

Social Media and Rural Youth - Implications and Imperatives

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ABSTRACT

Social media has become an integral part of modern life, offering numerous opportunities for communication and networking. Social media platforms are an essential element of the life of rural youth. The use of social media has shifted the focus of rural youth over time. Social media provides benefits such as improved connectivity, access to information and the ability to connect with people from different regions, it also presents significant disadvantages, including exposure to harmful content, social isolation and addiction. The use of social media has both advantages and disadvantages and its impact on rural youth is significant. This article examines the implications and imperatives of social media for rural youths. It highlights the present scenario, advantages, disadvantages and the need for policies to address the challenges faced by rural youths.

INTRODUCTION

Social media has revolutionized the way people communicate and share information. The term social media refers to all applications, websites, or blogs that allow people all over the world to interact over the internet, communicate, exchange material and make video calls among many other features. It

has transformed the world into a global village, where people can connect and interact with each other regardless of their geographical location. Social media is like two sides of the same coin. On one side it connects people worldwide and allows interaction, and exchange of ideas or knowledge, on the other side, it may promote

deceptive posts, messages, conflicts, cyber bullying, and mental and physical health issues. However, the use of social media has both positive and negative effects on society. Among all age groups, the majority of youth is rapidly transferring from electronic media such as television watchers and radio listeners to social media, youth rate is rapidly changing to social media, and the effects on youth are significant. While it is recognised that social media affects people's lifestyles, it is an ongoing effort to understand the nature of these influences in every community and country, particularly on adolescents.

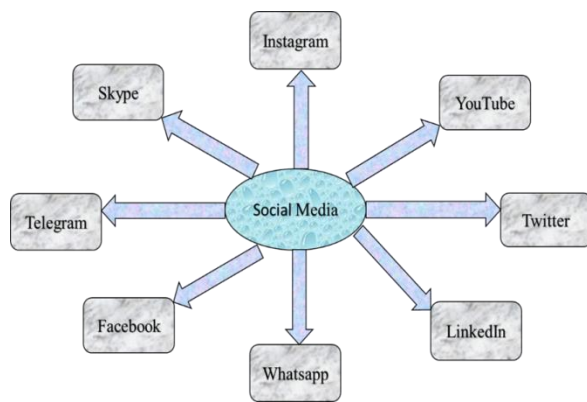


Fig. Different types of social media used by rural Youth

The use of social media among rural youths is increasing, but it is still not as prevalent as in urban areas. A survey by the Pew Research Center found that in the US, only 19% of rural adults use social media compared to 25% of adults in urban areas. Similarly, in India, only 22% of rural households have internet access compared to 42% of urban households. Despite these challenges, social media has the potential to bring about positive changes in rural areas.

According to a report by the World Bank, over 80% of the world's population lives in rural areas. In developing countries, rural areas are

often characterized by poverty, limited access to education, and healthcare services. Social media has the potential to bridge the gap between rural and urban areas by providing access to information, education, and communication. However, the use of social media is still limited in rural areas due to various challenges, including limited access to the internet and technology.

Many students are unable to access the internet and lack electronic devices such as laptops, smart phones, or PCs due to financial constraints. For millions of young learners this has resulted in a break of their education. Due to of the existing of digital and technology in India, many rural youths face obstacles and lack access to information about higher education, skill development courses, job opportunities, accessing benefits of government and many other things. This is the reason where government's put efforts to introduce and promote digital literacy among rural youth even in the most remote areas of Indian.

The SM Sehgal Foundation's named as 'Transform Lives One School at a Time' worked with the government's Digital India mission which focuses on increasing digital literacy. It collaborates with communities to establish safe, healthy and interesting learning environments for students in rural India's government schools through this programme. These include opportunities for higher education and suitable job vacancies, education and career guidance, development of confidence and negotiation skills, obtaining the benefits of government schemes, online transactions such as banking, bill payments, ticket booking, retail therapy, online payments or shopping, achieving proper health as well as hygiene and other things.

Reviews

- National Crime Bureau Records (2019) revealed that in India a total of 44,546 cybercrimes were filed in the year 2019 including 26,891 (60.4%) cases of online fraud, 2,266 (5.1%) cases of sexual exploitation and 1,874 (4.2%) cases of causing disregard. The study further concluded the more people utilise social media the more crimes committed.
- Pratap.V and Singh.K (2018) concluded that majority of students and scholars know digital literacy utilisation as well as its implementation in a proper way.
- Monica,et.al(2017) revealed that used of social media has both positive and negative impacts on youth. The study further added that overuse of social media increased among rural youth.
- Gupta.S(2016) mentioned that social media and technology has impact on agriculture and rural development where population can use in different manners.

Advantages

- Social media can provide rural youths with access to information, education and job opportunities.
- It can also connect them with people from different backgrounds, providing them with exposure and opportunities to learn and grow.
- Social media can also be used to promote social causes and create awareness about issues that affect rural communities.

- It can provide a platform for rural youths to share their experiences and stories, thus empowering them.
- Social media platforms offer opportunities to connect with people from different regions, share experiences, and exchange ideas.
- It can lead to improved access to information, enabling rural youths to learn about new opportunities and resources.
- Social media can provide a platform for rural youths to showcase their talents, express themselves creatively, and connect with others who share their interests.

Disadvantages

- The use of social media can also have negative effects on rural youths, it can lead to addiction, cyber bullying and exposure to inappropriate content.
- The lack of digital literacy and online safety measures can also make rural youths vulnerable to online threats.
- Social media can also create a sense of isolation and disconnect from the real world.
- Social media use can lead to social isolation, as excessive screen time can lead to decreased face-to-face interaction.
- Social media addiction is also a growing concern, with studies indicating that excessive social media use can lead to anxiety, depression and other mental health issues.

Inspiring Success Story



Mr Rajesh Kumar, a proud son of Shri Omprakash Kumar. He was born on 10th April 1999 and brought up in a small town named Jhunjhunu in Rajasthan state where he completed all his schooling included his high school. In the year 2020 he joined Dr Rajendra Prasad Central Agricultural University to pursued his degree in Community Science stream (batch 202-24). In the year 2021 he came up with the idea of starting his own YouTube channel after many of his friends influenced and appreciated his editing skills and activeness in social media. Soon after that he opened his official YouTube channel in 13th September 2021 where he named RK Education.

It wasn't an easy journey for him at those initial days, he started his YouTube channel with comedy videos but then later on he realised that he needs to do something else which will be more helpful to other youths in society who face financial issued or lack of support in the field of education, then later he converted his channel into education or related with academics. Through his channel he shares, upload videos in different aspects of education like medical stream, paramedical, agriculture, state exam, national exam, ICAR related exam and so on.

He faced challenges as well during this journey as he has to manage his academic life and social media platform throughout the year. He

overcame all these challenges and move ahead in his journey with positive outcome where he earned enough and supported himself financially in his study and college life and made his parents proud. This amazing young boy has set a good example, influencer and motivator to his friends, batchmates and other youths to never give up on their dreams no matter how much life push you hard but learn to stand back. His main motive is "Be in the right direction, do hard work and you will reach your targets".

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