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## Use of social media by rural and urban youths: A study in Uttarakhand

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**ABSTRACT:** Social media has increasingly gained more attention due to the advancement of technology over a period of time, yet it has fallen in public esteem. Youth uses social media more than any other segment of the population, and this use has changed their daily lifestyle by influencing their daily routines, schedules, behaviour, interaction pattern and relationships. Therefore, a research study was undertaken to find out the usage of social media by youth in rural as well as in urban areas. This study was conducted in Udham Singh Nagar district of Uttarakhand. Rudrapur block was selected randomly out of seven blocks. Total two villages i.e., Danpur and Matkota and two townships i.e., Fazalpur Mahraula and Rampura from the block were selected randomly. Total 120 respondents were selected randomly for the study and pre tested interview schedule was used for data collection. Descriptive research design was followed to meet the objectives of the study. The findings of the study revealed that that majority of the rural and urban youth belonged to middle age group and were male. They were educated up to Intermediate, unmarried and belonged to nuclear family. Maximum number of the rural youth meets and interacts with others daily and urban youth meet weekly and watch online movies and series in free time, had low social anxiety. Majority of respondents had favourable belief about social media and high motivation for social media use, medium social media fatigue. Majority of the rural and urban youth possessed smartphone and used social media to connect and communicate with friends and family. All rural and urban youth referred WhatsApp, spent 3-4 hours daily on social media, preferred to use social media during 9:00 pm- 12:00 pm.

**Key words:** Rural, social media, utilization pattern, urban

Social media has almost become part of our daily lives and being tossed around the past few years. Social media hype especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has changed the communication pattern of the tech-savvy generation. Social media is a way to make one's voice heard all over. The number of social media users in India is increasing as new technological devices such as smartphones and laptops become more widely available. Social media has been playing a significant part in helping people to communicate with people all over the world by facilitating communication abilities. The speed and effectiveness of social media as a communication tool cannot be denied. It was reported that by 2025, the penetration of social networks would be 67 per cent of the country's population from 58 per cent in 2020. In the very little period of time, it grasps the whole human activities in its clutches in such an extent as each and every person in the world is compelled to get help of it at every walk of his or her life (Pandey, 2014).

Social media is a network of internet facilities that

is on the technological and ideological foundation of web 2.0 which provides space for the development of user-changeable content (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Social media are media for social interaction that use highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques. There are various social networking sites and applications like WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Wikipedia, Pinterest etc. Facebook is the most used social media globally. YouTube has closed the gap with Facebook over the past year and now has at least 2.54 billion active users approximately 88 percent of the latest total. It is closely followed by WhatsApp and Instagram.

Social media is a type of technological innovation. Perhaps, like a coin with two sides, social media also have some advantages and disadvantages. Social media network undoubtedly has changed the lives of people for the good, but alongside created risks too for the individual and society alike. Young people feel accepted and connected to one another, enables students to access a wealth of information

and educational resources.

The use of social media by youth is more than any other segment of the population, and this use has changed their daily lifestyle by influencing their daily routines, schedules, behaviour, interaction pattern, and relationships. This study is an effort to explore the profile characteristics of youth and to check their pattern of social media along with its impact on youth. Present research investigation was conducted with the objective to study the socio-personal, communication and psychological characteristics of the rural and urban youth and to study the utilization pattern of social media among the rural and urban youth.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Udham Singh Nagar district of Uttarakhand which was selected purposively. Rudrapur block was selected randomly out of seven blocks. Total two villages i.e., Danpur and Matkota and two townships i.e., Fazalpur Mahraula and Rampura from the block were selected randomly. Total 30 respondents were selected from each selected village and town by simple random sampling procedure. Thus, the study comprises of 60 rural youth and 60 urban youth, thereby making a total sample of 120 respondents. Data was collected through Interview schedule. Data was analyzed with proper statistical tool.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### General information of Rural and Urban Youth

**Age:** It is clear from the data that majority of the youth of rural areas as well as urban areas belonged to middle group (65.00% and 70.00% respectively) followed by younger group (21.67% and 18.33% respectively). Only 13.33 and 11.67 percent of youth respectively belonged to elder group. The findings indicating that maximum number of youth (67.00%) were in the age group of 19- 24. Khan *et al.* (2015) also reported that 56.66 per cent of youth belonged to middle youth category.

**Sex:** Sex refers to biological differences between females and males. It is clear from the table that

majority of the youth (63.00%) were males while only 37.00 per cent were females. Thus, it can be concluded that majority of the youth in the study sample who were having ICT device and following social media for one year or more were males. Findings are in line with the findings of Ghodke and Kulkarni (2019) who found that majority of the respondents were male.

**Education:** The result obtained indicate that majority of the rural youth were educated up to Intermediate (46.67%). Further, 26.67 percent of rural youth were educated up to High school followed by Graduation (16.67%) and Middle school (6.67%). An equal number of rural youth (1.67%) belonged to Primary school and Illiterate category. Regarding urban youth, higher percentage (71.67%) of respondents had completed their Graduation degree and above followed by Intermediate (20.00%). Additionally, 8.33 per cent of urban youth were educated up to High school. No urban youth belonged to illiterate, primary and middle school category.

**Marital Status:** It is cleared from the above data that a large majority of the youth in both rural (65.00%) and urban (88.83%) areas were unmarried. Additionally, 31.67 and 11.67 per cent of youth from rural areas and urban areas respectively were married. Only 3.33 per cent of rural youth were widowed and no urban youth belonged to divorced or widowed category. Findings are aligned with that of Chopra (2020) who found that a higher percentage of respondents were unmarried.

**Occupation:** The results obtained indicate that majority of the youth (23.33%) in rural areas were unemployed. Further, 21.67 per cent of rural youth were students. It was also observed that 20 per cent of rural youth were doing private jobs followed by labour (18.33%). Additionally, 8.33 per cent of rural youth were doing business followed by government job (5.00%) and only 3.33 per cent were involved in agriculture, substantiating the fact that rural youth are getting away from agricultural occupation. The reason might be the low profit and productivity and large number of debts on farmers. In case of urban youth majority (45.00%) of them were students.

**Table 1: Distribution of respondents on the basis of general information (N=120)**

S. No.	Category	Rural		Urban		Total	
		n <sub>1</sub> =60	%	n <sub>2</sub> =60	%	N=120	%
A	Age						
1	Younger (less than 19)	13	21.67	11	18.33	24	20
2	Middle (19- 24)	39	65.00	42	70.00	81	68
3	Elder (more than 24)	8	13.33	7	11.67	15	12
B	Sex						
1	Male	41	68.33	34	56.67	75	63
2	Female	19	31.67	26	43.33	45	37
C	Education						
1	Illiterate	1	1.67	0	0.00	1	1
2	Primary school	1	1.67	0	0.00	1	1
3	Middle school	4	6.67	0	0.00	4	3
4	High School	16	26.67	5	8.33	21	18
5	Intermediate	28	46.67	12	20.00	40	33
6	Graduation and above	10	16.67	43	71.67	53	44
D	Marital Status						
1	Married	19	31.67	7	11.67	26	22
2	Unmarried	39	65.00	53	88.83	92	77
3	Divorced/ widowed	2	3.33	0	0.00	2	1
E	Occupation						
1	Student	13	21.67	27	45.00	40	33
2	Government job	3	5.00	6	10.00	9	8
3	Private job	12	20.00	18	30.00	30	25
4	Business	5	8.33	4	6.67	9	8
5	Agriculture	3	3.33	1	1.67	4	3
6	Unemployed	14	23.33	4	6.67	18	15
7	Labour	10	18.33	0	0.00	10	8
F	Family Type						
1	Nuclear	37	61.67	44	73.33	81	67.5
2	Joint	23	38.33	16	26.67	39	32.5
G	Income						
1	Low (Less than 4,13,333)	50	83.33	5	8.33	55	45.83
2	Medium (4,13,333 to 8,06,667)	10	16.67	47	78.33	57	47.50
3	High (More than 8,06,667)	0	0.00	8	13.33	8	6.67
H	Offline Social Gathering						
1	Daily	21	35.00	8	13.33	29	24
2	Weekly	18	30.00	20	33.33	38	32
3	Fortnightly	11	18.33	16	26.67	27	23
4	Monthly	7	11.67	11	18.33	18	15
5	Rarely or never	3	5.00	5	8.33	8	6
I	Leisure time activities						
1	Socialising with friends and family	42	70.00	39	65.00	81	68
2	Online gaming	9	15.00	13	21.67	22	18
3	Playing Sports	31	51.67	20	33.33	51	43
4	Taking up a hobby (dancing, singing, painting etc)	34	56.67	28	46.67	62	52
5	Watching online movies and series	47	78.33	53	88.33	100	83
6	Surfing internet	40	66.67	47	78.33	87	73
7	Other	3	5.00	7	11.67	10	8
J	Leisure time activities						
1	Low (less than 14)	46	76.67	53	88.33	99	82.50
2	Medium (14- 27)	13	21.67	4	6.67	17	14.17
3	High (more than 27)	1	1.67	3	5.00	4	3.33
K	Social anxiety						
1	Low (less than 14)	46	76.67	53	88.33	99	82.50

2	Medium (14- 27)	13	21.67	4	6.67	17	14.17
3	High (more than 27)	1	1.67	3	5.00	4	3.33
L	Belief about social media						
1	Less favourable (less than 41)	6	10.00	8	13.33	14	11.67
2	Favourable (41- 52)	41	68.33	48	80.00	89	74.17
3	More favourable (more than 52)	13	21.67	4	6.67	17	14.17
M	Motivation for social media use						
1	Less favourable (less than 41)	6	10.00	8	13.33	14	11.67
2	Favourable (41- 52)	41	68.33	48	80.00	89	74.17
3	More favourable (more than 52)	13	21.67	4	6.67	17	14.17
N	Social media fatigue						
1	Low (less than 49)	9	15.00	6	10.00	15	12.50
2	Medium (49- 57)	38	63.33	45	75.00	83	69.17
3	High (more than 57)	13	21.67	9	15.00	22	18.33
O	Possession of ICT devices						
1	Smartphones	46	76.67	53	88.33	99	83
2	Desktop	8	13.33	13	21.67	21	18
3	Laptop	13	21.67	43	71.67	56	47
4	iPhone	1	1.67	8	13.33	9	8
5	Tablet	4	6.67	10	16.67	14	12
P	Purpose of using social media						
1	Communicate and connect with friends and family.	53	88.33	56	93.33	109	90.83
2	Get updated about news and current events	47	78.33	53	88.33	100	83.33
3	Feel the sense of belonging	5	8.33	7	11.67	12	10.00
4	In quest of job opportunities	10	16.67	28	46.67	38	31.66
5	Entertainment and fun	42	70.00	49	81.67	91	75.80
6	Education	30	50.00	38	63.33	68	56.66
7	Business and professional networking	4	6.67	14	23.33	18	15.00
8	Earning money	4	6.67	9	15.00	13	10.83
9	Others	3	5.00	8	13.33	11	9.16

Further, 30.00 per cent of them were doing private job and 10.00 per cent were in government job. An equal number (6.67%) of them were doing business and unemployed. No urban youth were in labour category. *Family Type:* The data clearly depict that majority of the youth both in rural and urban areas belonged to nuclear family (61.67% and 73.33% respectively) while remaining 38.33 per cent and 26.67 per cent were from joint family.

*Family annual income:* The data clearly depict that majority of the rural youth (83.33%) had low family annual income followed by 16.67 per cent belonged to medium category. No rural youth belonged to high category. With regard to urban youth majority of the youth (78.33%) had medium family annual income followed by high (13.33%) and 8.33 per cent of urban youth had low family income.

*Frequency of offline social gatherings:* It is evident from the above table that majority of the rural youth

(35.00%) meet and interact with others daily followed by weekly (30.00%). Further, 18.33 per cent of rural youth meet weekly and 11.67 per cent monthly. Only 5.00 per cent of rural youth belonged to rarely or never category. In case of urban youth, majority of the urban youth (33.33%) meet and interact with others weekly followed by fortnightly (26.67%). Additionally, 18.33 per cent meet once a month and 8.33 per cent rarely.

*Leisure time activities:* It is evident from the above table that majority of the rural youth (78.33%) watch online movies and series in free time. Further, 70.00 per cent rural youth like to socialize with friends and family followed by surfing internet (66.67%) and taking up a hobby (56.67%). Additionally, 51.67 per cent rural youth play sports, 15.00 per cent play online game and 5.00 per cent do other things in their free time. Regarding the urban youth, majority of them (88.33%) watch online movies and series in free time followed by surfing internet (78.33%).



Further, 65.00 per cent of the youth like to socialize with friends and family followed by taking up a hobby (46.67%) and playing sports (33.33%). Additionally, 21.67 per cent play online games and 11.67 per cent do other things in their free time. Thus, it can be concluded that majority of the youth of both rural and urban areas spend their free time in watching online movies and series.

*Social anxiety:* It is clear from the data that majority of the rural and urban youth (76.67% and 88.33%, respectively) had low social anxiety followed by medium (21.67% and 6.67%, respectively) social anxiety. Only 1.67 per cent of rural youth and 5.00 per cent of urban youth had high social anxiety. It can be concluded that majority of the youth had low level of social anxiety. The reason might be that today's youth are often more exposed to various social interactions from a young age. This increased exposure can help them become more comfortable in social settings and develop better social skills, reducing social anxiety.

*Belief about social media:* It is clear from the data that majority (68.33% and 80.00%, respectively) of the rural and urban youth had favourable belief about social media. Total 21.67 per cent of rural youth had more favourable belief about social media followed by 10.00 per cent had less favourable belief about social media. In case of urban youth, 13.33 per cent of urban youth had less favourable belief about social media followed by 6.67 per cent had more favourable belief about social media. It can be concluded that majority of the youth had favourable belief about social media. The reason might be that social media platforms helps young people to stay in touch and share experiences, and maintain relationships with family, friends and others. It also provides instant access to current events and various sources of information and offer opportunities to express themselves creatively.

*Motivation for social media use:* Data regarding the motivation for social media use is presented in Table 4.12. It is clear from the data that majority (75.00% and 63.33%, respectively) of the rural and urban youth had high motivation for social media use

followed by 21.67 per cent of the rural youth and 25.88 per cent of the urban youth had medium level of motivation and only 3.33 per cent of the rural youth and 5.00 per cent of the urban youth had low motivation for social media use. It can be concluded that majority of the youth had high motivation for social media use. This might be the desire for social connection and the need to feel part of a community can drive their motivation to use social media. Additionally, the fear of missing out social events, experiences, or important information motivate them to constantly check social media platforms to stay updated and connected.

*Social media fatigue:* Data regarding the social media fatigue is presented in table 4.13. It is clear from the data that majority (63.33% and 75.00%) of the rural and urban youth had medium social media fatigue. Total 21.67 percent of rural youth and 15.00 per cent of urban youth had high social media fatigue and 15.00 per cent of rural youth and 10.00 per cent of urban youth had low social media fatigue. It can be concluded that majority of the respondents had medium social media fatigue. The reason might be the constant exposure to a large volume of content that can lead to fatigue and a desire to take a break. The realization of time wasted can also contribute to social media fatigue.

*Possession of ICT devices:* Data regarding the possession of ICT devices is presented in table 4.14. It is clear from the data that vast majority of the youth of both rural and urban areas possessed smartphone (88.83% and 76.67%, respectively) followed by laptop (21.67% and 71.67% respectively). Further, 13.33 per cent possessed desktop. Very few rural youths i.e., four percent possessed tablet while only one per cent possessed iPhone. In case of urban youth 21.67 per cent possessed desktop. Further, 16.67 per cent possessed tablet followed by iPhone (13.33%). Thus, it can be concluded that possession of smartphone and laptop was highest among the both rural and urban youth. This showed that youth are gradually becoming digitally advance. It can also be referred that portable and handy feature of the laptop had replaced the desktop gradually. The results of the present study

are in conformity with the study of Gora (2021) who reported that majority of the respondents possessed mobile devices.

*Purpose of using social media:* It is clear from the data that majority of the rural youth (88.33%) used it to connect and communicate with friends and family followed by 78.33 per cent to get updated about news and current events. Further, 70.00 per cent of rural youth used it for entertainment and fun, 50.00 per cent for education while 16.67 per cent used it in quest of job opportunities. Additionally, 8.33 per cent use it to feel the sense of belonging. An equal number of rural youth (6.67 %) used it for business and professional networking and earning money. Only 5.00 per cent used it for other purpose. Regarding the urban youth, majority (93.33%) used it to communicate and connect with friends and family followed by 88.33 per cent for to get updated about news and current events and 81.67 per cent for entertainment and fun. Additionally, 63.33 per cent for education whereas 46.67 per cent used it in quest of job opportunities. Further, 23.33 per cent used it for business and professional networking and 15.00 per cent for earning money. Total 13.33 per cent for other purpose and 11.67 per cent to feel the sense of belonging.

It can be concluded that major purpose of using social media by both rural and urban youth was to communicate and connect with friends and family and get updated about news and current events. The findings are in line with Rawath (2019) who reported that maximum number of respondents (26.00%) used social media to communicate and connect with friends and family and 22.00% to keep updated with news/ trends.

## CONCLUSION

The study revealed that more than half of the respondents use social media for educational purpose that can help in deciding various parameters while designing e-learning materials for the student and using social media as a platform for discussions and

reflections. This study also depicts possession of ICT devices, Social Media Fatigue, Motivation for social media use, Belief about social media etc. Majority of respondents used social media to connect and communicate with friends and family. Vast majority of the youth of both rural and urban areas possessed smartphone. It can also be concluded that majority of the youth had low level of social anxiety. This data will be useful for media actioners to develop the strategy related to social media.

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