

Impact of Social Media on Mental Health of Youth in Mumbai

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Abstract: Mumbai is one of the most digitally connected metropolitan cities in India, with urban internet penetration exceeding 80% and a large proportion of young people actively using social networking platforms. Studies suggest that more than 90% of urban youth aged 16–26 regularly use social media platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp, and YouTube, spending an average of three to five hours online daily. While these platforms provide opportunities for communication and information sharing, excessive usage has been associated with several psychological issues. Research indicates that adolescents who spend more than three hours per day on social media are more likely to experience anxiety, depression, and emotional distress. National surveys reveal that approximately 11% of student's report anxiety and 14% experience extreme emotional distress, highlighting the growing concern regarding youth mental health in urban India (NCERT, 2022). In a metropolitan city like Mumbai, where digital engagement is high, understanding the impact of social media on youth mental health has become increasingly important.

Ahmad, F., Mishra, V., & Musale, M. M. (2025). *Impact of social media on adolescent mental health: A comprehensive study.*

Keywords: Mumbai is one of the most digitally connected metropolitan cities in India, with urban internet penetration exceeding 80% and a large proportion of young people actively using social networking platforms.

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, social media has become an important part of everyday life, especially for adolescents and young adults. With the rapid development of smartphones and internet services, young people spend a significant amount of time on social networking platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, and YouTube. These platforms allow individuals to communicate, share ideas, express themselves, and stay connected with friends and family. While social media offers many benefits such as entertainment, access to information, and improved social interaction, increasing use of these platforms has also raised concerns about their possible effects on the mental health of young users (Ahmad, Mishra, & Musale, 2025; Prasad et al., 2023; Saleem & Jan, 2024).

Mumbai, being one of the most digitally connected metropolitan cities in India, has seen a rapid increase in internet usage and social media engagement among youth. A large number of young individuals aged between 16 and 24 actively use platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp, and YouTube for communication, entertainment, and social interaction. These platforms have significantly influenced how young people interact with others, build relationships, and shape their identities in modern urban society (Maurya et al., 2024; Gupta, Yadav, & Rathore, 2023).

However, excessive use of social media has been linked to several mental health concerns such as anxiety, stress, depression, and loneliness among adolescents. Constant exposure to online content, cyberbullying, unrealistic lifestyle portrayals, and social comparison can negatively affect self-esteem and emotional well-being. Research has also shown that individuals who spend more time on social media tend to report higher levels of psychological distress (Bhat, Gupta, & Bhat, 2024; Yadav & Khullar, 2024; Upadhayay, 2018; Jain, 2025). Therefore, it becomes important to



understand how social media usage influences the mental health of youth, particularly in a highly connected city like Mumbai.

II. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Social media plays a role in the lives of young people today. They use platforms like Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube and Facebook to chat with friends have fun and stay connected. In a city like Mumbai, where many people have internet and smartphones social media is something that many young people use daily. These platforms are good because they help young people interact with each other and get information. Using them too much can be a problem because it can affect their mental health.

There are reports that show mental health problems are getting worse among people in India. The Economic Survey 2025-26 says that 8-10% of teenagers in India have health problems that can be diagnosed. One reason for this is that they use social media too much. Researchers think that when young people, aged 15-29 rely much on social media it can cause anxiety, depression, stress from cyberbullying, sleep problems and low self- esteem. We can see these problems clearly when young people spend time online and less time talking to each other face-to-face.

Where everyone is connected to the internet it is crucial to understand how social media use affects the health of people. This research is going to look at how social media affects the health of people in Mumbai and what challenges they face in today's digital world.

Objective of the study

The specific objectives of this study are:

1. To examine the level of social media usage among youth in Mumbai.
2. To understand how social media influences the mental health and emotional well-being of young people.
3. To identify common mental health issues such as stress, anxiety, or loneliness that may be associated with excessive social media use.
4. To study the relationship between the amount of time spent on social media and the psychological well-being of youth.
5. To suggest possible ways to promote healthier social media usage among young individuals.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous studies have been conducted on the connections between social media usage and mental health amongst youths. Ahmad, Mishra and Musale (2025), suggest that while social media can provide ways for people to connect with and exchange information/updates with others; high time spent using social networking sites (including Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Snapchat) may be linked to decreased confidence and increased stress in youths who engage in heavy use. One of the major reasons cited for youths' decreased confidence when using social networking sites was the tendency for many young individuals utilizing such sites to constantly compare themselves with others through social media.

Prasad et al (2023) stated that social networking sites play an important role in shaping adolescent patterns of communication. However, they also noted that extended time spent online may cause increased feelings of loneliness and anxiety for many young people as they increasingly rely on digital forms of communication rather than traditional means of communication (face-to-face) with other people.

Maurya et al. (2024) and Gupta, Yadav and Rathmore (2023) conducted similar studies focusing on Salvadoran adolescents and found that social media had impacted the communication and interactions between adolescents in urban centres in a number of ways. However, the authors of these studies also indicated that although social media can provide platforms for entertainment and information-sharing, they also expose social media users to bullying, unrealistic depictions of lifestyles and social/friend comparison - all of which can have detrimental effects on an adolescent's mental health.



Previous studies have also shown that social media can have both positive and negative impacts on youth. It provides opportunities for communication and learning, if used appropriately, can be beneficial; however, if used excessively or poorly, can result in mental health issues in the user. More research needs to be done on how using social media will affect youth mental health, especially in large metropolitan areas such as Mumbai.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology refers to the systematic process used to collect and analyze information for the purpose of the study. The present research focuses on examining the impact of social media on the mental health of youth in Mumbai.

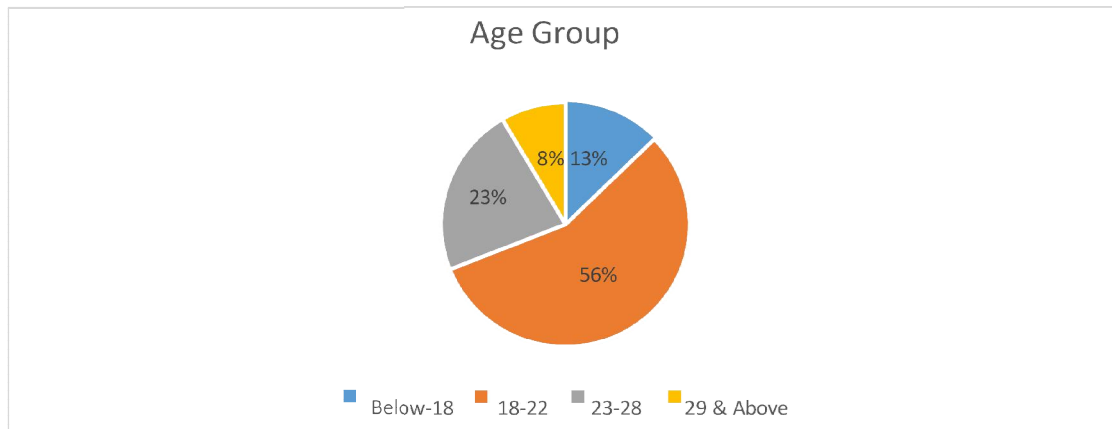
Primary Data:

Primary data was collected through an online survey conducted among youths in Mumbai. The online survey was conducted, and questions were asked about their usage of social media and how it affected their emotions and mental state.

Secondary Data:

Secondary data was collected from research papers, articles, and other reliable sources available online. This helped in understanding and supporting the research. The secondary data was analyzed using simple methods such as percentages, tables and charts.

Data Analysis and Interpretation (Survey Responses)



Interpretation:

The chart shows that most respondents 56% belongs to 18-22 age group. Around 23% are aged 23-28, while 13% are below 18 and 8% are 29 and above. This indicates that the survey mainly represents young individuals.

Social Media Platforms Used Regularly (Survey Responses)

To understand the digital behaviour of youth, respondents were asked about the social media platforms they use regularly. This helps in identifying the most popular platforms and the level of engagement among young users in Mumbai.

Platforms	No of Responses	Percentage
Instagram	49	68.1%
WhatsApp	43	59.7%
Snapchat	32	44.4%
You tube	24	33.3%
Facebook	14	19.4%



Interpretation:

The above table represents the social media platforms most commonly used by respondents. It can be observed that Instagram and WhatsApp are the most frequently. YouTube is also widely used, mainly for entertainment and informational content. On the other hand, platforms like Facebook show comparatively lower usage, suggesting a shift in preference toward more visually engaging and interactive applications. Overall, the data highlights that modern youth tend to prefer fast, user-friendly, and content-rich social media platforms in their daily lives.

Impact of Social Media on Mental Health (Survey Responses)

Responses	No of Responses	Percentage %
Yes Positive	43	59.7%
Yes Negative	20	27.8%
No Effect	9	12.5%
Total	72	100%

Interpretation:

The table shows that most respondents (59.7%) feel social media has a positive impact. However, 27.8% experience negative effects, while 12.5% report no impact. This indicates that social media affects users differently, with both positive and negative outcomes.

Social Media Addiction

Sr no	Response	No of Respondents	Percentage %
1.	Yes	40	55.7%
2.	No	15	27.8%
3.	Sometimes	17	23.6%
	Total	72	100%

Interpretation:

The above shows that a majority of respondents 55.7% feel addicted to social media. However, 27.8% of respondents do not feel addicted, while 23.6% sometimes experience addiction. This indicates that social media addiction is quite common among youth.

V. CONCLUSION

In a fast-paced city like Mumbai, social media is a constant companion for the youth. Whether it is staying connected, entertainment, or self-expression, social media is an essential part of their lives. From the findings of this study, it is evident that social media is beneficial in many aspects, but it is also observed that there is an impact on the mental health of the youth. However, there are many instances where the youth have found comfort in social media as well. In conclusion, social media is neither completely beneficial nor harmful; it is a mix of both.

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