

## A study at the digital gadget addiction of youth in south India

**Sandeep TK,**

Lecturer in Visual Communication department Amrita Vishwa vidyapeetham University,  
Amrita School of Arts Sciences Mysore campus, India

---

### Abstract

It is amazing that in India around 95% Smartphone users check their social media as the first thing in every morning. Our youth seems anxious without their digital gadgets especially smart phones. Even in sleeping time also almost 90% people keeps Smartphone near to their bed. As being a digital media driven society our south Indian gadget users are always trying to connect with digital or social media to have updates.

This study aims at the habits of Smartphone users and how it moving to the so-called addiction. Moreover, the paper observes the priming effects of new media on youth and its impact on society. As part of the study the researcher found some basic solutions to reduce the over use of internet or gadget. Through survey method, the researcher found many reasons to become a gadget additive of course how we can reduce the excessive use of Smartphone by practice.

**KEYWORDS:** Hybrid medium, digital gadgets, Addiction, Narcissism, media priming

---

### Review of literature

Some facts about present era: there are several studies, which brought out the negative as well as positive sides of the digital technology. Most of them were pointed the health issues and so on. In Mumbai MACRO (Market Analysis and Consumer Research Association) brought out a survey result on 'Mobile phone usage and teenagers in Mumbai'. That was also a study purely based on the geographical area of Mumbai. As part of curriculum, a research journal published from Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore on 'Prevalence of Digital Addiction and use of digital devices by students'. From all those studies and survey results we can come to an inference that all digital gadgets are in a way creating addiction to students. In this study, the data collection was concentrated on three different states and campuses of a same university. Not only limited to students but also taken care of people under 30. As a future study, planning to expand to major cities of south India. Google India top Mr. Rayen Anandan said that India is presently the third largest hub in the world for teen startups (News in Short Dec-2015).

India with 3200 million active internet users expected to reach more heights by 2020.

According the research firm IDC, globally around 2 Billion people will access internet with their smart phone this year. last year December Telecom minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said that electronic manufacturing investment increased six fold than 2014 The sector reached 1.14 lakhs crores by December 2015

NIT Rourkela campus also published one research paper on 'Gadget usage and health issues' a study based on the students of the same campus. Their major concentrations were on the health issues that they are facing because of the excessive use of gadgets.

In Chennai also they did a similar one but the targeted people were school going children.

Half of our country's population is below the age of 30. In that, around 243 million users are active in internet. According to a GSM association report on November 2015, India will have over 500 million unique mobile subscribers by the end of 2015 ( newsinshorts, Nov 2015). All together, our country is highly depending on Smartphone for including but not limited to information and educational needs. It is a fact that the number of internet users over mobile phone is increasing But the shocking elements in that is many people are additive to smart phones, they cannot imagine a day without their smartphone. Being the hybrid medium Smartphone provides the channel for information, education and entertainment as well. However, these days our youth gives priority to social media, chatting, gaming, music, pornography, photography etc...Recent survey conducts by global IT security solution firm Kaspersky lab this year 73% of the 1007 young Indians were found to be 'digital addicts'. (Kaspersky survey, 2014)

Internet or digital gadget addiction is like any other addiction. These days that is become a vital issue. If a person spends more than 4 hours for any gadgets, that habit leads to a kind of addiction. Especially our young generation they fail in setting priorities.

Mobile and internet gaming is another area which stretches the time into many hours. A survey has been conducted as part of the study it shows a Smartphone game named candy crush is one of the popular games among the smartphone users. People were complaining that many youngsters are spending their time in front of the game to kill the time. They preferred the game mostly for leisure time. This is like a habit and the game itself designed for making them additive.

The electromagnetic radiation from these gadget cause lot of health issues like sleeping problem, headache, stress, anxiety etc...Many physical and psychological issues were reported by doctors due to the technological addiction. The tendency of Narcissism is another area. Oxford Dictionaries announced that the word 'Selfie' as word of the year 2013. For the year 2015 a pictograph named 'emoji' face with tears of joy. From that, we can understand that how common it is among people. Big numbers of causalities has reported while taking selfies last year. These tech addictions creates both Psychological and Sociological issues.

Rapid growth of IT and Electronics created a wide boom in the field of communication and entertainment. Hybrid technology is become a common idea in our daily life. Mobile phones and smart phones are an apt example for that. The purpose of using gadget these days are very common but rather than necessity youths giving importance to pleasure factor. That tendency will become root cause of addiction. Technology has lot of positive as well as negative impacts on society. Through this study aims at how many gadgets are connected to our lifestyle and how we can reduce the excessive use of the same.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- (1) To understand are they really addiction on digital gadgets based on their usage with digital gadgets
- (2) To examine are they a using for their academic or non-academic purpose.
- (3) To study how we can reduce the over usage of digital gadgets among youngsters

### **Methodology**

For the data collection, fieldwork has conducted during the winter vacation of December 2015. Telephone interview and questionnaire method used for this study. Some previous observations also used for the same. Since the topic of the paper says that addition of youth in south India the Pilot study was based on the campuses of Amrita University in South India and Some self-financing colleges with two government colleges especially in Kerala, Tamilnadu and Karnataka. When we compare private self-financing colleges with government sector colleges private colleges dominates in gadget using. The one reason behind this is that almost students are coming from well-settled families. Due to the digital revolution these days owns a smart phone is very common thing. With a minimum of 4000 rupees one can have a normal Smartphone or a mp4 player.

### **Gadget and Youth**

Youth are always getting addicted to digital gadgets that are available in the market because all those online purchasing websites and online forums provide them an opportunity to get access with innovative digital techniques and updates.

Video and computer games is another division many are addicted to such games. It's a fact that some games are becomes a cause in making variations in peoples mind, like behavior change, anxiety, Stress etc. Some are good enough to make improvement in our brain activities too. However, the main problem in that is it affecting more on youth especially the age group of 15-25. They are spending hours in front of these games instead of their main domain. When youngsters play aggressive, stress oriented violent games for long time chances are high to become aggressive in nature. Such games are available in market like online and all with free of cost or open source. Therefore, it is usual to download or play through online. The major problem in it is that our youngsters don't know how to manage time for all these. They spend more time even in the late night also for such addictive games.

Music players and headsets are popular gadgets among college students.

In a random survey conducted in 3 campus of a university reveals that an almost 75% student carries their headphone or overhead speakers while going to college too. This data shows how much importance they are giving for music in their daily life.

Apps are other important areas that youngsters put concentration more with their smart phones. Many customized and non-customized applications are available in Android, I phone market, and most of the android applications are free of cost. More than 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of smartphone users belong to android platform. The technological revolution resulted in mass production and now with cheap prices one can have smart phones. After the spread

of 3G services almost 80% smartphone users having internet connection either 3G or 2G. A normal smart phone user may install on an average 15-20 application in the smartphone.

When we are stick on to some electronic gadget like a smartphone or laptop may avoid other information and the change may happen in our priority. When we are paying attention to social media or online media such tendency creates changes in their priorities and daily life also.

The digitization resulted in a drastic situation in the case of kids at their tender age also, they are aware about mobile phones and music players. Parents have to understand that whether their child is excessively using such gadgets or not.

### **Addiction v/s accident**

Usage of digital gadgets with other job is becoming a major issue now. Our youngsters are using these gadgets while driving or listening to a lecture too. The habit may divert their attention. In a study conducted by India Today group reveals that 15% smart phone users admit that they do texting while riding vehicles. (India Today September 2015) In addition, our National crime record bureau shows a rapid growth in road accidents because of mobile using while driving. Among teenagers, many admit that they used to hear music while driving bike. That may be the main cause of two-wheeler accident in south India.

Continuous use of gadgets like smart phones and all creates affection with that. Therefore, people cannot live without that. That situation leads to a so-called problem known as stress. The word stress management is very common these days.

### **Involvement factor**

The over involvement with your favorite gadget may create anxious in you. Without that, you may feel restless and such over involved persons may not be active in their real life. How much time we are spending in front of such gadget is always a matter. Ones we addicted to that it is very difficult to get back. So the involvement factor is so important

### **Internet addition**

Many experts one claimed that internet addition as a clinical disorder. Generally Internet addition can be classified into five segments.

- (1) Cyber sex addition
- (2) Internet relationship addition
- (3) Gambling, shopping, or trading addition
- (4) Web surfing addition
- (5) Game pleasure addiction

Day to day life our youngsters are depending internet for above mentioned needs. However, the spending time varies person to person. Ones they found the internet is the ultimate solution for all needs that situation may leads to addiction in future.

The internet is a huge network of computers, which connect million computers around the world. Tim Berners Lee's invention WWW is a collection of pages, which we can access for any information. – The rapid growth in the field of electronics and software created a new era of technology. Internet over mobile phones is a platforms for everyone to get access information, entertain and education globally. Around 1.7 billion people are using internet over their smart phone.

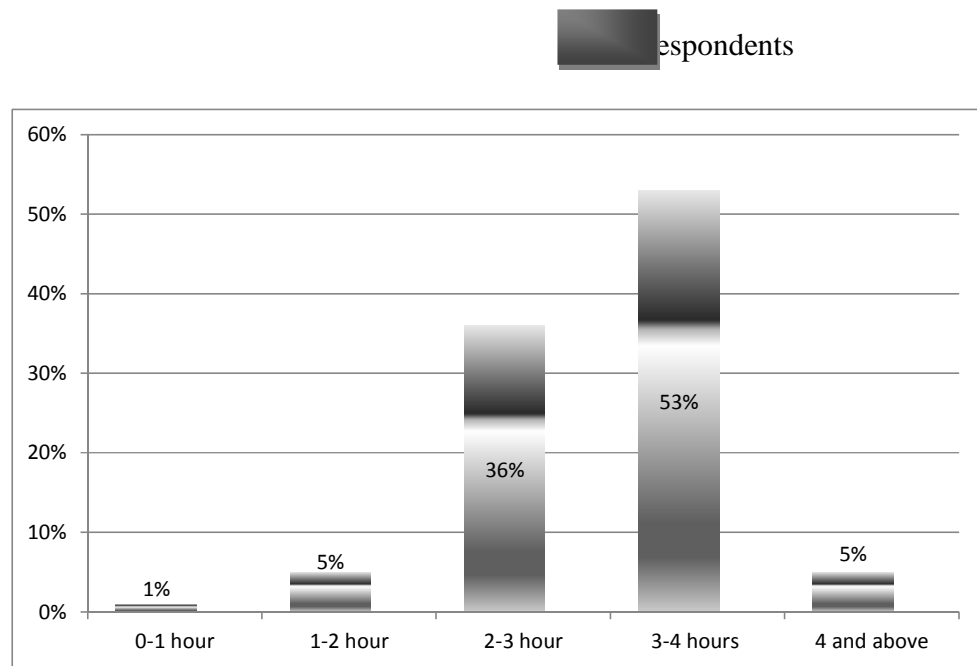
### **Result and Findings**

Around 100 samples were taken among 3 campus of amrita and telephonic interview was also taken for data collection, in that around 88% of people are using either a smartphone or any other digital gadgets most of them having a smartphone with internet facility .47% of them having Laptops or notebooks. Almost 90% youngsters having their headphones 63% the youngsters has agreed that they used to check either their whatsApp or their Face book in the morning. Many agreed that they send good morning wishes to their groups, friends, pages, and tweets so on. Around 23% of students are using their smartphone in the classrooms too. Less than 20% claims that they prefer tablets or notebooks for internet or social media surfing.41% of them using their gadgets during the late night also. Such students are facing a kind of sleeplessness or headache issues in their daily life. The funny part in that is around 45% of them having eyesight problem some are using spectacles partially some are using for full time

Most of the college students are maintaining various whatsApp group in the name of class, college, hostel etc...as per their version that is more useful to communicate to a group without any complication. Anyhow, they are having mobile internet connection so these communication platforms are free of cost. Wi fi or paid LAN connections are a part of campuses. ISP's (Internet Service Providers) are trying to give cheaper data packages to homely as well as commercial purposes. Now a day's school going kids are thinking it is a prestigious issue for having their presence in social media. Without a Facebook or WhatsApp account, they are incomplete.

After analyzing the questionnaire, the survey came in to an inference that 53 % of respondents are spending 3 to 4 hours with their digital gadgets. Most of them are having smart phones so they do use the gadget for making calls, watching videos, searching in social media, Internet surfing, hearing music, playing games etc.

Around 36 % respondents are using 2 to 3 hours with their gadgets. 5 % respondents are spending just 1 to 2 hours. The shocking information is that 5 % respondents are spending more than 4 or 5 hours. The following table (Fig: 1) shows the usage



(Fig: 1)

Most of them agreed that they do check their gadgets frequently especially their mobile phones. Only because of anxiety or become of their habit they used to check their social media with their gadget. They all have a tendency to check whatsapp 5 or 6 times on an average in a day. Without whatsapp that much of in times that they one having with whatsapp the interesting fact is that all are having different groups in whatsapp in the name of classes, groups, hostels, hometowns, events etc.

Smart phone users especially boys almost 49% of them are interested in updating the tech news with internet. Many are claimed that they having membership in many online forums and pages. They all have a tendency to read the technical comparisons on new mobile phones especially in amazon and Flip kart websites. Both websites having their mobile version app and a good number of users are already installed such apps. Around 24 % of them prefer desktop computers or a laptop to connect internet because they prefer large screen and are comfortable with mouse and keyboard. Simultaneously they are maintaining smart gadgets like smartphones. WhatsApp and internet are the main reasons for them to prefer a smartphone.

Around 73% Smartphone users on an average spending 20-30 minutes for hearing music many one carrying their headsets while going to college or outing. Many youngsters prefer headsets while making lengthy voice calls.

The notification from mobile application servers is good enough to catch attention of the users. These days they are sending frequent notifications with updates to customers to use their application. Mobile news applications are best examples in fact they are perfect in updating the current news. Many online traders and websites are planning to restrict only



to mobile applications. Examples flip kart no doubt in future the world will completely prefer smartphones to get access internet.

Why we are keeping our smart phones near to our bed?

These days many are using mobile as an alarm device and of course the very morning all need to check or update in face book, WhatsApp, Instagram or good morning tweets etc. instead of playing in ground these days our youngsters playing with digital gadgets. Our 50% population belongs to age group of 30. Now days good number of youngsters spending their time in front of a computer or digital gadgets. No wonder how they are becoming the couch potatoes. Wherever they go like hotels, function, living room, dining room, they carry mobile phones and play with those gadgets. So these habitués we can call it as digital addiction is like any other addiction such as alcohol, gambling, sex, etc. but no one will agree that they one addition to that gadgets. The questionnaire which used for the data collection is given below.

### **Recommendations**

Almost all research finding on the same topic reveals that the excessive use of digital gadgets creates lots of health related issues as well as psychological problems. So the present generation especially youngsters should understand the scenario and act. Very recently many celebrities promotes the habit of gadget free day which is an inspiration to all. Modern generation should understand that we can depend technology not for all but only for our necessities. Youth should limit their usage with gadgets and should make practice of day without digital gadgets. This may help to improve social bonding.

Medical department should give continuous campaigns on the same topic in the form of public service advertisement. Moreover parent should have a control over kids for not to promote gadgets for all needs.

### **Conclusion**

The present study was conducted based on digital gadget addiction of youth especially in three main cities of south India. The finding at the end was more than 50 % people are spending around 3 to 4 hours in a day with their gadgets. 80% people are having atleast 2 digital gadgets. All are giving prime importance to their smart phones. Internet, Smart phone and social media are becoming an unavoidable part of their daily life. In addition, of course around 43 % people are facing some kind of physical as well as psychological problem with excessive use of their gadgets.

### **Limitations**

Since the title named as Digital Gadget addiction in south India the pilot study was based on Amrita campuses and other 3 colleges in south India. However, for a future study the same can take for in-depth study in major cities of south India targeting below age of 30. More field visit report can incorporate in that.

### **References**

1. The Digital Junkies, (2015) September: India today magazine,
2. Lynsi Jennings, Judson rosebush, Computer Animation technology
3. Sonia Livingstone, Leau A Lievrouw, (2006). The Handbook of New Media
4. Anke Schwittay (2011). New Media Practices in India: University of Auckland

5. Dr.Chandra Shekar Ghanta, (2012). Whither New Media technologies in India: Telungana University.
6. Dr.Tripathi Durgesh, Impact of New Media on Teenager: International journal
7. News in shorts (2015), Mobile news application
8. International Telecommunications Unions (ITU). (February 2013). Key ICT indicators for developed and developing countries and the world (totals and penetration rates): Geneva.
9. <http://www.emergingedtech.com/.../pros-and-cons-of-digital-devices>.
10. Survey result, 2014,Kaspersky survey