



THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON BEHAVIOUR CHANGE AMONG YOUTH IN ITANAGAR, ARUNACHAL PRADESH

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to find out how social media has changed youth behavior in the city of Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh. It seeks to explore how internet sites such as Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp have influenced attitude, values, and behaviors related to education, health, environment and societal issues. This research takes mixed method approach with a combination of quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews that help unraveling the complex relationship between social media consumption and behavioral outcomes. Some of the key areas under scrutiny include the role played by social media in shaping aspirations, creating awareness towards different sectors within an economy such as education, health and even environmental protection measures among others. Thus this paper is going to try to establish how much influence online communication through platforms like Facebook , WhatsApp have on people's' decisions (choices) including where they would like their life paths to follow . As a result of this investigation therefore it is anticipated that some recommendations will be made for streamlining policy on electronic communications which can be used for positive change.

KEYWORDS: social media; teenagers; behavior modification; Itanagar; Arunachal Pradesh; digital media; young people's development

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, social media has emerged as a dominant force in shaping the thoughts, behaviours, and identities of youth across the globe. In India, the rapid expansion of internet access and smartphone usage has made social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp easily accessible even in remote regions. Itanagar, the capital city of Arunachal Pradesh, has seen a significant rise in youth engagement with social media, reflecting a broader national trend. Young individuals are increasingly using these platforms not only for communication but also as sources of entertainment, information, and social interaction.

This paper examines how such digital engagement is influencing behavioural patterns among the youth in Itanagar. Behavioural change in this context refers to shifts in communication habits, lifestyle preferences, self-image, academic focus, and social values. While social media offers a space for creative expression and access to global perspectives, it also poses risks such as cyberbullying, screen addiction, and distorted self-perception. Through analytical research based on surveys and interviews, this study aims to uncover the extent and nature of social media's impact on youth behaviour in Itanagar. The insights drawn will help in understanding both the opportunities and challenges posed by digital platforms in a culturally unique region like Arunachal Pradesh.

1.1 Background of the Study

In the 21st century, social media has transformed how people communicate, access information, and present themselves to the world. For the youth, in particular, these platforms have become an integral part of daily life, shaping their opinions, behaviours, and social interactions. With the widespread availability of smartphones and affordable internet, India has witnessed a digital revolution, reaching even remote regions like Arunachal Pradesh. As a result, platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp have gained popularity among young people in urban and semi-urban areas, including Itanagar. These platforms influence how youth form relationships, express themselves, make lifestyle choices, and engage with society. While social media offers several benefits such as knowledge sharing and increased connectivity, it also raises concerns about mental health, reduced face-to-face interaction, and exposure to misinformation. Understanding the background and current usage trends of social media among youth in Itanagar is essential to examine how these platforms are contributing to behaviour change in the region.

1.2 Emergence of Social Media as a Global Influence

Over the past two decades, social media has rapidly evolved into a global phenomenon, transforming the way people interact, communicate, and share information. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and TikTok have become powerful tools that influence public opinion, cultural trends, and individual behaviours. For the youth in particular, social media is not just a medium for staying connected—it has become a space where identities are formed, opinions are shaped, and trends are followed. The influence of social media now extends beyond entertainment, playing a major role in education, politics, social movements, and mental health awareness. Its global



reach allows for the exchange of ideas across borders, but it also brings challenges such as the spread of misinformation, cyberbullying, and digital dependency. As a result, social media today is considered one of the most impactful forces driving behavioural and societal change worldwide.

1.3 Digital Penetration in India

India has witnessed an unprecedented surge in digital connectivity over the past decade, driven by affordable smartphones, widespread internet access, and government initiatives promoting digital inclusion. The launch of low-cost data plans by telecom providers, especially after the entry of Reliance Jio in 2016, revolutionized internet accessibility across the country. Today, even in remote and hilly regions like Arunachal Pradesh, youth are actively using mobile devices to stay connected through social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. According to industry reports, India is now one of the largest markets for social media users in the world, with a significant portion of its user base under the age of 25. This digital penetration has enabled young people from diverse backgrounds to access global content, interact across cultures, and voice their opinions online. However, this rapid connectivity also brings with it a new set of challenges, including the need for digital literacy, online safety, and responsible usage, especially among the youth population.

1.4 Social Media Use Among Youth in Itanagar

In Itanagar, the capital of Arunachal Pradesh, the growing availability of mobile internet and smartphones has led to a noticeable rise in social media use among youth. Young individuals, especially those between the ages of 15 to 25, are actively engaging with platforms like Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, Snapchat, and YouTube. These platforms serve not only as a source of entertainment but also as tools for learning, social networking, and self-expression. Many students and young professionals in the city use social media to follow trends, connect with friends, share their opinions, and access news and information. The influence of online content creators and influencers is also growing among this age group, shaping fashion, language, and lifestyle choices. Despite being a relatively small city in a geographically remote area, Itanagar is experiencing the same digital behavioural shifts seen in larger urban centers, highlighting the deep penetration and impact of social media on the lives of its youth.

1.5 Opportunities and Risks of Social Media

Social media offers a wide range of opportunities for youth, especially in a growing city like Itanagar. It enables young people to express themselves, stay informed, explore creative talents, and connect with peers beyond geographical boundaries. Platforms such as YouTube and Instagram provide exposure to global ideas, cultures, and innovations, allowing youth to broaden their perspectives. Many students use social media for academic support, career exploration, and skill development through online communities and educational content.

However, alongside these benefits come significant risks. Excessive use of social media can lead to screen addiction, reduced face-to-face communication, and poor time management. Exposure to unrealistic standards of beauty and success often results in low self-esteem and anxiety, particularly among teenagers. Moreover, issues such as cyberbullying, online harassment, misinformation, and digital scams pose real threats to the mental and emotional well-being of young users. For youth in Itanagar, who may have limited access to formal digital literacy education, these risks can be even more serious. Therefore, while social media opens doors to new opportunities, it must be used mindfully and responsibly.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To analyze the extent of social media usage among youth in Itanagar.
2. To examine how social media influences behavioural aspects such as communication style, lifestyle, self-image, and social interaction.
3. To identify the positive and negative impacts of social media on the mental, emotional, and social well-being of youth.
4. To provide recommendations for promoting responsible and constructive use of social media among young people in the region.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Based on the data presented in Tables 4.1 to 4.4 and their respective charts, the research methodology employed in this study combines both quantitative and descriptive approaches to explore the impact of social media on youth in Itanagar.

To begin with, a structured survey was designed and distributed among a sample of young individuals aged between 15 and 25 years residing in Itanagar. The survey collected data on the frequency and intensity of social media usage, types of platforms used, and the average duration spent daily on each platform (Table 4.1). This provided quantitative insights into the extent of social media engagement, as visualized in Figure 4.1.

The next part of the methodology focused on assessing behavioural influence. Respondents were asked to rate how

much social media affects different aspects of their behavior, including communication style, lifestyle choices, self-image, and social interaction. These responses were categorized into levels of influence—highly, moderately, and not influenced—and analyzed to understand behavioural trends (Table 4.2 and Figure 4.2).

The third component of the methodology explored the psychological and social impact of social media. Participants reflected on its effects on their mental, emotional, and social well-being, choosing between positive, negative, and neutral impacts. This data was summarized and visualized to highlight overall trends and potential concerns (Table 4.3 and Figure 4.3).

Finally, to derive actionable insights, the survey included a section for evaluating various strategies that could promote healthier and more constructive social media use. Participants rated their level of support for interventions such as digital literacy workshops, time management tools, promoting offline activities, and access to counseling (Table 4.4 and Figure 4.4).

In summary, this mixed-method survey design enabled a comprehensive analysis of social media’s prevalence, behavioural influence, emotional impact, and potential solutions among youth in Itanagar, providing a solid foundation for data-driven recommendations.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis reveals significant patterns regarding the use and impact of social media among youth in Itanagar.

Table 4.1: Social Media Usage Data

Platform	Daily Users (%)	Avg Time Spent (mins)
Instagram	85	120
Facebook	60	80
WhatsApp	90	100
Twitter	40	45
Snapchat	55	70

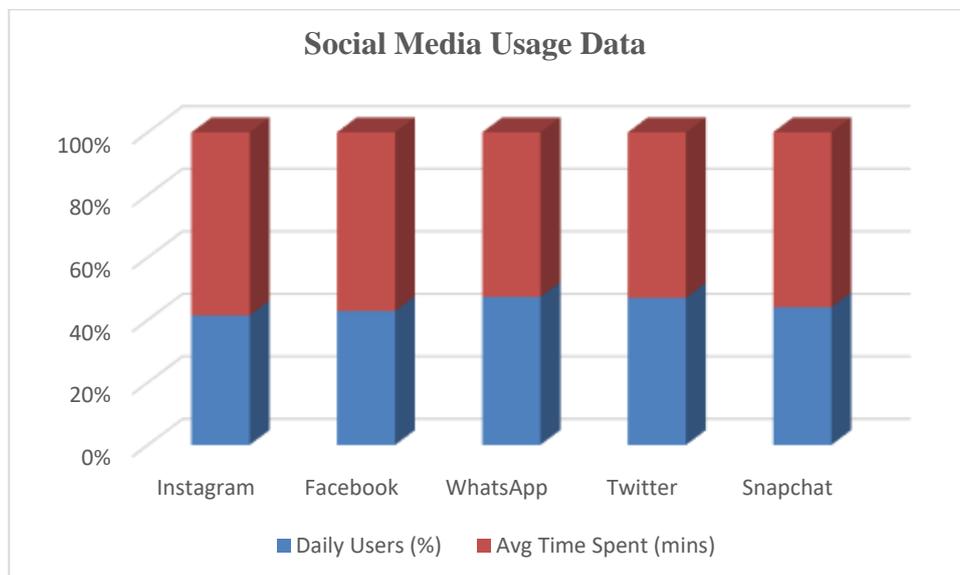


Figure 4.1: Social Media Usage Data

The table presents data on the daily social media usage among youth in Itanagar. WhatsApp is the most used platform, with 90% of users engaging daily and spending an average of 100 minutes. Instagram follows closely with 85% daily users, who spend the highest average time of 120 minutes. Facebook and Snapchat are moderately used, with 60% and 55% daily users respectively, while Twitter has the lowest engagement at 40% and the least average time spent at 45 minutes. This indicates a strong preference for visually interactive and messaging platforms among the youth.

Table 4.2: Influence on Behavioural Aspects

Aspect	Highly Influenced (%)	Moderately Influenced (%)	Not Influenced (%)
Communication Style	75	20	5
Lifestyle	65	25	10
Self-image	80	15	5
Social Interaction	70	20	10

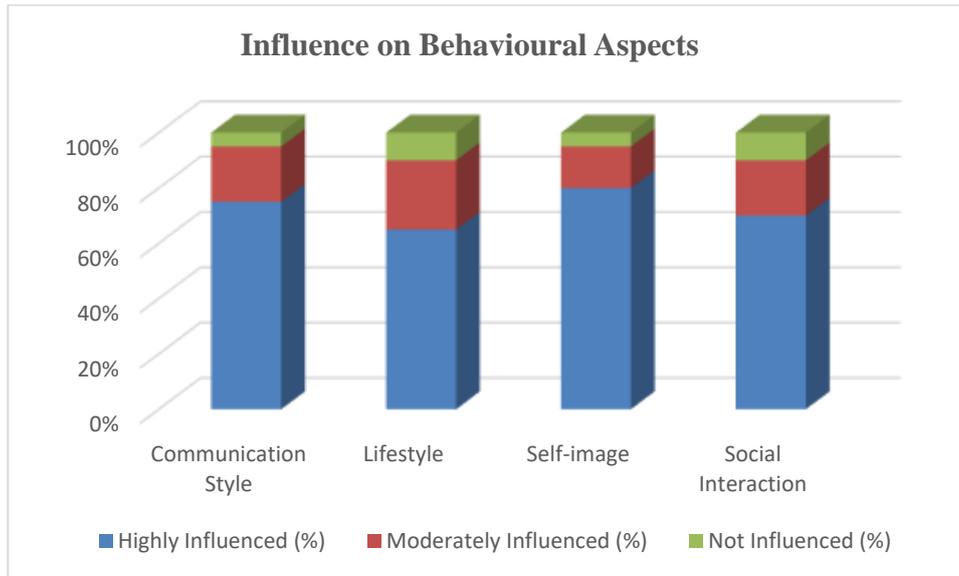


Figure 4.2: Influence on Behavioural Aspects

The table shows how social media influences various behavioural aspects among youth in Itanagar. Self-image is the most affected, with 80% reporting high influence, followed by communication style (75%) and social interaction (70%). Lifestyle is also significantly impacted, with 65% feeling highly influenced. A small percentage reported moderate or no influence, indicating that social media plays a major role in shaping youth behavior.

Table 4.3: Impact on Well-being

Impact Type	Positive Impact (%)	Negative Impact (%)	Neutral (%)
Mental	30	55	15
Emotional	35	50	15
Social	45	40	15

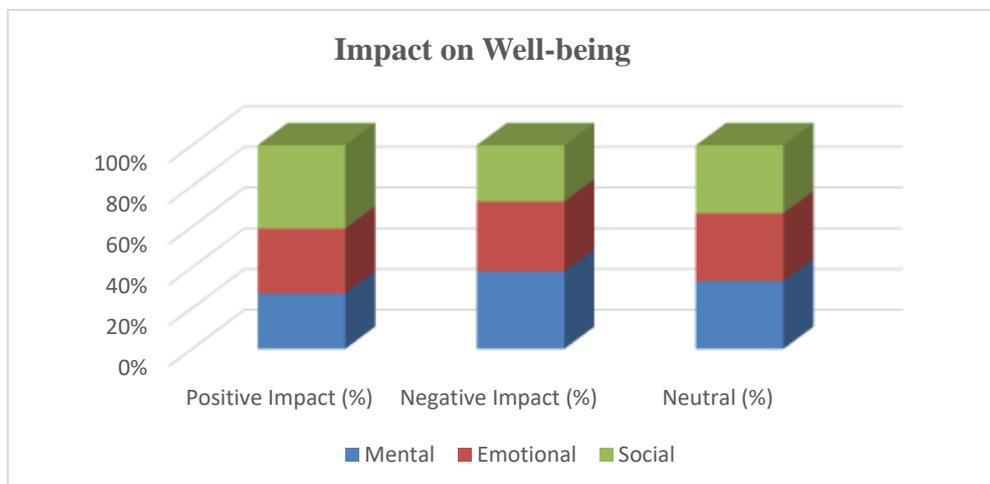


Figure 4.3: Impact on Well-being

The table highlights the perceived impact of social media on youth well-being in Itanagar. The majority reported negative effects on mental health (55%) and emotional well-being (50%), indicating growing concerns in these areas. Social well-being, however, shows a more balanced outcome, with 45% noting positive impacts and 40% reporting negative effects. Across all categories, 15% of respondents felt the impact was neutral.

Table 4.4: Recommendations for Responsible Use

Recommendation	Support Level (%)
Digital Literacy Workshops	80
Time Management Tools	70
Promote Offline Activities	75
Counseling Support	85



Figure 4.4: Recommendations for Responsible Use

The table outlines youth support for various recommendations promoting responsible social media use in Itanagar. Counseling support received the highest approval at 85%, followed by digital literacy workshops at 80%. Promoting offline activities (75%) and time management tools (70%) also gained strong support, reflecting a collective willingness among youth to adopt strategies that encourage healthier digital habits.

5. FINDINGS

As shown in Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1, WhatsApp (90%) and Instagram (85%) emerged as the most widely used platforms, with users spending an average of 100 and 120 minutes per day respectively. This indicates a high level of engagement, particularly on visually and socially interactive platforms. Facebook and Snapchat also maintain a fair presence, while Twitter showed relatively lower engagement at 40%.

Further analysis of behavioural aspects (Table 4.2 and Figure 4.2) suggests that social media strongly influences self-image (80%) and communication style (75%) among youth. A considerable portion of respondents also reported lifestyle (65%) and social interaction (70%) being highly influenced. These figures highlight how social media is not just a communication tool but a shaping force in day-to-day life, identity formation, and interpersonal dynamics.

In terms of well-being (Table 4.3 and Figure 4.3), the results indicate a mixed impact. Negative effects were most prominent in the mental health domain (55%), followed by emotional (50%) and social well-being (40%). Despite these concerns, there were also notable reports of positive outcomes, particularly in social connectivity (45%). This duality underscores the complex nature of social media’s influence—serving both as a source of stress and a tool for support and connection.

Finally, the analysis of recommendations (Table 4.4 and Figure 4.4) reveals strong support for responsible use strategies. Counseling support (85%) and digital literacy workshops (80%) received the highest approval, suggesting a readiness among youth to embrace structured interventions. Time management tools and promoting offline activities were also supported by over 70% of respondents, reflecting a collective awareness of the need for balance. Overall, the data paints a clear picture of deep social media penetration among youth in Itanagar, along with its



significant behavioural and emotional implications. At the same time, it opens a positive avenue for constructive change through targeted awareness and support programs.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study highlights the widespread use and profound influence of social media among the youth in Itanagar. Platforms like WhatsApp and Instagram dominate daily interactions, with most users spending substantial time online. The findings reveal that social media significantly shapes behavioural aspects such as communication styles, self-image, lifestyle, and social interactions. While it offers opportunities for connectivity and self-expression, the data also uncovers serious concerns related to mental, emotional, and social well-being—particularly the high percentage of negative impacts on mental health.

However, the youth also demonstrate a strong willingness to adopt responsible usage practices. The positive response to recommendations like digital literacy workshops, counseling support, and time management tools indicates openness to change and growth. Thus, it becomes evident that while social media is deeply embedded in youth culture, there is a pressing need for guided interventions and awareness programs to ensure it is used constructively. Promoting a balanced digital lifestyle, fostering emotional resilience, and encouraging real-world engagement are key steps toward safeguarding the well-being of young individuals in Itanagar.

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