

## Use of Various Communication Media by Adolescents and Patterns of Communication

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### Abstract

Our country's population is comprised of a larger number of teens and they are a bellwether in the use of various communication media. We often discuss the boom in the field of communication but we ignore the fact that teens are the flag bearers in the use of technology and it's the teens of the newer generations which comprise most of our population. This paper explores various mediums in which teens like to communicate, their communication patterns and data usage.

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### Introduction

Today every fifth person in India is a teen or as we call it adolescent (i.e. 10-19), the largest generation in history (1). With a greater access to technology, this generation tops the use of various communication media. They are getting higher internet speeds and cheaper data which had been a luxury to earlier generations. With the growth in the internet use and internet service providers there has been a greater increase in the use of instant messengers and social media. Aside from bigger media use pattern researches and untested media reports there is very less data to show the major trends in use of mobile phone to get an access to instant messengers or social media. There is a greater need for such data to study the market patterns as social media and peer pressure are the major driving forces for youth let it be buying or selling something or showing their opinions. A survey was conducted for this purpose.

Smartphone were first introduced in India in the year 1997, ericsson's 'penelope', atleast ericsson described it as a smartphone. But now the capabilities of a smartphone are endless and the tasks it can perform are numerous. The tasks which only a laptop or a desktop computer could perform can be performed with the help of a smartphone. This might explain the increase in the use of smartphone, other thing which people use smartphones being luxury. This phenomenon has changed thankfully in the last 5 years. In India, the age group of 16-18 has shown a rapid rise from 5% in 2012-25% in early 2014.

### Method

A paper and pencil survey with some ethnographic interview conducted on a group of sixty one individuals (23 boys and 38 girls). These individuals were gathered in the Kurukshetra University campus in Haryana. These individuals were mainly 12 to 18 years of age. The survey consisted of 10 forced choice questions and one question on post school schedule.

For ethnographic interview eleven individuals were chosen which comprised of 6 boys and 7 girls. All had smartphone access and internet access too. Interviews took 5 hours to complete and mainly comprised of questions related to their choice of medium, choice of messenger, their reaction to social media fake news, their friend circle, their virtual friend circle, time they spent on laptops, time they spent on smartphones, their need for a desktop or laptop, their data usage, their use of e-shopping apps, their favorite apps, etc. and a discussion on their media preference. Interviews were audio-taped.

### **Results and findings**

**Emails** were used only to create id on facebook, with no gender differences. Most of the younger teens used it to create facebook id, some used it because smartphones need an email id to log into their applications store (like playstore for android and app store for iphone). Their email inboxes consisted of messages from various shopping sites and some banks trying to loan them some money or even credit cards. Majority agreed to not opening their email inboxes in months. Email came out to be the least popular mode of communication amongst these individuals.

**Facebook** is used by majority of teens to interact and browse news on web pages of their interest. It is also seen as a barometer for testing popularity. Facebook likes and shares are a major driver for using it for the teens examined. Most of them had fancy names, adding some fantastic adjective to their name. Facebook's messenger app was found to be quite popular as they formed teens liked to form groups of some known and unknown people for sharing videos and messages of their interests. Also many relied on the app for browsing news and sharing their experiences. A pattern of 'vicarious living' was also seen amongst most of the teens.

**Youtube**, not very popular amongst the teens as data speeds and dependence on parents for recharge are a major issue in watching videos. Although young comedians with short comedy videos called 'vines' were found to be popular amongst them. As the app comes preinstalled in smartphones, the access to youtube is more than the actual use.

**E-shopping apps** were surprisingly found to be very popular amongst teens. But when asked about the shopping they did from the apps, the results were equally shocking. Dependence on parents for money and not able to select the proper quality goods were the main reasons for not using the apps for the real purpose. Most teens agreed to the fact that they used these sites to select the item they wanted to buy offline or from real shops.

**Whatsapp**, without a doubt the main reason for the teens examined during the interview and and the survey to use smartphone. This app came out to be the game changer for smartphones as per teens. They found it as the ultimate tool for connecting with peers. When asked about facebook messenger or similar messenger apps, they answered knowing the phone number to connect created a sense of intimate connection amongst teens and the ones they wanted to connect with, also they appreciated the factor that with number identification they can sieve out the people they did not wanted to talk to.

## Conclusions

The findings open gates to the unseen horizons of teen communication and would also provide a guide book to future researches in adolescent communication. The major findings being:

- Teens prefer to use lighter devices to communicate
- Use of messenger for intimate communication and romantic interactions is also referred.
- Teens believe that social media is a tool for becoming popular.
- Teens are not the decision makers when it comes to buying or shopping online.
- Teens are not phobic to newer technology if they find it useful.

## References

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