

Mobile Phone Use, Abuse, and Addiction: A Sociological Analysis on the Students of University of North Bengal

Pintu Majumdar

Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Sociology,

University of North Bengal, Shivmandir, Raja Rammohunpur, West Bengal, India

Email – rspintumajumdar@nbu.ac.in

Abstract: *Information communication and technology are resulting in rapid and significant changes in human behaviour. The comprehensiveness introduced by information communication and technology is the production of individualistic societies. Mobile phone has a great impact on human life; it influences all sides of life whether social, cultural, technical, economic, etc. and has become a major part of people's life. This trend is visible among the students of North Bengal University. The area of this empirical study is North Bengal University. So, data collected from Arts, Science, and Commerce streams. This study was based on primary as well as secondary data. The study will consider theories and approaches of different sociologists to understand and relate the present context of the study. Ram Ahuja's Social Bond Approach, The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (Dramaturgical Model) by Erving Goffman, and The Marxist notion of capitalism are major concept and theories that can be useful for the study and found a direct relation with this study. Different method has been employed to collect information's and analysed by the qualitative approach.*

Key Words: use, abuse, cyber-crime, madness to selfie culture.

1. INTRODUCTION:

India has become one of the fastest-growing mobile markets in the world. The mobile services were commercially started in August 1995 in India. In the initial 5-6 years the average monthly subscriber's addition around 0.05 to 0.1 million and in 2003-05 it becomes around monthly 2 million, but at the end of 2005 it becomes 32 million and 65 million in 2006. Mobile users increasing rapidly as time passes on. In 2015, it was 242.92 million, in 2016, the number was 281.81 million, in 2017, it was 351.06 and in 2018, the total number of subscribers was 390.9 million people and the number is growing rapidly. The study focuses on mobile use, abuse, and addiction by assessing the nature, pattern, and impact of mobile use on the users. The study seeks to investigate different activities of the user and how mobile phone use influences the behavior of the users.

Nowadays information and communication technology have a great impact on students' as they are more interconnected than ever before. The uniqueness of information technology is that nowadays it is easily accessible to everyone. It is having a focused interactive character; the interaction takes place without the bodily presence of those who interact. It is a kind of energy which helps to decide on our own. Information communication and technology (from mobile phone use) are resulting in rapid and significant changes in human behaviour. The comprehensiveness introduced by information communication and technology is the production of individualistic societies. This trend is visible among the students of North Bengal University. Some of the most significant consequences of information technology on the students are related to identity and self-selected culture for a better living. Through the mobile phone, students can choose or form a peer group with a like-minded person who has the same values. It is quite obvious that communication is essential for this gamut of activity. As an effective interpersonal communication tool, the mobile phone with social network plays a significant role in contemporary societies.

It can transcend the limitation of time and distance, the mobile phone has become an emblematic technology among students for identity and become a part of the self-selected culture. Students pursuing courses in the university have more time and mobility. They gathered in the canteen areas, cafes, stores, and city centres which are considered as the epicentres of interactions, planning, and work. They use a mobile phone and social networking sites to fix places and time. Hence, the mobile phone has created a Community experience among the students of North Bengal University. It has built a social network where relations are developed that based on virtual reality. We can find that, to some extent this networking increases interaction and relationships while in reality, it hampers existing relations with family members, friends along with their education. It only influences to have a virtual world that marginalizes the individual. The present study had been conducted to find out how mobile phone use is embedded in the daily life of the students of North Bengal University. The impact of the mobile phone on students is increasing day by day. Students have become

very much dependent on the gadget and it helps to build one kind of identity within the society. This identity is nothing but a hedonic pleasure for them that impact their education, daily interaction with their family members as well as friends. It is quite obvious that social networking increases social contacts but on the other hand, it marginalizes individuals in regular interactions because they are not always available whenever the user needed them. In networking sites all the contacts are not personally known, so users' identity could be false. Revealing personal information always invites danger to the user in the form of cybercrime. Many students are victimized through cyber activities that have been conducted on social sites by the students. This paper will try to deal with some of the relevant questions. These questions will formulate the major objectives of the study. How the students use the mobile? How do they look at their mobile and their intimacy with the mobile as well as social sites? Is there any way that mobile can help their education and how, if they use mobile or internet for that purpose? How they form their peer group through mobile or by social networking sites? How they manage their expenditure on mobile and internet use. This study will try to locate why they used mobile only for the accessibility, necessity, safety, or personal technology of information or they are abusing mobile to such a extend that reached addiction and they get addicted. This paper will discuss the positive and negative aspects of mobile phones with the internet and the behavioral pattern, intensions of the user as well.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

Many sociological theories are very much important and related but all the theories cannot be comprehended. Therefore, the study will focus on certain theories that are sociological in nature. The study will try to relate the theories which are very much applicable to this study and can help to extract the real insight. The study will consider Ram Ahuja's Social Bond Approach which he has discussed in his book 'Indian Social Problems' (1982), as the user's behavior towards the bonding which makes them social in society. In such a way, their effort to become social with the help of mobile and social networking sites makes them vulnerable. In contemporary society, people are always ready to engage themselves with social networking sites and upload all their personal and impersonal information along with their daily activities. This kind of activity refers to users' intention to become more and more social by increasing the network of their social contacts. Here a question arises, by uploading all of their activities in social networking sites can users truly become social? Does such behavior makes their life easier or are they moving towards the addiction of the virtual world which could be the vulnerability to cybercrime? Ram Ahuja mentioned that it is the social bonding that influences the interaction of individuals which impacted the values about what is good or desirable for their behavior. The behavior is completely guided by the social bond of an individual. In the virtual world, the individual does whatever they think is desirable to build a social network that will concretize their bonding with others. This kind of feeling creates an attachment to the world which may not be known to the user. In the course of studentship, they are expected to learn things that will help to build their academic caliber in future career but they are using mobile and social networking sites in a sense of 'openness'. They are eager to state their psychological conditions (feelings), material conditions (food, shopping, visiting a place with date and time), family occasions along with disputing behavior of the family members, etc. In peer groups, the numbers of likes, comments, followers, the share of their uploaded images matter a lot to them. They consider these activities as a status symbol that depicts the wideness of social contacts and popularity. These activities generate hedonic pleasure to them which will follow an insatiable appetite for lifelong. Once this engagement is hampered by external forces like, parental supervision, hacking, online bullying, or decreasing trends in likes, comments, shares, followers than users start behaving in a deviant manner, and feeling of anomie comes in which could damage their career.

The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (Dramaturgical Model) by Erving Goffman was published in the book 'Presentation of Self' in the year 1959, which is very much important concept for this paper because it is directly related to self-presentation in social networking sites and over the mobile phone. He presented his theory in two parts- The dramaturgical model and impression management. In day to day life, people are always trying to present themselves in public through social networking sites where the mobile phone is an available means. This procedure became very easiest to portrait themselves in a better way. The concept of backstage and front stage performance is appropriate for understanding. In the virtual world, no one is imperfect because, in reality, they are well aware of themselves and about their lacking areas. All these disputes they recover before the presentation of themselves in the virtual world. In Goffman's theory, expression and impressions are very important that lead towards impression management because users are well aware that expressions create an impression. They are trying hard to manage themselves to become perfect without any flaws before a presentation so that they could generate a positive expression and that will leave a good impression on all the virtual companions. According to, Goffman- 'What are our self-presentation motives? In answer he mentioned three things- First, to achieve personal goals, second, to present a consistent and positive view of ourselves to the world, and lastly, to conform to social norms. In this paper 'madness to selfie culture' is a key term that has its relation directly because in daily life one is always trying to disseminate his/her image again and again to the virtual

world members to give a consistent and positive view of their self by uploading self-images. The ingredients of likes, comments, followers, shares of their images confirm and satisfy one's personal goals of uploading. By uploading more and more selfies on social networking sites they became addicted to this selfie culture and they forgot to conform to social norms that could result in cyber-crime.

The Marxist notion of capitalism is also related to this study in the sense that, these social networking sites encourage the smartphone companies along with the users who are very much influenced to start a business house in social networking sites without investing any capital on land, shop, or advertisement. They can easily promote their business on social networks. In India, popular smartphone companies are luring their customers by introducing the latest smartphones in the market and influence the consumers at regular intervals (Lyon, 2001). Although, these sites are social platforms, in recent times these sites have become very much economic by its activities. We can find buyers and sellers are very much active in social networking sites nowadays.

3. BACKGROUND OF THE UNIVERSE:

The field of study is North Bengal University which was established by the Act of the legislature of West Bengal in 1962 and assigned the mandate of producing teaching, training, and research in various branches of advanced learning, promoting and dissemination of knowledge to fulfil growing socio-economic, and technical manpower needs in the districts of West Bengal along with neighbouring states. The University of North Bengal is Re-accredited "A" by NAAC in the year of 2017. University has 3 faculty- Arts, Science, and Commerce along with some self-financial courses which continue for one year and two years as well. In the Arts faculty their History, Bengali, Economics, Sociology, Political Science, and so on, in the Science discipline, there are Botany, Chemistry, Mathematics, Geography, and so on, lastly commerce. In self-financial courses, there is Rural Development, Tea Management, Master of Business Administration, and so on. The total number of students in these departments is around 2055. They are pursuing their master's regularly. In distance education, there are 25000 students enrolled per year at North Bengal University. 50% of these total students are from outside of the Siliguri area. In the University campus, there are 4 girl's hostel and 4 boy's hostel for students along with research scholars.

4. METHODOLOGY:

The present study is conducted from a sociological perspective. The area of this empirical study is North Bengal University. So, data collected from Arts, Science, and Commerce streams. This study was completely based on primary as well as secondary data. For secondary data different books, journals and newspapers have been reviewed. For data collection, different methods have been employed. In an empirical study, rapport establishment is very much important which ensures the researcher gets information from the respondent. To fulfil the aim, the Random Sampling method has been applied for the selection of the respondents from the 27 departments of North Bengal University. Two case studies have been taken from each department but some departments are self-financed and continue for one year. So that one case study was taken from those departments and two case studies from the rest, one from the first semester and one from the third semester of each department. Fifty cases as sample have been taken from all the departments of North Bengal University. Interview schedule prepared for the collection of the data, the study has used interview schedule because of personal contact can be made which would help to explain different and difficult terms. The next important method is the observation that is applied for the study. Non-participant observation method had been used to get the real scenario. Lastly, the group discussion method was executed to extract information as well as cross-checking of it which has been gathered during the fieldwork. The data has been analysed by the qualitative approach.

The study followed Likert's 4-point Scale model for addictive use of social networking sites by allowing the dimensional answers of- dangerous use- using the mobile while driving, prohibited use- the tendency to use the mobile or accessing social networking sites in banned places, dependence symptoms- loss of control, the occurrence of negative effect in situations or contexts in which the use of the mobile phone is not possible, financial problems- negative outcome in daily life. All these questions are followed by this model to ensure the addiction nature of the users.

5. DISCUSSION:

The study explores some important insights through the analysis of the questions alongside the discourse of the students. The mobile phone has acquired a significant position in students' life as well as in common life which plays a vital role in communication. Now, mobile symbolize as a constant companion of the users. Without a mobile phone, a newer form of alienation process has taken place within society. A sense grows where they felt left alone with no contact or they are unable to update themselves and failed to keep the balance with their family and friends. Now, the mobile phone is equated with the existence of an individual; for them, the mobile phone is playing the role of a friend, philosopher, and guide. Users cannot imagine themselves without their mobiles because, they think, they will be lost

and get bored if they lost their mobile not for forever but for a few days. It would be a nightmare for a lifetime if they lost it forever. The students expressed that the World that they experienced is freedom-filled and identity-focused. Such a condition influenced the students and monopolizes the interaction with those who believe in that expression. Now mobile phones are used as an expressive personal technology that enables the students to do or express those things which they aspire. With the help of the internet, they became a member of several social networking sites and create several identities through which they can fulfil their wishes. It always marginalizes one from the rest because of concerning accommodation to the virtual relations instead of existing. Such involvement leads to an identity crisis that itself direct towards an unforeseen social reality.

It is clear from this study that the mobile phone has become a symbol of identity. Each member is characterized by their number or any semiotic character which is used by the user. It gives the user's own space and time compression. Students now see the mobile as a means of freedom, a dice that instantly connects them to their friends, families, and with latest gossips. The majority of the students pointed out that mobile is a 24*7 gadget which they can keep with them all the time and can make use as a personal and advanced technology which keeps all the members of the family and friends always in touch and they can interact with them any time, any moment from anywhere and altogether heading to the process of globalization. It provides them one kind of sense of security because if they involve in any sort of problem, they can contact immediately and can call for help. The mobile phone is so helpful in daily life and it embossed a social network among the students of North Bengal University.

Although mobile phone is becoming a symbol of identity as in, particular SIM number represents individuals in a social setting as well as in the virtual world (social networking sites) there are symbols or names which reveal their identity and they created these identities of their own. This extends the sociological inquiry that, the process of creating their identity along with its modifications wherever or whenever they are required. One user can create several identities in the virtual world that offers a paradoxical space to the students. The identity modifications are highly prevalent which makes it hard to recognize any user and the user's authenticity. Falsification or doubts are always there in recognizing the particular user. This statement is for those who modified their accounts frequently in social networking. Over the phone users makes a false statement that the particular user is in any particular place while he is sitting in his drawing room and having a cup of tea that intensified the opportunity of falsification, anything could be possible in networking. So, the modifications of identity and locations are being used wrongly nowadays by the users which leads towards the diminishing value judgment, low morale, etc. Many users did this due to the hidden aspirations and desires. For instance, one girl opened one Face book account in the name of a boy and uploaded many pictures of a boy and sent a friend request to girls. She started chatting with girls as a boy. All of her hidden wishes to play the role of a boyfriend are being carried out on the social networking sites. On the other hand, girls were treating her as a boy. They do not know the actual identity of that particular boy who is a girl or a lesbian. So, in networking sites, we need to aware of and conscious enough to accept or send any friend request to anyone.

It is also found that there are significant differences in the use of mobile phones among the respondents concerning their socio-economic conditions. However, a majority of the respondents share their ideas, knowledge, feelings, and difficulties with others through mobile or at different social sites. Appropriately, one thing could be considered that revealing personal problems or information always brings difficulties for the users and that could be very much fatal in nature. Many of the users who felt lonely reveal all their personal information like personal photos, videos, and bank-related information, and so on, and those things are the causes of cybercrime. They could be blackmailed by hackers or by their virtual friends. Many instances happened in this region of Darjeeling district and most of them involved students.

The use of mobile phones for communication and expression of feelings create dependency amongst themselves. Students can form their peer group with which they can share and exchange their views. They get the choice to be a member of the group with similar interest in the virtual world. In this way, mobile phones contribute a significant role in making the students' virtual world. Apart from education, the internet plays a vital role for the users. Many of the students use the internet for their educational activities instead of logging in to social networking sites. This technology helps to expand their area of knowledge to the maximum and update them very quickly. They can prepare themselves for any educational challenges. It depends upon the user's activity and interest whether they take the positive sides of technology or abuse it.

In society, imitation is a very important behavior of an individual. Teenagers are the major segment who used imitation during their ages. It creates competition amongst the group members (virtual or actual). In the case of a mobile phone, if any group member having a costly cell phone then, the competition starts working within group members. They start to pressurize their family members to give them that particular cell phone or even more costly one, if the family members denied or unable to provide it, then they commit some irrational activities just to satisfy their ego. They just wanted to keep their status within the group. This kind of behavior creates distress among family members or it could be a situation where deviant or criminal activities may grow.

The mobile phone played a crucial role for girls rather than boys in terms of empowerment. As a personal and constant companion, it provides personal space and freedom to the girls because now they can communicate with their friends anytime and it provides a sense of security while they are outside home. In the considered field, most of the girls are staying in the hostel. They can keep in contact with their families and can provide the information that they are safe. Family members can assure themselves of the safety of their children and can monitor their activities as well. Through the mobile phone, girls become economically empowered. Now, many of the girls start doing business on social networking sites. They can freely advertise their business products, their services, and their holding (bridal makeup, clothing shops, makeup items, etc.). They can accumulate money without visiting several places physically and can sell their products anywhere they wanted to buy home deliveries through the post. They do not need to spend any money for these purposes. So economically mobile phone makes more empowered than they were earlier. Boys also doing their businesses on social networking sites but that has not been considered as empowerment for them.

In contemporary society, mobile is playing a vital role in people's life. It becomes a major tool or constant companion or medium of enjoyment. Students are a very important segment of society, generally considered as the future of the nations. Students should focus on their educational activities along with physical exercise which can be done through playing games in the ground but in a real situation, they are playing games not in the ground but on the bed over the mobile phone. Students are spending a major portion of their time operating their mobile phones. They devoted enumerable time to mobile that is unproductive to many extend. Major activities on the mobile phone are chatting with friends, chatting in social networking sites (friends may be personally known or unknown), calling, scrolling news feed, again and again, searching people with whom they aspire themselves to join, playing games, listening to songs, taking selfies and uploading photo, checking repeatedly how many likes, comments dropped by the friends with their reactions on the photos. These likes, comments, shares, followers make students imbecile to selfie culture. They do not know the actual reason for clicking so many selfies in a day. Gradually it becomes an addiction to them which can be termed as 'madness to selfie culture'. It impacts on students' psychological order of viewing society. They regularly upload all of their pieces of information private or public, happiness or sadness, enjoyment, or boredom in social networking sites. Views, likes, comments, share, and followers have become so much important to them that sometimes they posted live videos to share their feelings or to increase the trend in likes, comments, or shares. They never bothered about what kind of message they convey to the society and how they portraying their image to the family members or society as a whole. Sometimes, many users share murder, rape, atrocities against women and children which generate some sort of awareness and they can put their opinion on the particular issue and can create a virtual movement against any social evil or practice. For instance, recently we have experienced that one girl child was raped in Kashmir and how much virtual activities were taken place. These activities become significant in the virtual world but on the other hand, it impacts teenagers mind set up and they lured to commit such kinds of cases unconsciously. It changes the behavior pattern of the user.

Too much use of the mobile phone can create mental distress along with family disorganization, fatigue which occurs through the alienated feeling of the user. Users usually gave priority towards virtual relations instead of actual or existing relations. They build peer groups in the virtual world with whosoever understands them they think. So, they need to spend more time on social networking sites to find friends, they devote extra time that could be a major impediment to their education or other activities. Some users just travel from one site to another to find their suitable friends. Some of them being online throughout a day and that can be a reason for family disorganization. Family members always get irritated to see all these activities of their children or brothers or their sisters. Use of these sites can be useful if it is in a limit but if it crossed its limit then the problem starts. They used to waste their valuable time while they should invest that amount of time to their study.

Technology is an indicator that always shows the development of any society. The mobile phone is a communicative technology and at the same time, is it very much personal. Mobile phone use provides a personal and secret platform for users. Education is a key concept of any society because it helps individuals to grow in a civilized manner and to secure a position within the society. So, in that case, students should devote all of their time to their study but here, the mobile phone plays a vital role. Students could use a mobile phone as a surfing engine to access all of their required information, concepts, relating materials regarding their study along with non-academic interests; but in reality, most of the students especially the hostellers using it in a negative way to realise their personal desires, although they are not realizing it. With the help of an in-depth interview method, the study revealed that students are using it for drugs and arranged inmates for the celebrations over the phone. Another dimension of it is the prevalence and popularization of pornography. Visiting pornographic sites is quite normal in hostels because the university is providing free Wi-Fi access to the students. Firstly they visit the sites then download sex videos and start circulating to their friends which is time-consuming. It directly affects their imagination and diverts them from the study subject to other hedonic pleasure that is ultimately insatiable. So, they easily get addicted to these sites and start fantasizing. Due to low supervision and

unlimited internet facility they can continue and explore their time in negative interests instead of their study and that can make huge damage to their educational career.

The use of mobile phones has its benefits and losses. As we all know, mobile phone facilitates wider social connections through calls, messages, emails, different social networking sites, etc. It helps to build a network that provides a strong interpersonal relationship. People can easily contact others virtually but at the same time; it limits the physical interactions of the individuals. Youths are spending huge amount of time on social networking sites and become a part of rumours which has already been discussed, they called it trends because without checking the authenticity of the information they start liking, commenting, and sharing that has a great impact to the individual knowledge in particular and society in general. The study found that social networking sites nowadays have become a platform where they can release all of their frustrations, abusing mentality, and can satisfy their personal grievances by blaming or abusing others' psychology. These kinds of activities are taking place and at the same time, they are urging support in the name virtual or online revolution against any issue without having a proper knowledge regarding the same. These activities are very dangerous and harmful to the future of the youth. Here, one sort of process is going on where quasi-groups are turning into a social group and starts functioning based on the same and similar intentions and interests. This is how mobile phones impacting daily life, especially students.

6. CONCLUSION:

Information technology and communication are advancing rapidly in contemporary times. The mobile phone is no exception to that. Initially, it came into existence only to communicate one at a time but as time passed on, now we can communicate several individuals at a time with the help of smart mobile. Mobile technology makes communication easier which was never before. It has a great impact on human life. It influences all sides of life whether social, cultural, technical, economic, etc. and has become a major part of people's life. Mobile phone use has its positive and negative dimensions; it is up to the user what side they wanted to choose. Mobile and internet use provides a platform where interaction takes place and users start judging themselves on the basis of their image on the virtual world that has created intentionally without any flaws and is completely based on face value instead of their innate qualities that mean, in before virtual communication and interaction. People used to judge on the basis of individual qualities that is behavior, language, way of life, education, etc. Users are actually appreciating and creating an 'image of an image' that is very much relevant in contemporary times not only amongst youth but in all ages.

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