 1-6 months and 7.9% for 0.5-1 year.



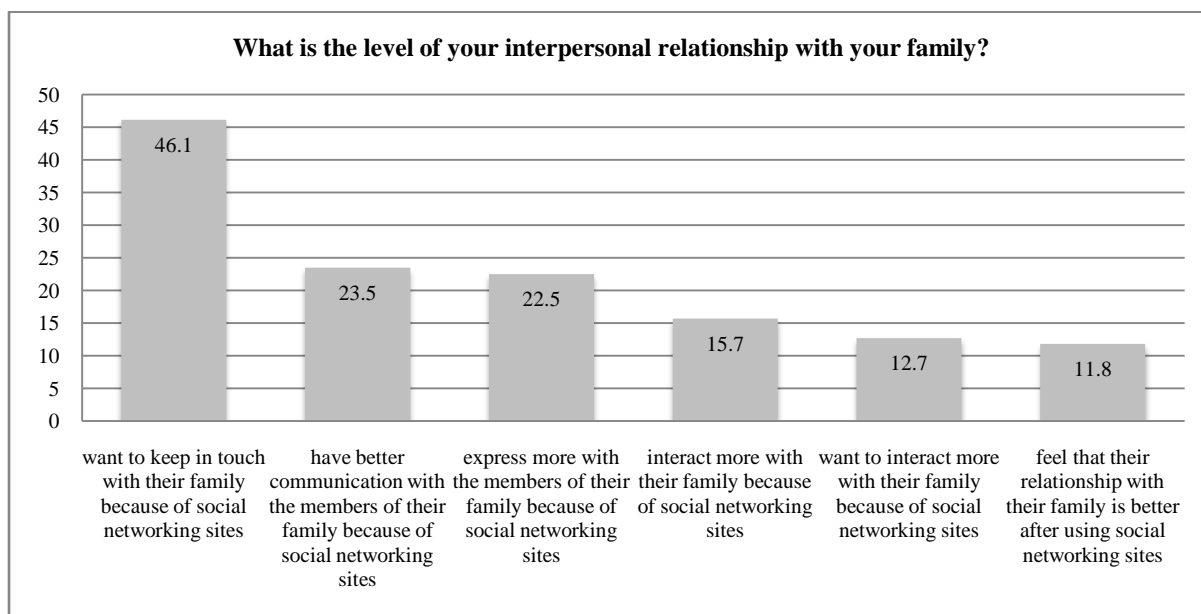
20) Friends on social networking sites

It was found that 81.6% of the youth have friends on social networking sites who are old friends/classmates, 49.1% have classmates as friends, 23.7% have friends as people who are not classmates and 21.9% of the youth speak to friends through social networking sites.



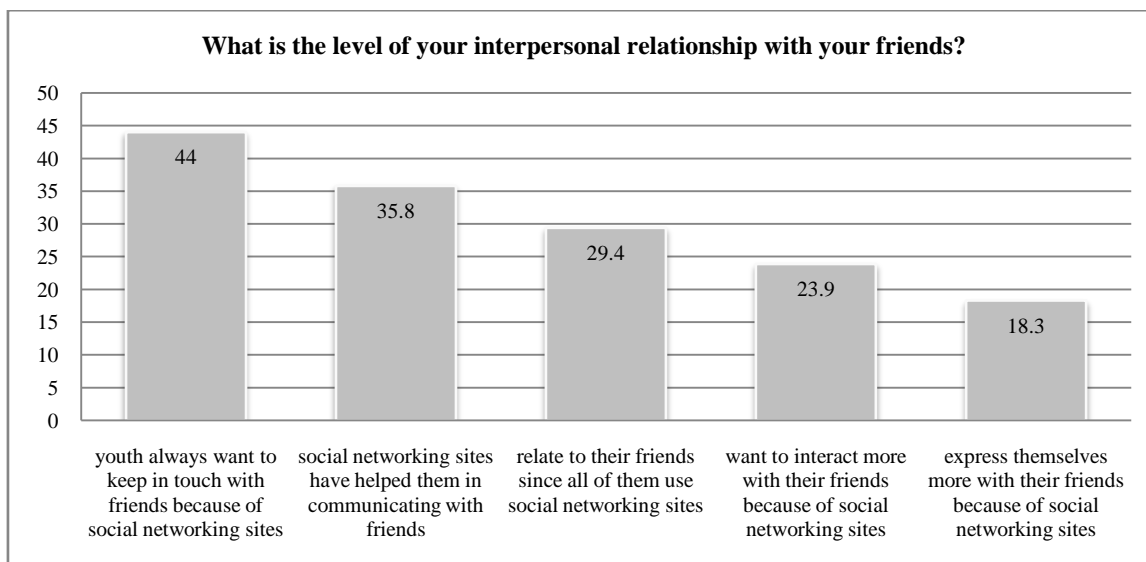
21) Level of interpersonal relationship with family

46.1% of the youth want to keep in touch with their family because of social networking sites, 23.5% have better communication with the members of their family because of social networking sites, 22.5% express more with the members of their family because of social networking sites, 15.7% interact more with their family because of social networking sites, 12.7% want to interact more with their family because of social networking sites, 11.8% feel that their relationship with their family is better after using social networking sites.



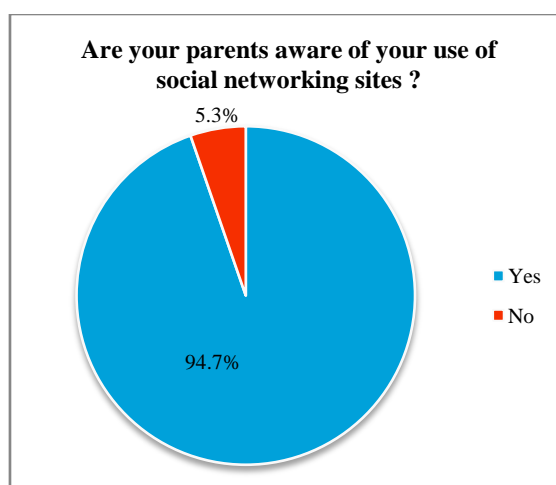
22) Level of interpersonal relationship with friends

44% of the youth always want to keep in touch with friends because of social networking sites, 35.8% feel that social networking sites have helped them in communicating with friends, 29.4% relate to their friends since all of them use social networking sites, 23.9% want to interact more with their friends because of social networking sites and 18.3% express themselves more with their friends because of social networking sites.



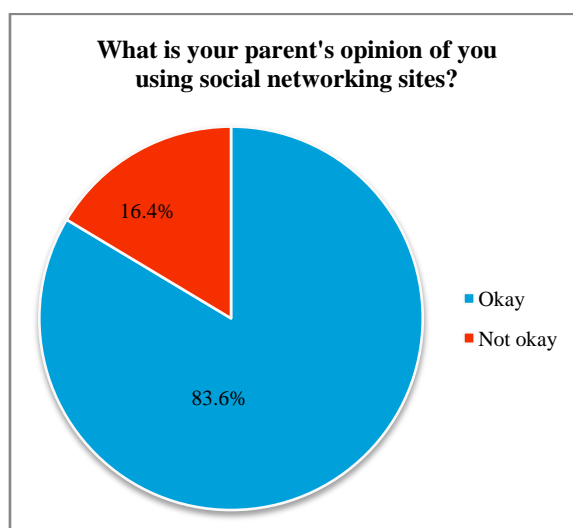
23) Parents' knowledge regarding use of social networking sites

94.7% of the youth's parents are aware of their children's social media usage whereas 5.3% are not.



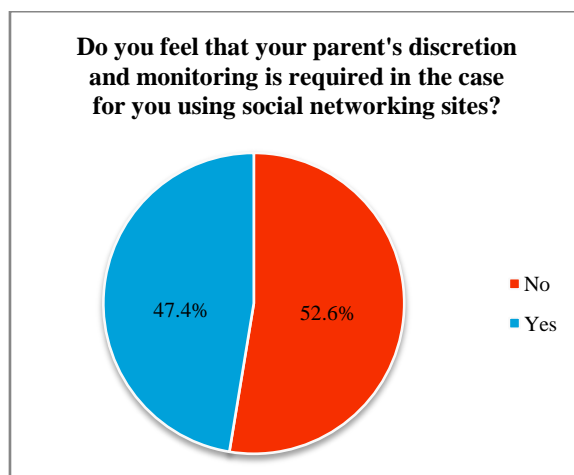
24) Parent's opinion

83.6% of the youth's parents are comfortable with their ward's social media usage whereas 16.4% are not.



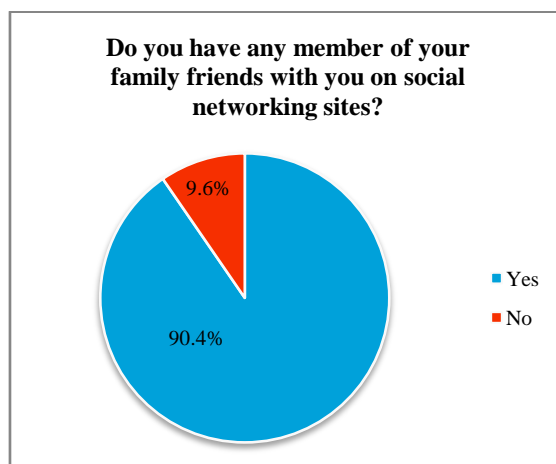
25) Parents' discretion/monitoring

52.6% of the youth feel that their parent's monitoring is not required while 47.4% voted yes.



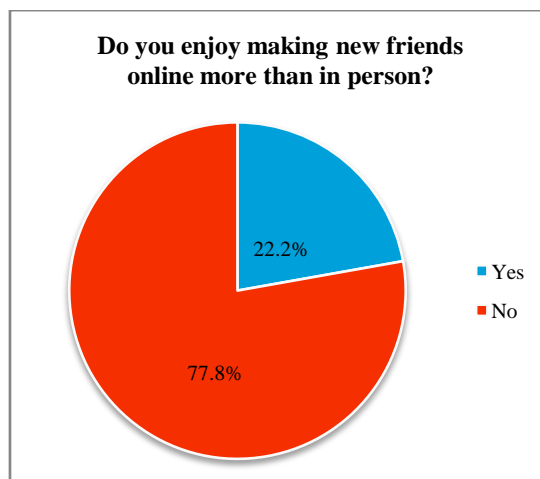
26) Family members as friends on social networking sites

The survey revealed that 90.4% of the youth have at least one family member as a friend on social networking sites whereas 9.6% do not.



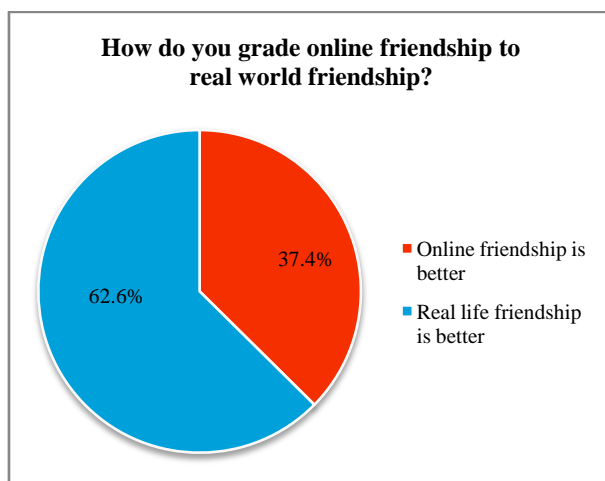
27) Making friends online versus in person

77.8% of the youth prefer making friends in person and 22.2% prefer making online friends.



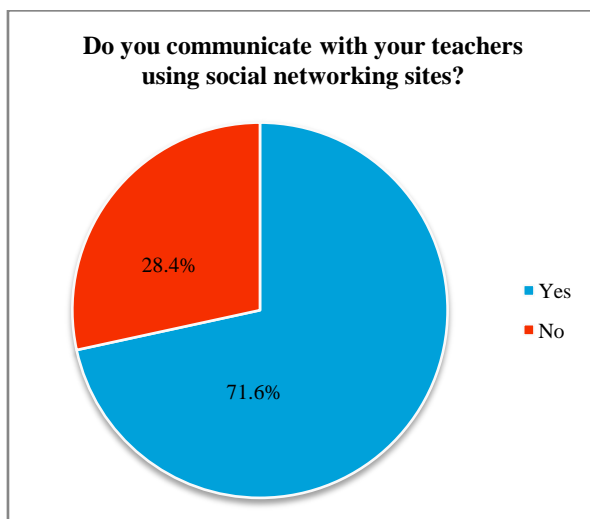
28) Online friendship versus real life friendship

62.6% of the youth feel that real life friendship is better than online friendship and 37.4% feel that online friendship is better.



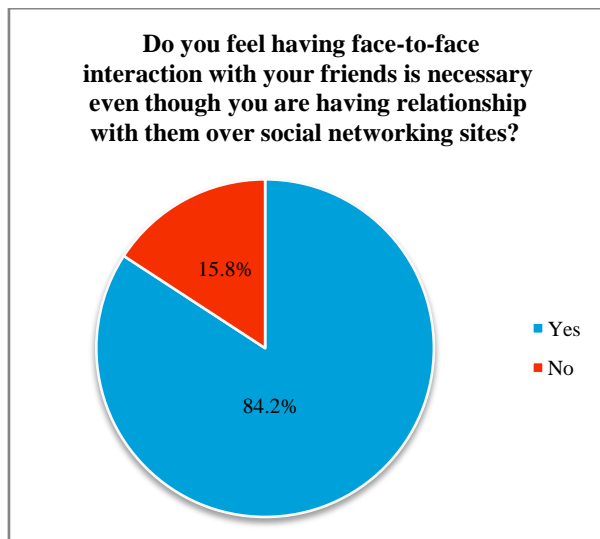
29) Communication with teachers with the help of social networking sites

71.6% of the youth are in favor of communicating with their teachers through social networking sites while 28.4% are against it.



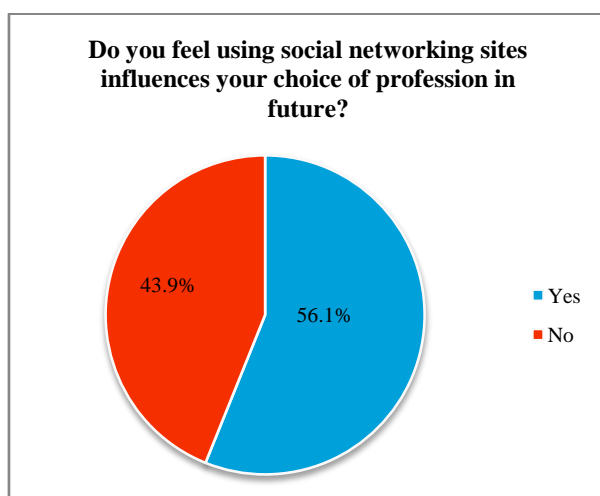
30) Necessity of face to face interaction

According to the survey 84.2% of the youth feel that face to face interaction is necessary even after having a relationship over social networking sites whereas 15.8% feel that it isn't necessary.



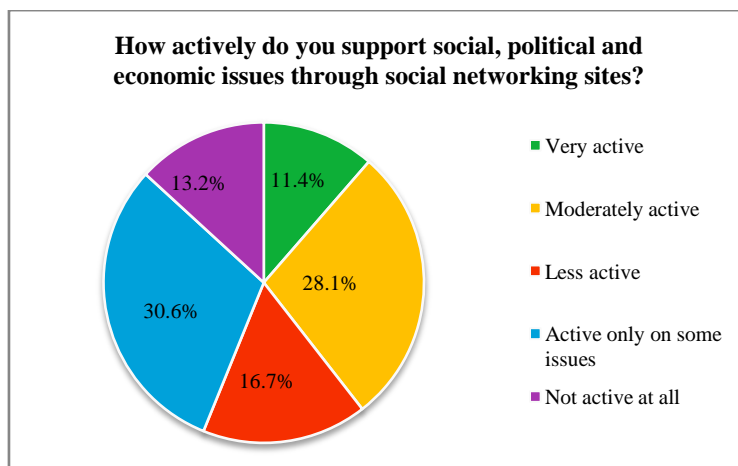
31) Influence on choice of profession

56.1% of the youth feel that social networking sites have an influence on their choice of profession in the future whereas 43.9% do not.



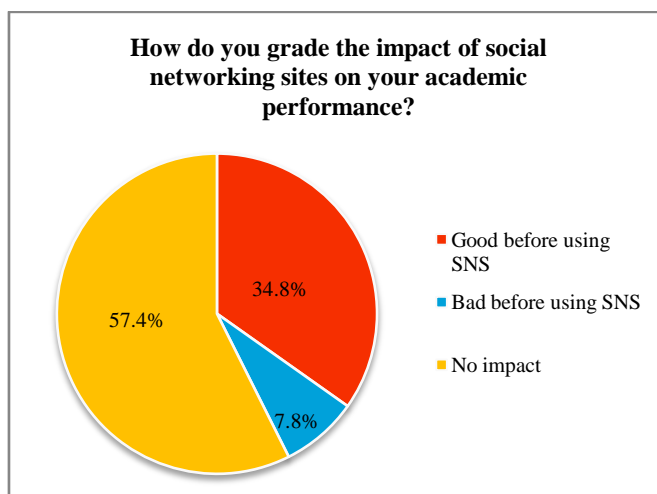
32) Social/Political/Economic issues

The survey revealed that 30.6% of the youth are active only on some issues, 28.1% are moderately active, 16.7% are less active, 13.2% are not active at all and 11.4% are very active.



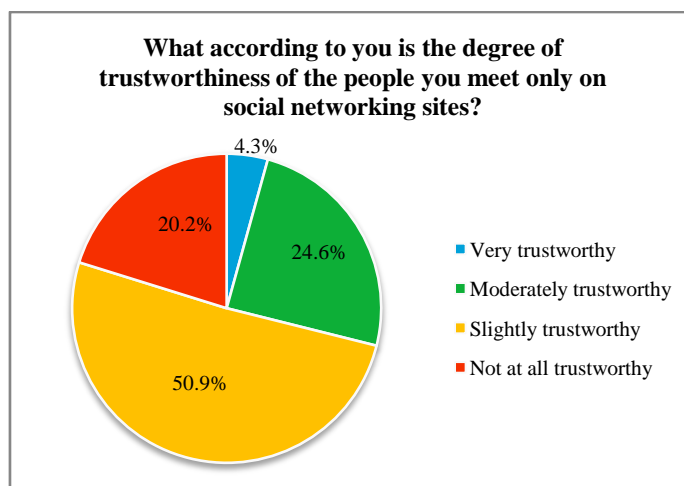
33) Impact of social networking sites on academic performance

Social networking sites have no impact on the academic performance of 57.4% of the youth, a negative impact on 34.8%, and a positive impact on 7.8% of the youth.



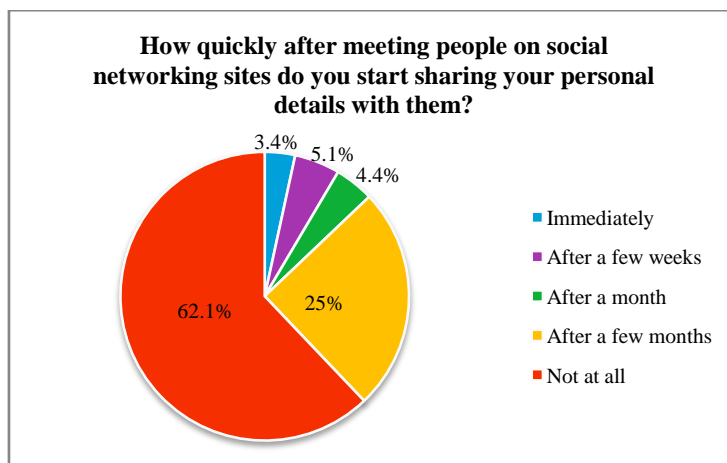
34) Trustworthiness of people on social networking sites

50.9% of the youth feel that the people they meet on social networking sites are slightly trustworthy, 24.6% feel that they are moderately trustworthy, 20.2% feel that they are not at all trustworthy and 4.3% feel that they are very trustworthy.



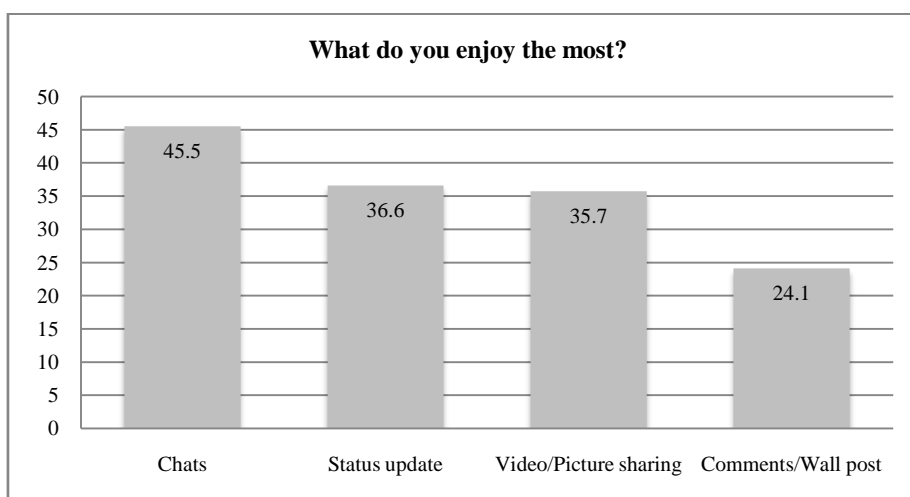
35) Sharing personal details

62.1% of the youth are against sharing any personal information, 25% of the youth share information over social networking sites after a few months, 5.1% share information after a few weeks, 4.4% share information after a month and 3.4% of the youth share information immediately.



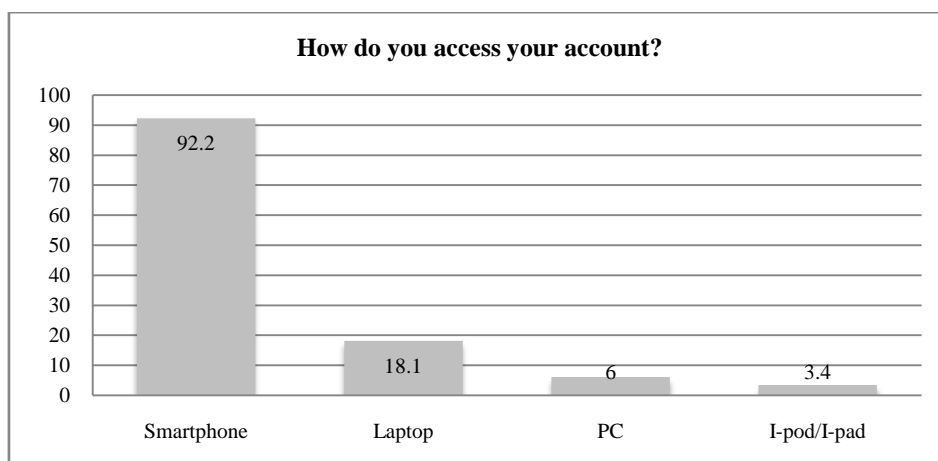
36) Activity enjoyed the most

According to the survey, 45.5% of the youth enjoy chatting, 36.6% enjoy updating status, 35.7% enjoy video/picture sharing and 24.1% enjoy commenting and posting.



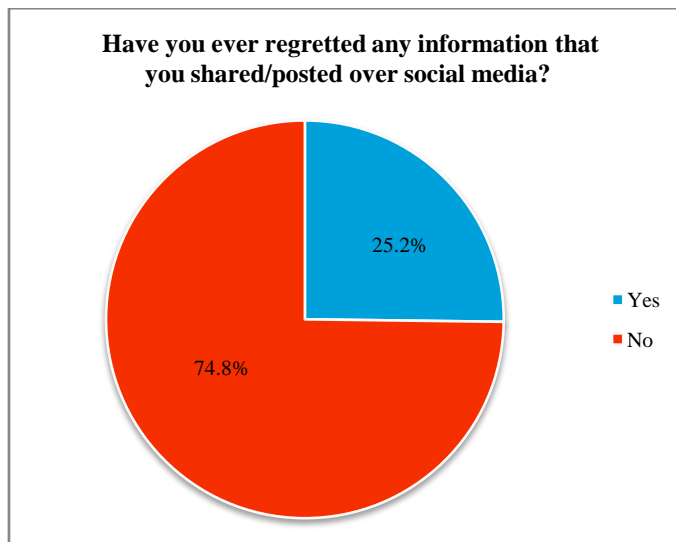
37) Accessing account

92.2% of the youth use smart phones to access their account, 18.1% use laptop, 6% use PC and 3.4% use I-pod/I-pad.



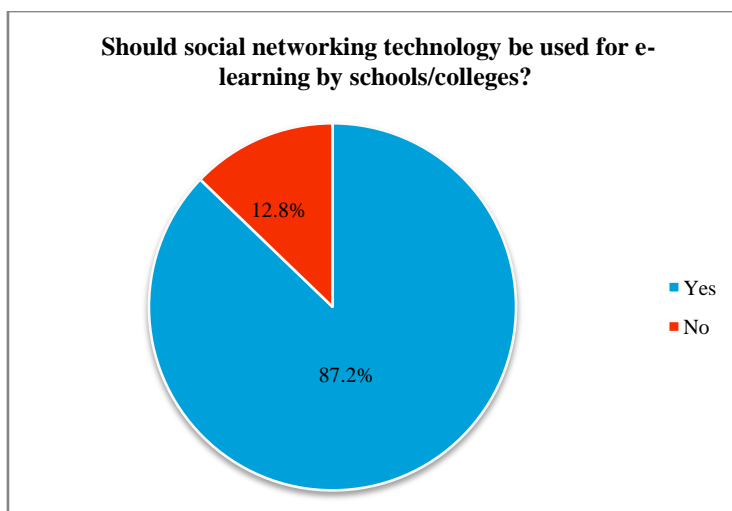
38) Regret sharing information over social networking sites

74.8% of the youth do not regret sharing any information over social media whereas 25.2% regret sharing some information.



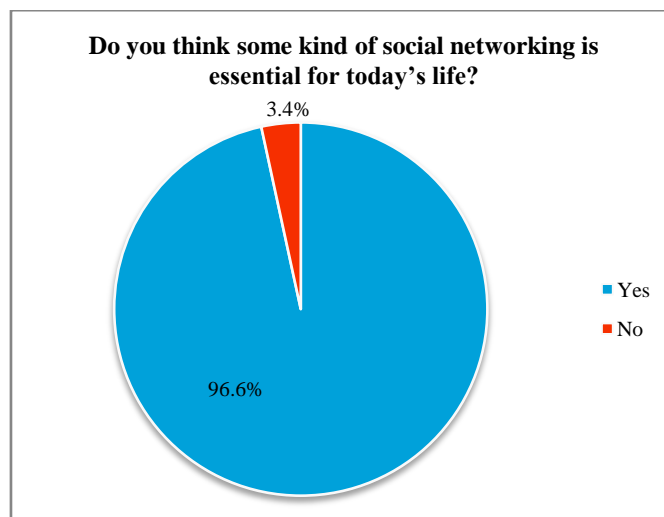
39) Take on social networking sites used for e-learning

87.2% of the youth want social networking sites to be used for e-learning by schools/colleges while 12.8% do not.



40) Essentiality on social networking in today's life

96.6% of the youth feel that some kind of social networking is essential in today's life whereas 3.4% do not.



VI. CONCLUSION

As per the balance of nature, all acts or happenings in our life exhibit two faces-darkness to brightness, night to day, pain to relief and exactly in the same pattern, social networking sites have brought both good as well as bad points in youth's life. There is nothing wrong in using social media in today's fast and competitive world but at the same time, a check has to be kept either by the youth themselves or by their parents and teachers on how far the youth have to explore these sites and not to cross the thinnest possible safety line drawn between the positivity and negativity of the facility available.

It has been observed that the popularity of social media in youth makes it a potentially influential force. The findings discussed above provide a foundation for future research and have opened up important discussions on how social media usage is affecting the physical and mental health of youth in Jammu region. Although, most of the findings may be applicable to an individual and not generalized to the general public, however, the role of parents and teachers to educate the young about the information and its usage on the World Wide Web right from early stages is coveted.

The importance of reading privacy policy of various social networking portals also needs to be stressed.

Parents and schools must consider installing software that can track browsing history. This could help identify cyber bullying at an earlier stage. Without making an unwarranted effort to encroach their privacy, it is pivotal to monitor which websites are being visited by the youngsters. Keeping a track of the gaming webpages visited, the peer group and online engagements is also crucial. If any unreasonable behavioral change is noticed in a student, the teacher should be encouraged to discuss it with the class coordinator and counsellor and sought the problem out.

While it is important to note that there is no way of enforcing any rule on the young minds, but a frank and open engagement with the young can help counsel them on right internet usage.

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