

## A Study on the Social Networking Sites Usage by Undergraduate Students

<sup>a</sup>Suraj Sharma, <sup>b</sup>Sunita Godiyal

<sup>a</sup>Research Scholar, <sup>b</sup>Professor, Department of Education, SRT Campus, HNB Garhwal University, Srinagar, Garhwal, India

### Abstract

Social networking sites (SNSs) usage is a common phenomenon nowadays. Social Networking Sites are basically internet based tools that facilitate communication, content exchange and collaborate in multiple ways. Beginning with sixdegrees.com (Boyd & Ellison, 2007) SNSs have evolved with complex functionalities and grown to engulf the globe particularly after the genesis of Facebook in early 2004 and it is now the largest SNS in terms of user base (Staticbrain.com, January 2016)

Authors found that there are few authentic studies on SNSs status in the Indian scenario especially in Uttarakhand. Therefore authors felt a strong need to assess the usage pattern of SNSs in the college students. Author in this paper also trying to get the overall view of the social media usage by the college goers and will present a comparison of the usage by the male and female undergraduates.

**KEYWORDS:** Social networking sites (SNSs), Under Graduate Students, Facebook, Social Media

### INTRODUCTION

Social networking sites (SNSs) usage is a common phenomenon nowadays. Social Networking Sites are basically internet based tools that facilitate communication, content exchange and collaborate in multiple ways. Beginning with sixdegrees.com (Boyd & Ellison, 2007) SNSs have evolved with complex functionalities and grown to engulf the globe particularly after the genesis of Facebook in early 2004 and it is now the largest SNS in terms of user base (Staticbrain.com, January 2016)

Social Networking Websites or Social Networking Sites (SNSs) have become an everyday social activity for peoples across the world (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Ever increasing penetration of the Social Networking sites have become a fad amongst the young adults. Ofcom research data found that just over one fifth (22%) of adult internet users aged 16+.

According to Kuss & Griffiths (2011), Consumer researches and empirical data on SNS usage reveals that overall regular usage of social media has increased over the last few years and SNSs are mostly used for social purpose; for maintaining the already established offline networks, relative to individual one. Further they point out that teenagers and students are making most of SNSs as compared to general population. Some latest researches are also pointing towards the fact that young adults

are making most of the Social Networking Sites. A report based on the Pew Research surveys viz.; "Social Media Usage: 2005-2015" points out that 65 % adults now use Social media up from 7% in 2005. And there is relation between social media use and age. Those in the age group of 18-29 are the most likely user of social media. Today as per the Pew research data, 90% of young adults use social media; compared to 12% in 2005. There is no surprise that social Networking Sites usage and their impact and social and cultural implication have now become hot topics of research.

Tham, J., & Ahmed, N. (2011) in their study examined the usage and implication of social networking sites among college students. Results of the study revealed that female college students spent more time on SNSs than male students. In general the time spent on SNSs decreased as the age of the respondent increased.

Kumar, A. & Kumar, R. (2013) made an attempt to study the activities and reasons for using social networking sites by post graduate students and research scholars Results of the study found that majority of the respondents were aware of and making use of such application in their research work. The study also revealed that Facebook is most popular SNSs among the all categories of students and research scholars.

Bhola, R. M., & Mahakud, G. C. (2014) indicates that most youngsters begin social networking at 14.6 years; the average time spent on Social Networking is 3.6 hours daily. Facebook is most preferred SNS for the function of Chatting and making friends night chatting and interaction with the opposite sex is common, have interest in electronic gadgets, ignore daily activities, hide their online tasks from others, use SNS secretly and feel frustrated in its absence.

Arumugam, B., Nagalingam, S., & Ganesan, R. (2014) indicated that majority of teenagers were addicted to Social Networking Sites and hence proper steps should be taken to create awareness among teenagers and their parents regarding the addictive behavior and risk factors associated with the usage of Social Networking Sites.

Sampasa-kanyinga, H., & Lewis, R. F. (2015) in their study investigated the association between time spent on Social Networking Sites (SNSs) and unmet need for mental health support. Among other things It was found that out of total samples 25.2% of students reported using SNSs for more than 2 hours every day, 54.3% of students reported using SNSs for 2 hours or less every day, and 20.5% reported infrequent or no use of SNSs.

The present study is limited to the Government /Aided degree colleges and is limited to the undergraduate students (B.A/B.Sc/B.Com) students of Dehradun district of Uttarakhand State of India. The descriptive survey method was used for the present investigation.

#### **SAMPLE OF THE STUDY:-**

In this study 550 students studying in undergraduate classes were randomly selected from the total population of the undergraduates students studying in the various colleges of Dehradun affiliated to HNB Garhwal University. They were given self developed inventory for seeking information related to usage of SNSs by them.

**TOOL USED:-**

A self developed inventory/checklist was used to know the status of use of Social Networking Sites by the college students.

**OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY-**

To know the online Social Networking Site usage pattern by the undergraduates' male and female students.

**ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

It is an important step in the research. The data collected from the sample was analysed as per the questions of the self made inventory. Presented below is the description of the status of SNSs usage.

**1-Use of SNSs by the male and female undergraduates****TABLE-1****Use of social networking sites (SNSs)**

	Total responses (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)
Male	269 (48.91)	263(97.77)	6 (2.23)
Females	281 (51.09)	271 (96.44)	10(3.56)

Note- All figures in parenthesis represent percentage

Table 1 shows that, 97.77% of males were aware of and using SNSs whereas 96.44% of female were using SNSs out of total male and total female users respectively. There are only 2.23%of male and 3.56% of female who were not using Social Networking Sites (SNSs).

**2- Membership of Social Networking Sites****TABLE -2****Membership of social networking sites (SNSs)**

	Total Responses (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)
Male	269 (48.91)	240 (89.22)	29 (10.78)
Females	281 (51.09)	271 (73.31)	75 (26.69)

Note- All figures in parenthesis represent percentage.

According to table-2, out of total male users 89.22% were member of any SNS while 10.78% do not have membership in any SNSs. Whereas out of total female 73.31% said that they are member of any SNS and 26.69% were not having membership in SNSs. Those not member themselves said they were accessing the SNSs from their friend's accounts or their relative's accounts.

**3- SNSs that are mostly used by male undergraduates****TABLE-3****Top five sites used by male undergraduate students**

S.No	Name Of Site	Total No. Of User (male)	Total % Of User
1	Facebook	254	96.58
2	WHATSAPP	220	83.65
3	YOUTUBE	167	63.50
4	GOOGLE +	161	61.22
5	HIKE	152	57.80

Table-3 shows that top five sites being used by male users are Facebook (96.58), WhatsApp (83.65) and YouTube (63.50), Google+ (61.22) and Hike Facebook (57.80) respectively.

**4- SNSs that are mostly used by female undergraduates****TABLE- 4****Top five sites used by female undergraduate students**

S.No.	Name Of Site	Total No. Of User	Total % Of User
1	WHATSAPP	193	71.22
2	FACEBOOK	182	67.15
3	GOOGLE +	124	45.76
4	YOUTUBE	80	29.52
5	HIKE	71	26.20

Table 4 interestingly diverts from the male usage pattern and shows that female WhatsApp user has 71.22% userbase and stood at top whereas other four Social Networking Sites next to WhatsApp were Facebook (67.15), Google+ (45.76), YouTube (29.52), and Hike (26.20) respectively.

**5- Devices that are used to access SNSs by male undergraduates****TABLE-5****Devices used for accessing social networking sites (SNSs)**

Devices	Male (%)
Mobile Phones	258 (98.10)
Laptops	83 (31.56)
Desktops	65 (24.71)
Tablets	38 (14.45)

Note- All figures in parenthesis represent percentage

As users were permitted multiple options, according to table-5, 98.10% of male users were accessing Social Networking Sites through Mobile phones, 31.56% through Laptops, 24.71 through Desktops and only 14.45% were using Desktops for accessing SNSs.

#### 6- Devices that are used to access SNSs by female undergraduates

**TABLE-6**

##### Devices used for accessing social networking sites (SNSs)

Devices	Female (%)
Mobile Phones	254(93.73)
Laptops	34 (12.55)
Desktops	32 (11.81)
Tablets	30 (11.07)

Note- All figures in parenthesis represent percentage

In case of table-6 as users were permitted to opt multiple options, accordingly 93.73% of male users were accessing Social Networking Sites through Mobile phones, 12.55% through Laptops, 11.81 through Desktops and only 11.07% were using Desktops for accessing SNSs.

#### 7- Purpose of using Social Networking Sites (SNSs) by the male undergraduates

**TABLE-7**

##### Purpose for using SNSs by undergraduate male students

S.No.	Purpose for using SNSs	Total No. Of User(male)	Total % of User
1	Entertainment	249	94.68
2	Education	232	88.21
3	To stay in touch with friends they see a lot	185	70.34
4	Social contact	179	68.06
5	To stay in touch with friends they rarely see	172	65.40

According to table-7 the top five purpose for which male users access SNSs were entertainment, education, to stay in touch with friends they see a lot, social contact and to stay in touch with friends they rarely see with the percentage of 94.68, 88.21, 70.34, 68.06 and 65.40 respectively.

**8-Purpose of using Social Networking Sites (SNSs) by the female undergraduates****TABLE-8****Purpose of using SNSs by undergraduate female students**

S.No.	Purpose for using SNSs	Total No. Of User (female)	Total % Of User
1	Education	238	87.82
2	Entertainment	184	67.90
3	Preparing for competitive exam	155	57.20
4	Social contact	142	52.40
5	Knowledge sharing	136	50.18

According to table 4, the top five purpose for which female users access SNSs were education, entertainment, preparing for competitive exam, social contact and knowledge sharing with the percentage of 87.82, 67.90, 57.20, 52.40 and 50.18 respectively.

**CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS:-**

From the above tables, following conclusions are drawn:

Table 1 and table 2 shows that most of the undergraduates were using SNSs and that confirms to various other studies. Even those who are not member of any Social Networking Sites themselves were accessing them from others' account. Whereas, the Table 3 and table 4 shows that male undergraduates were using Facebook the most while females' top site was WhatsApp.

Table 5 and table 6 show that SNSs are accessed mostly through the mobile phones and laptops. Least used are the tablets.

Table 7 and table 8 gives the top reasons for accessing SNSs. For male entertainment is the top reason while for female it is education. For males staying in touch with friends was more important. For female preparation for competitive exams, knowledge sharing were important than other things.

As a suggestion, it can be said that these data can be further validated in a large sample and more reason of using could be found. It will be also interesting to work on the topic that why WhatsApp is choice of the female undergraduates.

**REFERENCES:-**

**Arumugam, B., Nagalingam, S., & Ganesan, R. (2014).** Behavioural attributes and risk factors on usage of social networking sites among school going children of Chennai. *British Biomedical Bulletin*, 2(1), 165-173. Retrieved from [www.bbulletin.org](http://www.bbulletin.org)

**Bhola, R. M., & Mahakud, G. C. (2014).** A qualitative analysis of social networking usage. *International Journal of Research & Development of Health*, March 2014; 2(1): 34-44. Retrieved from [www.ijrdh.com](http://www.ijrdh.com)

**Boyd, D. M., & Ellison, N. B. (2007).** Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13(1), article1.from <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol13/issue1/boyd.ellison.html>

**Kumar, A.& kumar, R. (2013).** Use of Social Networking Sites (SNSs): A study of Maharishi Dayanand University, Rohtak, India. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-Journal)*, 1–12. <http://doi.org/http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/1000>.

**Kuss, D. J., & Griffiths, M. D. (2011).** Addiction to social networks on the Internet: A literature review of empirical research. *International Journal of Environment and Public Health*, 8, 3528–3552.

**Lenhart, A., Madden, M., & Hitlin, P. (2005).** Teens and technology: Youth are leading the transition to a fully wired and mobile nation. Pew Internet & American Life Project.

**Sampasa-kanyinga, H., & Lewis, R. F. (2015).** Frequent Use of Social Networking Sites Is Associated with Poor Psychological Functioning Among Children and Adolescents, *18(7)*, 380–385. <http://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2015.0055>

**Sharma, S. (2015).** Use of Social Networking Sites by undergraduates in relation to their academic achievement. *Scholarly Research Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies*, 3(21), 1229–1234

**Tham, j. & Ahmed, N. (2011).** The usage and implications of Social Networking Sites: A survey of college students. *Journal of Interpersonal, Intercultural and Mass Communication*, 5(1), 1-11.

#### **websites**

Ofcom Social Networking Sites research Published separately at: [www.ofcom.org.uk](http://www.ofcom.org.uk)

[Pewinternet.org](http://Pewinternet.org)

[Statisticsbrain.com](http://Statisticsbrain.com)