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## **An Analysis of Usage of Social Networking Sites in Jammu and Kashmir**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Social Networking Sites are considered as the web based application and platforms which help users to connect with one another and form social connections. It is said that use of these technological tools to communicate have led to digitization where each user on these website is available on a single click and the person doesn't need to search for anywhere as he can communicate with the other user through a single click. The aim and objective of the current study was to analyse the usage of Social Networking Sites in Jammu and Kashmir. The study also deals with the positive and negative impact of Social Networking Sites. The study reveal that the students in the Jammu and Kashmir access Social Networking Sites more than other sites. This might be because most the day to day information is available on these websites. As a result, the students are being getting addicted to these website. As compared to females, the male participants were found to be high on internet addiction than their counter parts and no significant difference was found in internet addiction with respect to their residential status.

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**Keywords:** Social Networking Sites, Virtual Private Networks, Academic Achievement, Jammu and Kashmir

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### **Social Networking Sites: An Overview**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is being considered as the technological world where the common people can't imagine their life without technology. Undoubtedly, these technological platforms have transformed our world into a global community (Majid, 2018). It is being considered that use of these technological tools has led to digitization where each and everything is available on a single click of mouse (Majid & Verma, 2018). These technological tools or technological platforms has a vast potential for making a good contribution to the education and help education in achieve the goal of excellence. The advancement in technology has forced each and every to be a part of it (Kouser & Majid, 2021). Among these technological tools, Social Networking Sites are the main technological tool being used today the young generation.

Social Networking Sites refers to various applications, websites and applications which provide an opportunity to common people to create a proper social and specialized connection with other people. The various social networking sites available to users today are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp etc. (Majid, 2019). Social networking site is the phrase used to describe any web site that enables users to create public profiles within that Web site and form relationships with other users of the same Web site who access their profile. Social networking sites can be used to describe community-based Web sites, online discussions forums, chat rooms and other social spaces online. After joining an SNS, an individual is asked to fill out forms containing a series of questions. The profile is generated using the answers to these questions, which typically include descriptors such as age, location, interests, and an "about me" section (Danah & Ellison 2007). The SNS websites then proceed with that information and display the profiles of people around that location or interest. Even now a days it has been seen that when a new user creates an account on Facebook, the friend request is sent automatically to the people of the same interest. As per the latest ranking issued by The Statista Portal in July 2018, Approximately 2 billion internet users are using social networks and these figures are still expected to grow as mobile device usage and mobile social networks increasingly gain attraction. Facebook was the first social network to surpass 1 billion registered accounts and currently sits at 2.2 billion monthly active users.

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### **Usage of Social Networking Sites in Jammu and Kashmir**

Social Networking Sites are now a days very much popular among students. The popularity is increasing day by day. With respect to Jammu & Kashmir, the mobile phone services in the state of Jammu and Kashmir was launched on Wednesday August 20, 2003, with Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee receiving the first call from the state Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed in Srinagar (Rediff). After the start of the mobile services in Valley, mobile Internet was the least thing among students. But as time passed and importance of internet started to grow, the common masses started to use Social Networking Sites. Though the students were using these sites even before the start of the mobile phone service by using private broadband

networks but due to easy access to the mobile phones, the number started to increase and now there is no one in Jammu and Kashmir who is not using Social Networking Sites. The social networking sites are considered as a main tool for communication and it is believed that most of the users use it for that purpose only (Majid, 2019).

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp are the Social Networking Sites or Apps which became popular among the students of Kashmir in early 2010. Still a large majority of the students were not paying attention to these sites. But due to law and order situation in 2010, a lot of people created their profiles on these websites to remain updated with the news related to the conditions in Kashmir. Following some law and order situations, the govt had to cut off the internet service to restore peace in Kashmir. Tabassum Farooq in a related study is of the opinion that it is hard to imagine one's life without internet. But the people of Kashmir valley had to live this beyond imagination life - a life without internet (Farooq, 2017). The usage of Social Networking Sites is increasing day by day and as such the common masses are getting addicted to these websites. Addiction towards Internet can be defined as excessive and uncontrolled urges regarding access to internet that leads to distress. Due to this addiction, some Internet users may develop an emotional attachment to on-line friends and activities that they create on their computer screens (The Illinois Institute for Addiction Recovery). The internet addiction is very much now a days particularly when we talk about the Social Networking Sites. A study conducted by Rehman et. al. (2016) reveals that there is significant negative correlation between internet addiction and psychological well-being among youth of Kashmir. Further the study reveals that there is significant difference in internet addiction among youth of Kashmir with respect to their gender. The male participants were found to be high on internet addiction than their counter parts and no significant difference was found in internet addiction with respect to their residential status.

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### **Negative Impact of Social Networking Sites on Health**

As the use of Social Networking Sites increased, student started to use the extra features of the websites. They switch over to creating Pages and Groups on Facebook and WhatsApp. In 2017, Doctors Association Kashmir (DAK) said that excessive use of Facebook, Twitter and other social networking sites increases the risk of mental health problems. They further said that excessive use of social media has been found to be strongly linked to underachievement at school. Syed Amin and A.W. Khan (2017) reveal in their study that in Kashmir Valley, the prevalence of depression is 55.72%. The prevalence is highest (66.67%) in the 15 to 25 years age group, followed by 65.33% in the 26 to 35 years age group. The difference in the prevalence of depression among males and females is significant. Depression is much higher in rural areas (84.73%) as compared to urban areas (15.26%). In rural areas the prevalence of depression among females is higher (93.10 %) as compared to males (6.8%).

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### **Social Networking Sites and Virtual Private Networks**

In April 2017, Authorities in Kashmir banned Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp after the Indian government said that social media services were being misused by antinational and antisocial elements. After blocking the sites, students went into a state of depression as they were not able to access the Social Networking Sites. Although the ban was going on, the Virtual Private Networks started to play their job. They enabled the student to use the Social Networking Sites by establishing a Private connection which shows how much the students were addicted to the Social Networking Network. Though these virtual private networks provide access to banned websites but at the same time it keep a track of all the surfing the user is doing which can cause many concern for the users (Majid & Kouser, 2019). Dr. Aijaz Ahmad Bund in a related study reveals five key aspects which are on threat that are identity, privacy, ownership and authorship, credibility, and participation. He believes that Social Networking Sites offers a way to keep in touch with new and old friends, network, follow bands and companies, and offers a mini biography of each user's life. It has been seen that the students in the Valley access Social Networking Sites more than other sites. This might be because most the day to day information is available on these websites. As a result, the students are being getting addicted to these website.

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### **Positive Impact of Social Networking Sites**

Though it is clear that the usage of Social Networking Sites in Jammu and Kashmir is high but that too seems to give fruitful results. There are thousands of people who are facing health issues and cannot afford the treatment. Few of the local news agencies and the common people share their account details on these websites and request for help. It has been seen that the people in Jammu and Kashmir are providing immediate help to these kind of people. On one side, there might be a lot of negative impact of Social Networking Sites but on the other side, these websites have rescued a lot of people. The educational information and information is being made available on these websites which help the people to access it in no time. The educated youth get to the latest job recruitment in India and the world. From the education point of view, these websites have been vary much helpful. The faculties create groups on these websites and application to share educational content with students and keep them updated regarding the classwork. In a related study, the researcher revealed that Usage of Social Networking Sites has positive influence on the academic achievement of students as they receive most of the study material from these websites (Kouser, 2020).

## Conclusion

Today's world is world of technology, and everyone want to be connected with each other. The Social Networking Sites has really in that aspect. These websites help uses to receive information from the comfort of their home. The users don't need to go anywhere for information rather the information comes to them. Now it depends on users how much usage they want to make and how much information they need. These websites help in creating connections and the users can create profiles and share their thoughts and views with other users. But this conversation should be limited, and the people should prefer to communicate with people in face and face mode. At last, we only can say that we need to remain in touch with our online community but that must be for a limited time period. We should increase our face to face communication than the online communication. There is a dire need to control the usage of internet, especially in adolescents and this need has to be fulfilled by parents, teachers and counsellors (Farooq 2017).

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