

Gender Variation in Using Social Media Among Adolescents in Hyderabad City

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Abstract: *The advent of social media has significantly influenced the lives of adolescents, shaping their social interactions, self-expression, and information consumption. This research investigates the frequency of social media usage among adolescent children in Hyderabad city, with a specific focus on gender-based variations. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, data was collected through surveys and interviews with 440 adolescents aged 13-18 years from both government and private schools and colleges in Hyderabad. The findings reveal significant gender-based variations in social media usage, with male adolescents demonstrating a higher engagement in various social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram and you tube compare to female adolescents. The study also highlights the socio-economic profile of the adolescents and the gender variation in access to own smart mobile phones. This research provides valuable insights into the gender dynamics of social media usage, informing educators, parents, and policymakers to foster a balanced and healthy digital environment for adolescents.*

Key Words: *social media, adolescents, gender, usage, variation.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

1.1 Evolution of Social Media and its Types

The evolution of social media has taken place in the early 1990 where it has started with a intention of sharing information and news at one single board, it mainly operated by news groups, forums and other social groups. In the year 2000 and later on the social networking sites has focused on connecting the friends' sharing photos, videos and music albums through networking sites which mainly include Friendster, MySpace Orkut etc., For example, Facebook originally for college students, it expanded to the general public and became a dominant platform for connecting with friends, sharing updates, and more (Dhingra et al, 2019).

In the decade of 2001-2010 twitter and Instagram has taken a new concept of microblogging with realtime pictures and videos and other tweets, on the other side snapchat and tiktok has focused on the short videos incorporating trends, challenges, music and photos. Meta Platforms (formerly Facebook: Expanded its ecosystem to include Instagram, WhatsApp, and other services. Emergence of Niche Platforms like Clubhouse (audio-based social networking) and newer entrants focused on specific interests or communities (Love, K. C. 2015).

1.2 Adolescence Meaning and its importance:

Globally, there is no uniform definition to Adolescents. Different countries consider different age groups. Defined by the **United Nations** as those between the ages of **10 and 19**, adolescents experience a transition period between childhood and adulthood and with it, significant growth and development (UNFPA, 2014). In India also according to various government sources like The National Adolescent Health Strategy and National Programme for Youth Adolescent Development, the 'adolescent' would cover persons in the age group of 10-19 years (Government of India, 2014)

Adolescence is recognized as a phase rather than a fixed time period in an individual's life. Adolescence is characterized by rapid brain development, deep physical, biological, emotional and cognitive transformations.

Adolescence is the years in which young people establish the social, cultural, educational, emotional and economic resources to maintain their wellbeing and health across the life course. Interventions made at this stage can lay or reinforce the foundations for a fulfilling and healthy adult life. Adolescence frequently co-occurs with puberty, a biological phenomenon defined by a constellation of events that are driven by increases in adrenal and gonadal hormones, including the development of secondary sex characteristics and modulations in muscle and fat. It is associated

with a period of increased risk-taking behaviours as well as increased emotional reactivity. This is typically coincident with changes in the social and school environment, such as spending less time with parents and more with peers, as well as an increase in autonomy.

1.3 Statement of the Problem:

In India, adolescents comprise a sizeable population, constituting 243 million comprising nearly one-fifth of the total population (21.4%). Composition varies by age and sex, where of the total population, about 12.1 percent belong to 10-14 age group and 9.7 percent are in the 15-19 age group. With the surge of smartphones and easy internet access, social media has become an integral part of most people's daily lives, especially among adolescents. This demographic is increasingly engaging with platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Facebook, and Twitter. While these platforms offer opportunities for connection, creativity, and self-expression, concerns have arisen about the potential negative consequences of prolonged and intense engagement.

Social media networking of adolescents has a vital role to play in the advent and development of psychopathology. Online community social interactions are described as significant risk factors for mental health issues. Social media users are radically subjected to idealized self-shows. This poses a danger to youngsters' potential to appear superficial, but the awful effect may depend on a form of social media interaction. The impact of social media on adolescent children is an area of significant interest to educators, parents, policymakers, and mental health professionals. Hence, the present study would like to focus on the issues related to the impact of social media on adolescents in major metropolitan city of Hyderabad.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Popat, A., & Tarrant, C. (2023) in their study 'Exploring adolescents' perspectives on social media and mental health and well-being—A qualitative literature review' highlighted the complex impact of social media on adolescent wellbeing. Their perspectives enabled in-depth understanding of the reasoning behind the positive and negative effects of social media usage on mental health. NCPCR (2021) (National Council for Protection of Child Rights) in their study conducted in 6 states namely Delhi, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Bhubaneswar, Ranchi and Guwahati on 3491 number of children identified that 42.9 percent of all valid respondents amongst children confessed to having a social networking account and 52% children accepted that they are chatting on social media. Of these, Facebook (used by 36.8 percent) – Instagram (used by 45.50 percent) are the most popular. NCPCR reveals that 37.15 percent of children, always or frequently, experience reduced levels of concentration due to smartphone use. Jahan I et al (2021) studied total 601 Bangladeshi students included questions relating to socio-demographic, behavioral health, online use behaviors, and psychopathological variables. They found in their results that quarter of the participants (26%) reported having low levels of internet addiction, whereas 58.6% were classed as having moderate internet addiction and 13% severe internet addiction.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

3.1 Objectives:

- To study the socio-demographic profile of the various adolescent age groups who are using social media in the Hyderabad city.
- To understand the purpose of using social media by adolescent children of various age groups covering 11 to 18 years.
- To assess the gender variation in usage of social media among the adolescents.

3.2 Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between adolescent girls and boys in usage of social media.

3.3 Research Design:

The study used both qualitative and quantitative data through primary and secondary sources. Primary data has been collected by survey method through self-structured questionnaires using appropriate scale questionnaires from 440 students (school and Intermediate college) covering two zones of eleven circles of Hyderabad city. The collection of samples has followed the technique of stratified random sampling.

3.4 Sample Selection:

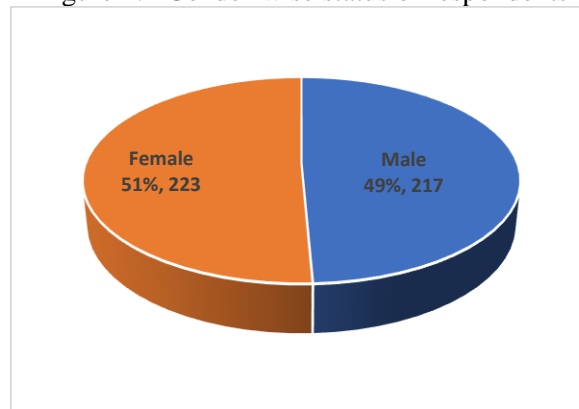
There are total six zones in Hyderabad city. These zones are further divided into 30 circles. Of these, two zones have been selected using purposive sampling based on feasibility.

From each circle one (1) school and one (1) intermediate college was selected using simple random. In each selected school (9th & 10th class) and college, 20 adolescent children were chosen randomly consisting 10 boys and 10 girls respectively. A total of 440 adolescent children were surveyed consisting of 223 girls and 217 boys.

4. FINDINGS:

4.1 Gender-wise status of the respondents:

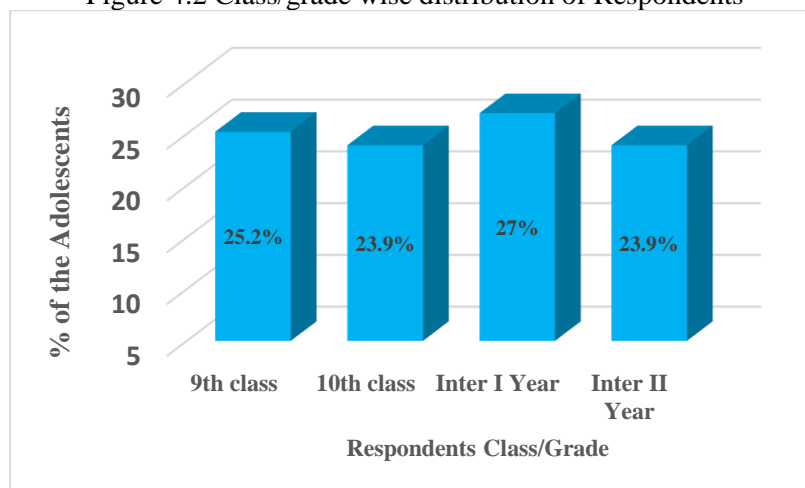
Figure 4.1 Gender-wise status of respondents



From the figure 4.1, the data represents that out of 440 respondents, majority of the respondents belongs to girls with 50.7 percent. The boy adolescent children constitute 49.3 percent. It shows that the present Indian society was enlightened towards importance of girl education. It is a good indication because since decades girls and women were severely discriminated in all the sectors.

4.2 Class/Grade wise status of respondents

Figure 4.2 Class/grade wise distribution of Respondents



The figure 4.2 represents class/grade wise (9th, 10th classes and Inter I and II year) distribution of respondents from the selected institutions. The data illustrates that largest group of students are in the Inter I year with 27.0 percent. This is followed by the students of 9th class constitutes one-fourth (25.2 percent) of the total students. The 10th class and Inter I year grade children each account for 23.9 percent respectively. Further, the data indicates that a notable proportion (50.9 percent) of the adolescent children are in Intermediate education. Overall, the data shows that with small variation students are selected in equal proportion with respect to their class.

4.3 Respondents based on their type of school/college:

Hyderabad city is major metropolitan area in India, where people of multi-culture and varied socio-economic families are living. This study has focused to cover such diversified respondents of adolescent children pursuing in both government and private institutions.

Table 4.1: Frequency and percentage of Adolescents based on their type of school/college

S.No	Type of Institution	Frequency	Percent
1	Government Institution	250	56.8
2	Private Institution	190	43.2
Total		440	100.0

From the table 4.1, it is found that out of 440 respondents, majority are pursuing in government institutions with 56.8 percent. The remaining 43.2 percent respondents are studying in private institutions. While this percentage is smaller than that of government institutions, it still represents a significant portion of the adolescent population. This distribution suggests that both sectors serve important roles in the education landscape, and it might be valuable to further explore the factors that influence students' decisions, approach, understanding, life-style, daily activities, etc. in one type of institution over the other.

4.4 Respondents Type of Family:

The information about the family type of adolescent children in the sample population has been collected. The table 4.2, outlines the family structure of 440 adolescent children that is classified into three types of families viz. Nuclear family, Joint family and Extended family.

Table 4.2: Frequency and percentage of respondents type of family

S.No	Type of Family	Frequency	Percent
1	Nuclear family	244	55.5
2	Joint family	163	37.0
3	Extended family	33	7.5
Total		440	100.0

The above table 4.2 shows that, majority of the respondents belong to nuclear family i.e. 55.5 percent followed by 37 percent in joint family and the remaining 7.5 percent belongs to extended family. Therefore, it is clear that 244 out of 440 respondents i.e. 55.5 percent are from nuclear family. The study shows that our society is in the process of transformation from joint families to nuclear families.

4.5 Respondents Father's Income levels:

The study collected the data related to respondents parents income levels to know about their families' financial situation, which is helpful in understanding the socioeconomic background of the group.

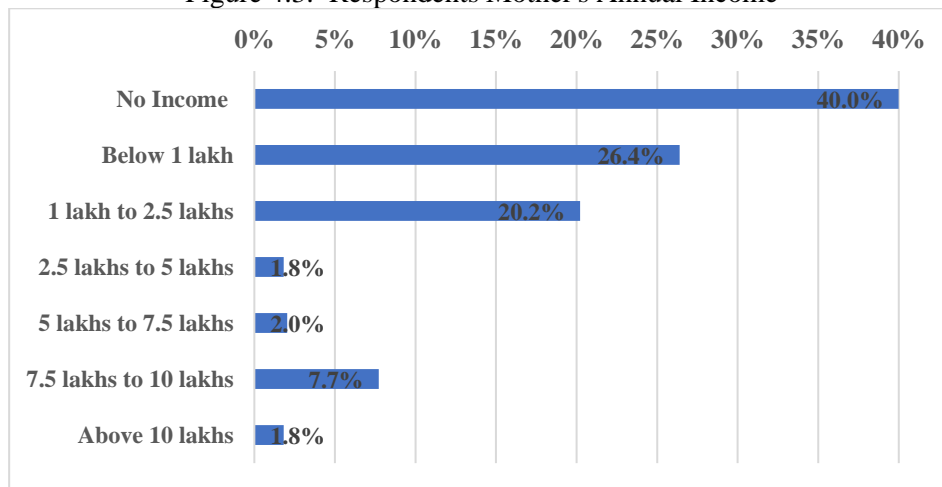
Table 4.3: Respondents Father's Annual Income level

S.No	Respondents Father's Income level	Frequency	Percent
1	Below 1 lakh	220	50.0
2	1 lakh to 2.5 lakhs	125	28.4
3	2.5 lakhs to 5 lakhs	45	10.2
4	5 lakhs to 7.5 lakhs	9	2.0
5	7.5 lakhs to 10 lakhs	16	3.6
6	Above 10 lakhs	25	5.7
Total		440	100.0

The table 4.3 represents the respondents' father's income levels per annum, it is found that the largest income group fall in the category of income level below 1 lakh with 50.0 percent. The second largest income group is 1 lakh to 2.5 lakh which accounts for more than one-fourth (28.4 percent) of the sample. A notable portion of the respondents' fathers fall in the income range of 2.5 lakh to 5 lakh constituting 10.2 percent. A slightly higher percentage (5.7 percent) are in the higher income bracket of above 10 lakhs. The remaining small percentage i.e. 2.0 percent and 3.6 percent of respondents fathers earn between 5 lakhs to 7.5 lakh and 7.5 to 10 lakh respectively. Overall, the data shows that majority of the respondents (78 percent) has come from the families with income levels below 2.5 lakhs.

4.6 Respondents Mother's Income level (per annum):

Figure 4.3: Respondents Mother's Annual Income



The figure 4.3 represents the respondents' mother's income levels per annum, it is found that the largest group fall in the category of no-income level as they are working as homemakers. The second largest group fall in the income level of below 1 lakh, accounts for more than one-fourth (26.4 percent) of the sample. A notable portion of the respondents' mothers fall in the income range of 1 lakh to 2.5 lakh constituting one-fifth (20.2 percent) of total sample. A slightly higher percentage (7.7 percent) are in the higher income bracket of 7.5 lakh to 10 lakhs. The remaining small percentage i.e. 2.0 percent and 1.8 percent each are in the category of 5 lakhs to 7.5 lakh and 2.5 to 5 lakh & above 10 lakh respectively.

4.7 Respondents Accessibility to Smart Phones:

Table 4.4: Respondent's response on number of smart mobiles in their home

S.No	No. of smart phones	Frequency	Percent
1	1	64	14.5
2	2	193	43.9
3	3	108	24.5
4	4	75	17.0
Total		440	100.0

The table 4.4 represents no. of smart phones the respondents are having at their home. The data depicts that out of 440 respondents, 44 percent respondents reported that they are having two (2) smart mobiles followed by 24.5 percent having three (3) smart mobile phones in their homes. The remaining 17 percent and 15 percent are having four (4) and one (1) smart mobile phone.

4.8 Gender Variation in having Own Smart Mobile Phones and Usage of Social Media

Table 4.5: Comparison between respondents gender and having own smart mobile phones

S. No	Gender	Do you have your own smart mobile?		Total
		Yes	No	
1	Boys	160	57	217
		(73.7)	(26.3)	(100.0)
2	Girls	117	106	223
		(52.5)	(47.5)	(100.0)
Total				440
				(100.0)

From the table 4.5, the data shows that among the respondents of adolescent boys 73.7 percent are having own smart phones. Whereas, among adolescent girls 52.5 percent of them are having own smart phones. Therefore, it is inferred that regarding access to own smart phones adolescent boys are having more access compared to adolescent girls.

4.6 Testing of Hypothesis: There is no significant association between adolescent girls' and boys' in usage of social media.

Table 4.6: Analysis of respondents gender and their time spend on social media

S.No	Spending on social-media every day	Gender		Total
		Boys	Girls	
1	Less than 1 hour	40 (35.1)	74 (64.9)	114 (100.0)
2	At least 1 hour	17 (50.0)	17 (50.0)	34 (100.0)
3	2 to 3 hours	64 (39.0)	100 (61.0)	164 (100.0)
4	3 to 5 hours	56 (77.8)	16 (22.2)	72 (100.0)
5	More than 5 hours	40 (71.4)	16 (28.6)	56 (100.0)
Total				440 (100.0)

The table 4.6 represents the data pertaining to the gender wise respondents time spent on social media every day. The data shows that among the respondents who spend less than 1 hour in a day the adolescent boys are 35 percent and adolescent girls are 65 percent. For the respondents time spending at least 1 hour, there is no difference between adolescent boys and girls. Among the respondents who spend about 2 to 3 hours, girls are 61 percent and boys are 40 percent. For the remaining respondents who spend 3 to 5 hours and more than 5 hours, more than 70 percent are boys and nearly 25 percent are girls. Overall, it shows that in most time cases, as the time increases the percentage of girls is reducing and boys percentage is increasing.

In order to assess the significant difference between the adolescent boys and girls in using social media, a non-parametric test of Chi-square has been performed.

Table 4.7: Chi-Square Test between variables gender and social media usage

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	50.478(a)	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	52.343	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	31.023	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	440		

(a) 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. at 95% confidence Interval

From the above chi-square test, the data represents that the significant p value is <0.05 and the chi-square test value is 50.478. Hence, the hypothesis is rejected and indicates that there is significant association between the adolescent boys and girls in usage of social media.

5. CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, the findings of this study underscore the significant role of social media in the lives of adolescents, with a notable disparity in usage patterns between genders. The data reveal that adolescent boys exhibit higher levels of social media usage compared to adolescent girls, suggesting potential differences in their digital engagement and online behaviour. These results highlight the need for further investigation into the factors influencing this gender gap, including social, psychological, and cultural dimensions. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing targeted interventions and fostering a balanced, healthy approach to social media use among adolescents.

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