

Chapter 6

A Study on the Internet Usage Pattern of Youths in Sikkim

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ABSTRACT

Internet is being used by people all over the world. It has become a part of their day-to-day activity. The smartness brought by internet and its related devices have made life of people easy. Sharing knowledge, researching, and reaching out to people are now within the reach of fingertips. This study aims to find the internet usage pattern of youth in Sikkim, India. Fourteen internet activities have been identified and through a survey. The usage of these activities was analysed for the youth population in Sikkim, India. It has been found that, more or less, all the activities are used by the youth population of Sikkim. The most popular activity is use of emails and social networking sites while blogging and video calling is not too popular. In addition, it has been found that 67% of the users use internet for more than 3 hours per day. Hence, there also is a serious risk of “internet addiction.”

INTRODUCTION

The evolution of internet and technology has changed the lives of people in many ways. The challenges of speed, time, cost and distance have been overcome to a great extent with the advancement of technology and its widespread use in the modern era. The availability and affordability of high end, technologically advanced devices are possible due to cheap data plans and wide scale adoption of mobile devices among the masses. People have been using internet and technology for many purposes (Saha, 2016) like communication with each other by email, text messages, telephone calls, video conferencing, sending pictures and videos, research, writing and reading blogs, booking tickets, shopping, searching for colleges, doctors, hobbies, playing games and many more things (Saha, 2015). This has become a part of every individual in this high tech world. The wide scale availability of a number of robust and

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multi device compatible, user friendly applications have increased the popularity of internet. The use of internet has not only been adopted for high end competition in the business world but has diffused into the lives of individuals.

LITERATURE REVIEW

College students are a perfect blend of work and leisure, childhood and adulthood, are the futures of tomorrow. Internet is a part of their daily routine as they are habituated of using computers and mobiles since their childhood (Unnikrishnan et al., 2008). College students use internet as a supplement of their formal education and use the same to enhance their social lives (Jones, 2002).

One of the most important scientific developments in the field of technology is internet which is an ocean of information (Lal et al., 2006). Its advantage over paper based diffusion of information is cost and easy instant accessibility. Today internet is the biggest global digital information library. It is the most widely used information source for today's generation (Kumar & Kaur, 2005). The popularity of internet databases for accessing journals was highlighted in the study of (Asemi, 2005). A study conducted by Voorbij (1999) in Netherlands revealed that students and academicians used internet to search a wide variety of information including factual, ephemeral and specific information. According to Kooganurmath and Jange (1999) majority of users used internet for communication, followed by information access. The study also reported that 70% of users used internet for higher studies while 39% used it for deliberations with friends. The study of Mahajan and Patil (1999) reveals that researchers used internet for literature search, students used internet for more information on curriculum while teachers used internet to find secondary information for writing articles. The study of Kaur (2000) reveals that 75.6% of the respondents faced problems due to slow internet connectivity, more than 80% felt internet saved time, it is easy to use, provides extra information, is useful and is widely preferred over other medium. The study of Bavakutty & TK, (1999) confirms that students primarily use internet for their study, research scholars for research and academicians for teaching. Internet was also used for e-mail services, finding library catalogues and downloading images.

All good things are bundled with some negative and bad elements. Internet is no exception. Although there are numerous benefits of internet, there is an inherent problem of addiction (Carbonell et al., 2018; Menon et al., 2018). The possible inclusion of addictive usage of internet and mobile phones in the list of mental disorder has become a topic of great concern in the scientific fraternity (Carbonell et al., 2009). The term "technological addiction" has been given to the possible addiction of use of technology and technology enabled devices like television, mobiles, virtual gaming and internet (Griffiths, 2000). This problem is mainly seen among youth and adolescents (Lepp et al., 2015). Due to this there is increase in the stress and anxiety levels while there is lack of communication and sleep disorders (Thomé et al., 2012). It also affects psychological and mental health leading to numerous problems like loss of social skills, extreme obsession with websites, mobile apps, social networks and internet (Ghassemzadeh et al., 2008; Liu & Potenza, 2007).

Although technology of internet and mobile services has disseminated into the metros and other cities of India, it is yet to penetrate into the rural areas due to low population density and low paying capacity of users (Raman & Chebrolu, 2007). With rapid popularity of 4G technology and cheap data plans, Digital India is all set to change the scenario of technology adoption in the rural areas of India.

With an area of 7096 sq.kms, Sikkim is the second smallest state of India and holds the record of having the least population. The population of the state is 6.1 lakhs which is about .05% of total population of

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