

# Social Media Participation Patterns among Teenagers and adolescents: The Study of Secondary School Students

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**Abstract:** *The topic of statements is to explain the advantageous and dis-advantageous effects of social media on the education. Here the data has been collected from six schools of Cachar district, extreme remote corner of India. The schools were selected from both urban and rural areas, co-educational, boys only, girls' only, English and Bengali medium and Govt. and private schools. The research emphasizes the influence of social media both in educational and amusement purposes among the student. The research covers the socio-economic structure and the social media use pattern of the samples. To end, the chapter highlights the findings that most of the students used social media for their development, but a significant portion of students use social media for time killing.*

**Keywords:** Social Media, School, Social Networking sites, Socio-economic background, Effects, Social Media Participation, Social Media Use

## 1. Introduction

Social media is the strongest medium of communication which helps people connects from any place and at any time. There is seen extensive use of social media and it has fully entered into our lives at the beginning of 21st century with blogs. Teenagers' and young adults' academic life is one of those areas which have got immense effect of social media (Alejandra Guzman and Farida Vis, 2016). Today students rely more on such social media platforms to gather information and knowledge, instead of looking for the same in books, notes etc. (Abhishek Karadkar, 2015, Talaue, Gilbert M. et al. 2018). Social media contributes to learning in many ways, though it has negative effect, as well (Mustafa Colak 2016). However, harnessing the benefits of social media depends on the way students participate on social sites (Kuznekoff, Jeffrey H., Stevie Munz & Scott Titsworth. 2015). Therefore, this paper analyses the patterns of social media participation or access by class X students.

## 2. Methodology

The south Assam's Cachar district located in India's remote corner, with diverse populations, landscapes and resources as well as relatively better development, education and media growth in the area, was selected purposively. From the district, based on their various socio-cultural characteristics there were purposively selected five schools; namely, Narshing Higher Secondary School (Bengali medium co-ed public school), Netaji Vidyabhavan Girls Higher Secondary School (Bengali medium public girls school), Don Bosco Higher Secondary School (private English medium co-ed school) and Holy Cross Higher Secondary School (private English medium girls school) from the Silchar city, Morely High School (Bengali medium co-ed private school) from the Salganga village and KBJR Memorial High School (Bengali medium co-ed public school) from the Thaligram village, which constitutes a development continuum in the district. Out of 685 students of class X, a gender-based (male/female) 20% stratified random sample was taken, which came to be 137 students.

A questionnaire was constructed, pretested and administered to the sample in class rooms and collected. Data were collected from the sample of the class X students during the period from September 2021 to February 2022. Data classified into tabular forms have been analysed by using percentages.

### Socio-economic Background of the Students

- 1) The number of boys is a little greater than the number of girls in the sample and also the urban students are far more than the rural students. Besides, there are far more boys from the urban schools and far more girls from the rural schools.
- 2) The sample of students has by and large covered the caste diversity - General Castes, SCs and OBCs in the rural-urban context of schools as well as covered genders - boys and girls of the students.
- 3) Across the genders and the rural-urban context a huge majority of the students belongs to Hindus, followed by a significant portion of the Muslim students.
- 4) Most of the students are Bengali speakers and a small, yet significant, portion speaks Hindi among the boys and girls of the urban and rural schools.
- 5) The respondents' fathers are significantly distributed over four occupations - Govt sector, private sector, self-employment and business with the lead of private sector. About three fifths (59.86%) of them are engaged as employees in Government and private sectors.
- 6) Though there is seen a diversification of occupations in formal sectors of work among the mothers they are still largely home makers only, specially the rural school students' mothers (three fifths of the total). The urban mothers are seen to be far ahead of the rural mothers in formal sector occupations, perhaps due to better educational, developmental and occupational opportunities in urban areas that they can avail.
- 7) Nuclear family is found among the students with a good majority, across the two genders, overwhelmingly among the rural students, perhaps due

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to rural-urban and other out migration of people in search of livelihood or better opportunities.

- 8) The students' families are by and large equally distributed between the small size and the medium and large families, irrespective of their gender and urban-rural context. This signifies the existence of a big size, along with nuclear type, of the family among the students.
- 9) Across the genders of the students, a good majority of the students' fathers (69.8%) have education up to Higher Secondary School; Near about half (46.43%) of the urban school students' fathers are concentrated at the higher educational levels starting from graduation onwards and almost all (98.11%) of the rural school students' fathers have education up to Higher Secondary School with a heavy concentration at primary and undermatric levels.
- 10) The mothers have mostly school education, along with a high proportion of illiterates, which is seen across the genders of the students. However, nearly half of the urban school students' mothers have higher education. Comparatively, there is similarity between educational patterns of the students' fathers and the students' mothers; however, the proportion of the school students' illiterate mothers, specially the rural ones, is far bigger than the students' illiterate fathers.
- 11) The students' family income reflects wide rural-urban differences, yet there is seen, by and large, similarity of income distribution between the families of the boys and the girls. The families of the respondents have by and large found evenly distributed over income groups ranging between Rs 0-10000 and more than Rs 50000/-.
- 12) The students' families involve both father and mother in deciding various matters, yet mother's involvement

is lesser than father's in the urban as well as rural school contexts of the students.

- 13) Majority of the students have pucca houses. At the same time, there are more urban and boy students from the pucca houses whereas the rural and girl students are more from the semi-pucca and kachcha houses.
- 14) Majority of the students have pipe water supply in homes that differs in terms of their gender and the urban-rural context as more girls and the rural school students depend on community water point for drinking water.
- 15) Though a fairly good majority of the students have pucca latrines, the girls and the rural students are much less than the boys and the urban students in respect of pucca latrines in their houses which indicates significant difference of gender and urban-rural context in case of the students' sanitation facility.
- 16) Almost all (97.81%) of the respondents have electricity connection in their house, across the genders. All the urban students and 94.34% rural students have electricity connection.

**The Social Media Access Patterns**

**Academic Stage of First Access to Social Media**

Students who are accessing different social media sites start their access to social media sites at different stages of their schooling, owing to variation in social, cultural, economic and technological resources in their families. This results in differences of their experiences in use of the social media. The first access of the respondents is seen to have taken place during Class VIII, Class IX and Class X. Their distribution into these classes is given in the following table:

**Table 1:** Academic Stage of Students and the First Access to Social Media Site(s) (Percentage in Parentheses)

Stage of First Social Media Access	No. of Respondents						Grand Total		
	Urban			Rural			Boys	Girls	Total
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total			
Class VIII	34 (60.71)	12 (42.86)	46 (54.76)	10 (62.5)	18 (48.65)	28 (52.83)	44 (61.11)	30 (46.15)	74 (54.01)
Class IX	15 (26.79)	9 (32.14)	24 (28.57)	6 (37.5)	17 (45.95)	23 (43.4)	21 (29.17)	26 (40.0)	47 (34.31)
Class X	7 (12.5)	7 (25)	14 (16.67)	0	2 (5.4)	2 (3.77)	7 (9.72)	9 (13.85)	16 (11.68)
Total	56 (100)	28 (100)	84 (100)	16 (100)	37 (100)	53 (100)	72 (100)	65 (100)	137 (100)

The table shows that most of the students (88.32%) had gone for the first access to social media sites before they entered Class X. This pattern is by and large observed across the genders and urban-rural residences, pointing out that the social networking sites are very easily accessible by the students at the age of 13-14 years.

**ICT Equipment Used for Access**

ICT equipment used to access social media sites also differentiates the students. They are using generally three types of equipment; namely, desktop computer, laptop and own or parents' smart phone. Use of mobile phone has made the social networking sites quite familiar to them. The following table shows the ICT equipment being used by the students:

**Table 2:** ICT Equipment Used for Accessing Social Media (Percentage in Parentheses)

ICT Equipment	No. of Respondents						Grand Total		
	Urban			Rural			Boys	Girls	Total
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total			
Desktop	7 (12.5)	2 (7.14)	9 (10.72)	0	0	0	7 (9.72)	2 (3.08)	9 (6.57)
Laptop	17 (30.36)	7 (25)	24 (28.57)	1 (6.25)	0	1 (1.88)	18 (25)	7 (10.77)	25 (18.25)
Own Smart Phone	18 (32.14)	9 (32.14)	27 (32.14)	7 (43.75)	3 (8.11)	10 (18.87)	25 (34.72)	12 (18.46)	37 (27.01)
Parents' Smart Phone	14 (25)	10 (35.72)	24 (28.57)	8 (50)	34 (91.89)	42 (79.25)	22 (30.56)	44 (67.69)	66 (48.17)
Total	56 (100)	28 (100)	84 (100)	16 (100)	37 (100)	53 (100)	72 (100)	65 (100)	137 (100)

The table shows that the students have three types of ICT equipment which they used to access social media; namely, Desktop Computer, Laptop and own or parents' smart phone. It has been found that most (75.18%) of the total respondents are using mobile phone is the equipment used by the students to access social media and laptop is also being used for access to social media by a significant size (18.25%). It indicates that the handy/ mobile equipment with media convergence, followed by the portable one like Laptop, is the most preferred.

**Social Media Sites Accessed by Students**

Now-a-days, one finds it easier and more convenient to access and share information, and to communicate through social media. The respondents access only the sites of major social media; namely, Face Book, WhatsApp, Twitter, You Tube, Instagram and Google+. Their distribution into these social media sites is given in the following table:

**Table 3: Social Media Sites of Access among the Respondents (Percentage in Parentheses)**

Type of Social Media Site	No. of Respondents						Grand Total		
	Urban			Rural			Boys N = 72	Girls N = 65	Total N = 137
	Boys N = 56	Girls N = 28	Total N = 84	Boys N = 16	Girls N = 37	Total N = 53			
Facebook	29 (51.79)	14 (50.0)	43 (51.19)	14 (87.5)	15 (40.54)	29 (54.72)	43 (59.72)	29 (40.28)	72 (52.55)
WhatsApp	56 (100)	27 (96.43)	83 (98.81)	16 (100)	36 (97.3)	52 (98.11)	72 (100)	63 (96.92)	135 (98.54)
Twitter	8 (14.29)	4 (14.29)	12 (14.29)	2 (12.5)	1 (2.7)	3 (5.66)	10 (13.89)	5 (7.69)	15 (10.95)
YouTube	48 (85.71)	16 (57.14)	64 (76.19)	14 (87.5)	33 (89.19)	47 (88.68)	62 (86.11)	49 (75.38)	111 (81.02)
Instagram	20 (35.71)	19 (67.86)	39 (46.43)	13 (81.25)	12 (32.43)	25 (47.17)	33 (45.83)	31 (47.69)	64 (46.72)
Google +	56 (100)	27 (96.43)	83 (98.81)	16 (100)	36 (97.3)	52 (98.11)	72 (100)	63 (96.92)	135 (98.54)

The table reveals that WhatsApp and Google+ are the sites accessed by most of the students (98.54% each), followed subsequently by YouTube (81.02%), Facebook (52.55%), Instagram (46.72%) and Twitter (10.95%). By and large, this pattern is observed across the genders and rural-urban residences of the students.

**Frequency of Social Media Access**

Students differ in respect of checking of their social media profiles. Some of them do not check it even once a day while some people check it many times in a day. The following table distributes the respondents into frequency of checking of their social media profile:

**Table 4: Frequency of Social Media use (Percentage in Parentheses)**

No. of Social Media Checking	No. of Respondents						Grand Total		
	Urban			Rural			Boys	Girls	Total
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total			
1-3	16 (28.57)	8 (28.57)	24 (28.57)	2 (12.5)	17 (45.95)	19 (35.85)	18 (25)	25 (38.46)	43 (31.39)
4-6	13 (23.21)	4 (14.29)	17 (20.23)	5 (31.25)	12 (32.43)	17 (32.08)	18 (25)	16 (24.62)	34 (24.62)
7-9	10 (17.86)	7 (25.0)	17 (20.34)	2 (12.5)	1 (2.7)	3 (5.66)	12 (16.67)	8 (12.31)	20 (14.6)
10-12	7 (12)	8 (28.57)	15 (17.86)	3 (18.75)	6 (16.22)	9 (16.98)	10 (13.89)	14 (21.54)	24 (17.53)
More than 12	10 (17.86)	1 (3.57)	11 (13)	4 (25.0)	1 (2.7)	5 (9.43)	14 (19.44)	2 (4.62)	16 (11.68)
Total	56 (100)	28 (100)	84 (100)	16 (100)	37 (100)	53 (100)	72 (100)	65 (100)	137 (100)

The table finds that about one third (31.39%) of the total respondents access social media 1-3 times in a day, followed by 4-6 times (24.62%), 10-12 times (17.53%), 7-9 times (14.6%) and more than 12 times social media checked in are 16 (11.67%) of the total respondents. It indicates a very high frequency of social media access among the students of all the categories.

In sum, major patterns of social media participation are being brought out hereunder.

- 1) By the teenage most of the students across the genders have got access to social media as they have got Internet facility on parents'/ family members' mobile phones or in other ICT equipment at home. A gender difference is seen in the sense that the proportion of the girls who had first access to social media only in the Class X is greater than that of the boys and it is significantly higher in case of the urban residence.
- 2) The handy/ mobile equipment with media convergence, followed by the portable one like Laptop, is the most preferred, but their independent use is seen quite restricted in case of the girls. The girls and rural

students largely depended on parents' mobile phone for access to social media.

- 3) Most of the students access to WhatsApp, Google+ and YouTube, around half of the students access to FaceBook and Instagram and the least number, one tenth, of the students access to Twitter. A notable gender difference in the context of their rural-urban residences is that among the students the proportion of the urban girls (67.86%) accessing to Instagram is far greater than the proportion of the urban boys (35.71%) whereas, contrarily, the rural boys' proportion (81.25%), compared to the rural girls' proportion (32.43%), is much greater.
- 4) Social media sites are accessed by all the students for social networking, across the genders as well as rural-urban residences. Only very small portions of the students, both boys and girls, belonging to the urban residence only, each, access social media for other purposes such as micro-blogging, blogging, linking posting, and content writing, along with the general purpose of social networking.
- 5) Home is the place used by the most of the students, across the genders and rural-urban residences, to access

social media. Other places such as neighbour's home, cyber café and educational institution are each chosen by less or very less than one tenth of the students for social media, access across the rural-urban residences.

- 6) The preferred times for social media access for the students are evening, night and their convenient time seem. The urban boy students by and large access any time of a day while majority of the urban girl students access at night, during convenient time or in the morning whereas most of the rural boy students access in the evening and at night and most of the rural girl students access in the evening, at night and as per convenient time.
- 7) A very high frequency (1-12 times) of social media access is found among the students of all the categories based on gender and rural-urban residence.
- 8) The students, across the genders and the rural-urban residences, spend daily a time up to 2 hours on social media access. The boy students and the urban students spend more time on social media access than the girl students and the rural students.

### 3. Conclusion

Teenage students access to social networking sites on different social media by using ICT tools such as personal or parents' mobile/ smart phone, laptop, desktop etc. Most of them, rural and urban, are accessing the social networking sites, quite frequently, from home and some other places. They use social media for multiple purposes based on their need and amusement for sharing, chatting, searching, posting and downloading material and discussions mostly with previously known as well as significantly unknown people. The use of social media directly linked with two aspects; namely, the duration of using and the use of contents. Mostly they have used it for their development, yet there is a significant section which admitted of killing of time on social media/ addiction, viewing porn videos and being victims of cyber-crimes as well as distraction in studies, non-completion of syllabus and low academic performance. There is need for enhancing positive use of social media and neutralize its negative effect.

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