

# IMPACTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA UPON INDIAN YOUTH: ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL LAG

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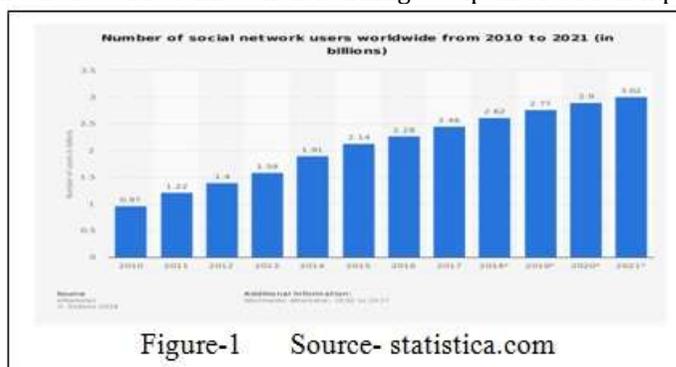
**ABSTRACT:** Social media is the most sought after medium of communication amongst university students in India. It has replaced all other traditional and current methods of interaction platform for its faster speed and easy availability. The revolutionising effect of mobile phones with net usage has made every student access social networking sites with the touch of their finger. It helps them in academic learning and to make friends or to socialize. Thus, it has become the way of life for Indian youth. Technology has a two dimensional effects upon the society. When it improves the functioning of the outer segment-like smart homes, smart cities, smart cars, smart phones, smart apps, it causes appalling effects in inner segments- social interaction patterns. It also affects the core structure of the society i.e. -social institutions. Due to social media there are reported changes found in the exterior as well as interior layers (cultural perspective) of the Indian society. This study is keen on analyzing these changes that are felt in the social structure that is related to university students. It also attempts to examine the positive and negative impacts of social media upon their academic performance, relationship patterns and identity issues.

**Key Words:** : Social Media, Social Networking, Indian Youth, Social Structure

## 1. INTRODUCTION

With the rise of the middle class in India the application of technologies in the life of general public has become common. Social media has happened to be an integral part of student's social life. They are now able to access net through many devices such as iPads, tablets, desktops, laptops, and smart phone. This has changed the way of communication and trends of education. Social media is one of the easiest means of communication that involves a group of internet based applications and interactive surface that include social networking sites such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, Google+. Social networking and media tools offer students the opportunity to communicate, get in touch, make friends access information, research, and chat (Abdulahi et al., 2014, Ahn, 2011). Internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, wikis, podcasts help provide a learning platform to them. Students can perform better by using these extra gadgets that assemble the world wide view. It has been proved to be a smart and developed tool to gather and share information compared to the traditional methods of referring to test papers or sharing notes in hard copies or to consult a tutor who is always not worth the task.

However, significant changes are registered in the socio-cultural segment of the society due to the introduction and adaptation of social media in daily life. There is a marked "cultural lag" observed in the degrees of educational achievements and also in the formation of relationship and interaction pattern. Sociologist Ogburn has rightly said that culture takes time to catch up with the technological inventions and the social problems and conflicts arise due to this lag. This paper seeks to identify this lag in student's life. Social media in the context of material culture is a boon for the students whereas it turned to be a bane for them in the non-material culture- that defines their learning set up and relationship pattern.



The global increase in social media usage since January 2017 is 13%. The Social network penetration worldwide is ever-increasing. In 2017, 71 percent of internet users were social network users and these figures are expected to grow. Social networking is one of the most popular online activities with high user engagement rates and expanding mobile possibilities. The increased worldwide usage of smart phones and mobile devices has opened up the possibilities of mobile social networks with increased features such as location-based services like Foursquare or Google Now.

Most social networks are also available as mobile social apps, whereas some networks have been optimized for mobile internet browsing, enabling users to comfortably access visual blogging sites such as Tumblr or Pinterest via tablet. Social networks not only enable users to communicate beyond local or social boundaries, but also offer possibilities to share user-generated content like photos and videos and features such as social games. Social advertising and social gaming are two major points of revenue for social networks. In 2019, it is estimated that there will be around 2.77 billion social media users around the globe, up from 2.46 billion in 2017.

The number of internet users worldwide in 2018 is 4.021 billion, up 7 percent year-on-year. The number of social media users worldwide in 2018 is 3.196 billion, up 13 percent year-on-year. The number of mobile phone users in 2018 is 5.135 billion, up 4 percent year-on-year. Annual growth continues apace, especially in active mobile social users - 39% penetration up 5% from 2017. Share of web traffic by device highly favours mobile at 52% (+4% year-on-year change), whilst Desktop remains in second place with only 43% of device share to all web pages, down by 3% year-on-year.

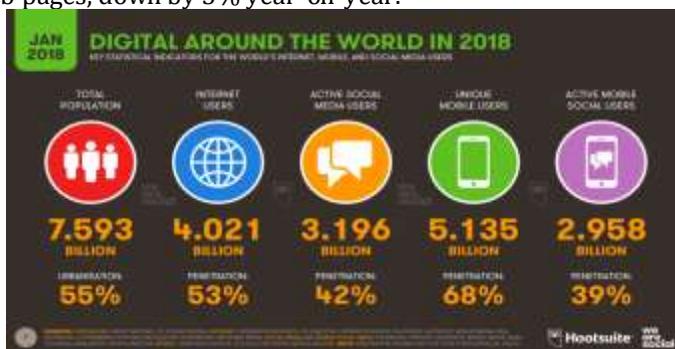


Figure 1 Source-www.smartinsight.com

Some 90% people ages 18 to 29 used at least six forms of social media (Pew Research Centre). Over one fifth of a student's time is spent on social media. Today's youth prefer social media to traditional media such as print media –newspapers, magazine, and journals and electronic media such as television viewing or radio listening. One can find a single youth on road or in a corridor talking, smiling or crying or shouting on his/her own now-a-days. S/he is not alone in reality. The virtual companion or companions are there for that person. This is the wonder of living in a hi-tech scientific era.

### 1.1 Types of Social Media

Social media can be categorized in to six types and they are: Joint projects like Wikipedia, blogs like Twitter, content communities like YouTube, social networking sites like Face book, effective game worlds like World of War craft and virtual social worlds like Second Life. **Other than this social media technologies may include**-blogs, picture-sharing, vlogs, wall-postings, email, instant messaging, music-sharing, crowd sourcing and voice over IP and many more. **The whole of social media is managed using the seven functional building blocks such as**-identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation, and groups. Main purpose of using these building blocks is to get better idea on the essential needs of the social media viewers and these building blocks may differ with the type of social media. For example users of LinkedIn mainly focus on identity, reputation and contacts whereas YouTube building blocks are sharing, conversation, groups and reputation.

The evaluation of the role of social media upon Indian youth has become a crucial point of investigation in the field of social research. Information technology makes the world a global village and the use of smart phones connect the people from all over the world. Besides the pressure of searching the identity in an achievement oriented current social system and the stress of personal relationships the youth is now left vulnerable to a powerful mode of technological life that has side effects. According to the magic bullet theory (or hypodermic-syringe model, transmission-belt model) the students exposed to social media are so vulnerable they can be labelled as "sitting ducks" and are taking whatever is coming their way or are shot at with messages and bewildering information. If they are managing to handle the social media, it is well and

good otherwise they do suffer with maladjustments of culture and there is noticeable failure in their achievement pattern. They fall the prey to the powerful tool and sometimes without their wish and so is struggling to catch up with its tremendous pace.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Waddington (2011) youth of this generation consider social media as the component of their culture; not a craze. It could enhance their ability and they use it as educational tool. Brady, Holcomb, and Smith (2010) and Lusk (2010) also hold the same opinion and believed that social media had provided efficient ways for education. Students use social media for e-learning. Social media had provided new web tools which could be used by the students to raise their learning skills. To Jacobsen and Forste (2011), and Kalpidou, Costin, and Morris, (2011) media had negative effect on grades, about two-thirds of the students used media while doing homework, or in class which had bad impact on their grades. According to Livingstone and Bober (2003), social media was the main cause of generation gap in several ways like lack of awareness, recognition of domestic rules, and in what kids were really acting and what were parents' opinion about their children's doing. Berson and Berson (2005) stated that high use of internet linked high risks.

### 2.1 Theories of social media

Basically there are four types of theories of social media, which are as follows:

#### 2.1.1 User Gratifications Theory (UGT)

UGT is an audience-centred approach to understand mass communication. UGT discusses how users deliberately choose media that will satisfy given needs and allow one to enhance knowledge, relaxation, social interactions/companionship, diversion, or escape. The Heuristic approach of UGT holds that audiences are responsible for choosing media to meet their desires and needs to achieve gratification. Mark Levy and [Sven Windah](#) provide a good description of what it means to be an "**active consumer**" of media. UGT gives the consumer power to discern what media they consume, with the assumption that the consumer has a clear intent and use. Gratifications sought (GS) vs. gratifications obtained (GO) is one of the research issues dealing with U&G theory, and it is a contrast between "what you were seeking from experience" versus "what you actually got from the experience - whether it was a satisfying experience or not."

#### 2.1.2 Hypodermic Needle model

Recently Woman & Child Development Minister Maneka Gandhi has assured all assistance to a Bengaluru Muslim woman who was reportedly **given triple talaq over WhatsApp by her husband**. This is the first case of instant triple talaq through social media to come to light and many may follow the route to give talaq to their respective wives.

#### 2.1.3 Technological determinism

Thorstein Veblen (1857-1929), an American sociologist assumes that the technology of a society determines the development of its social structure and cultural values William Ogburn. To Karl Marx, productive technology, exerts primary influence on human social relations.

**2.1.4 Crowd Power Theory**-According to Susan Greenfield, an Oxford University researcher in her article *The Quest For Identity In The 21st Century*, on Daily Mail UK 14th September, 2010, as growing numbers of people discover the potential of the World Wide Web and as they become active parts of it and as technology becomes even more advanced, expanded, accessible and sophisticated, current forms of communication will transform, taking advantage of the crowd sourcing phenomenon. Crowds are becoming more powerful through technology, because technology has the ability to unite them.

## 3. OBJECTIVE

The objective of the study is an attempt to investigate the impact of social networking on the Indian youth and to determine the extent of it's addiction on them. How they use it in daily life and it's effect on their socio-educational and psychological wellbeing. The reason for selecting youth as the target audience is because the direction of a country and culture is decided by the direction taken by youths of that country. The overall objective of the study is -

- 1 To assess the positive Effects of Social Media in Learning/Educational Setting
- 2 To analyse the negative Effects of Social Media in Learning/Educational Setting
- 3 To examine the positive Effect of Social Media upon Social Relationships
- 4 To scrutinize the negative Effect of Social Media upon Social Relationships
- 5 To study the effects of addiction of social media upon student life

- 6 To evaluate the principle of “Gratifications sought (GS) vs. gratifications obtained (GO)”
- 7 To find out the cultural lag

**4. METHODOLOGY**

The data was collected by online survey method from 380 students as random sample of 28342 college students of Raipur, Chhattisgarh, India. The survey was online for two weeks in January 2019. The students belong to 17 to 21 age group. Girls accounted for 59% of respondents, while male students constituted 41% only. Questionnaire was designed to collect primary data from the selected sample. In questionnaire, Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree) was utilized. After collecting this primary data, its descriptive statistics are measured by using software “SPSS” (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The collected data were tabulated, analyzed by using frequency, percentage, index and correlation.

**5. RESULT & DISCUSSION**

It has been found out that social media is a big asset for learning these days. Table 1 analyses that students agree to the fact that social media helps in studies. Majority of the students are of the opinion that it helps them access information online from govt. & non-govt. portals, journals for research. It assists them exchange class notes, prepare and submit assignments to professors online for checking. Diagrams & theories explained vividly in YouTube for students pursuing courses in science stream.

Table-1 positive effects of social media in learning/educational setting

Sl. No.	Use of social media in education	Agree	Disagree	Undecided
1	Accessing information from govt. & non-govt. portals, journals for research is easy	47	00	03
2	Easier to study by sharing notes, links, videos, files by WhatsApp	50	00	00
3	Makes presentation of assignments easy	48	00	02
4	Diagrams & theories, updates explained lucidly in YouTube for students in science stream	45	02	03
5	Student teacher communication has become faster and swifter by Facebook/Whatsapp groups	50	00	00

Table-2 puts light into how excessive use of social media causes failure in studies. 76% of the students agree that excessive use of social media creates inattentiveness in studies. 78% of the students agree that it diminishes physical activities & the importance of play grounds for youth. When 56% of the respondents agree that loss of health & vigour & laziness kills the zeal to study hard and excel, 78% of the students agree that unavailability of time to prepare for exams as they lead a busy virtual social life. Majority of the students agree to the fact that students who knows how to create a balance between virtual life and real life perform well in studies and Day scholars that are under parental supervision are more prone to secure good grades than the hostellers without parental supervision.

Table-2 Negative Effects of Social Media in Learning/Educational Setting

Sl No	Excessive use of social media causes failure in studies	Agree	Disagree	Undecided
1	Excessive use of social media creates inattentiveness	38	6	3
2	Diminishes physical activities & the importance of play grounds for youth	39	6	5
3	Loss of health, vigour and laziness kills the zeal to study hard and excel	28	15	7
4	Unavailability of time to prepare for exams as they lead a virtual social life	39	9	2
5	An imbalance between virtual life and real life leads to bad performance in studies	46	02	02
6	Day scholars with parental supervision on social media usage secure good marks compared to hostellers	46	04	00

Table 3 verifies that social media makes finding, formulating of relationship, courtship & dating easier. It also helps to stay in touch in the case of long distance relationship. 72% of the students agree that finding friends, dates & interest groups is easy. 74% of the students agree that formulating relationship is effortless through social media. Hundred percent agree that sharing practical details by photo and video is easy. Hundred percent students agree that meeting using location sensing apps becomes unproblematic. 76% of the students feel that staying in touch is possible with long distance important relationship.

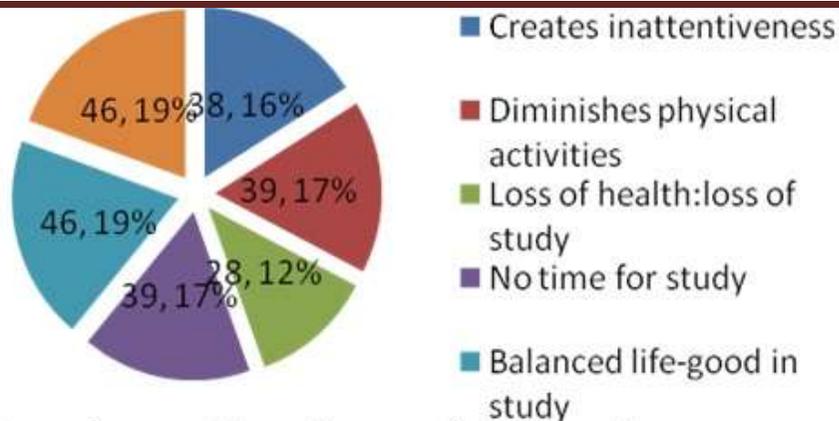


Figure-4 Excessive use of social media

Table-3 Positive Effect of Social Media upon Social Relationships

Sl. No.	Active, Optimistic Tenets of Social Media in Social Relationship	Agree	Disagree	Undecided
1	Finding friends, dates & interest groups is easy	36	6	8
2	Effortless formulation of relationship, by chatting & video calling	37	7	6
3	Sharing practical details by photo & video is easy	50	0	0
4	Meeting using location sensing apps becomes unproblematic	50	0	0
5	Long-distance friends, family members & couples could stay in touch	38	9	3

Table-4 is all about the negative effects of social media upon poor achievement in studies and for causing break ups in relationships. 90% of the students are of the opinion that it is easier to make friends and romantic relationship online so it is easier to break it too. 92% of the students opine that young people form romantic relationship and goes for dating without creating a solid base. 78% of the students expressed that spending lot of frivolous time together-chatting online or talking spoil the tenderness of relationship. Majority of the students told that suspicion and jealousy sprout followed by misunderstanding related to some profile status. 78% of the students said that the feeling of negligence by the dear ones leads to so much of frustration one can hardly afford time for studies. Most of the students hold the view that spending most of the day online creates lot of physical ailments i.e. constant mild-severe headache, loss of sleep, eye-pain, loosing eyesight early, loss of appetite. All this leads to poor health and constant and severe irritation, which turns into anxiety disorder. A sane mind is required to nurture a relationship or to focus in studies, which is absent in students leading virtual life. 74% of the students agree to the fact that a mild quarrel online could lead to a break up in relationship. Hundred percent of the respondents agree that due to social media a break up is highlighted among friends that makes patch up impossible, which again becomes detrimental to their inner sanity.

Table-4 Negative Effect of Social Media upon Social Relationships

Sl. No.	Use of social media for break ups in relationships	Agree	Disagree	Undecided
1	Frivolous online togetherness spoils relationship	45	03	02
2	Profile status creates misunderstanding	46	00	04
3	Feeling of negligence leads to frustration	39	05	04
4	Physical ailment causes bitterness in attitude	47	00	03
5	A mild quarrel online leads to break up in relationship	37	10	03
6	Break up is highlighted among friends	50	00	00

Table-5 evaluates the effect of addiction of social media upon student-life. 50 percent of the student are of the opinion that social media is addictive. 68% of the students hold the view that lack of face to face communication causes mental disharmony. It kills the incentive to lead a healthy life. 70% holds the view that it creates ambiguous self identity. 64% of the student feels that absence of proper cultural values or

adequate and timely parental interference leads to loss of faith and leads to demoralised social standards. Hundred percent of the students are of the opinion that failure in studies and break up in relationship leads to loss of self confidence and. Most of the respondents state that lack of proper parental care and support for leads to demoralised standards.

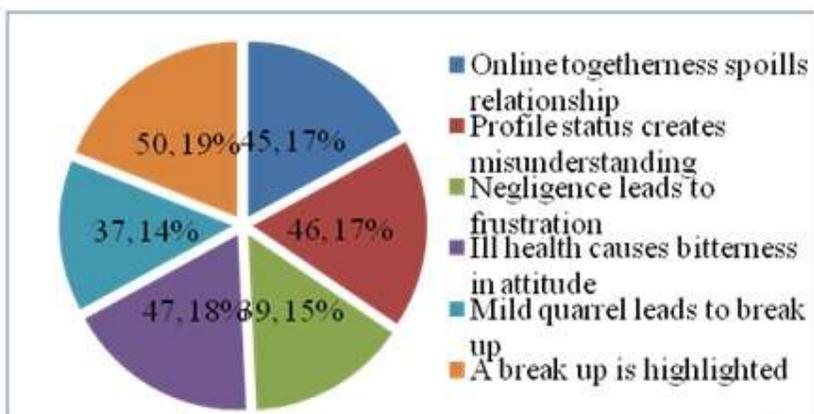


Figure-5 Effects of social media for causing break ups

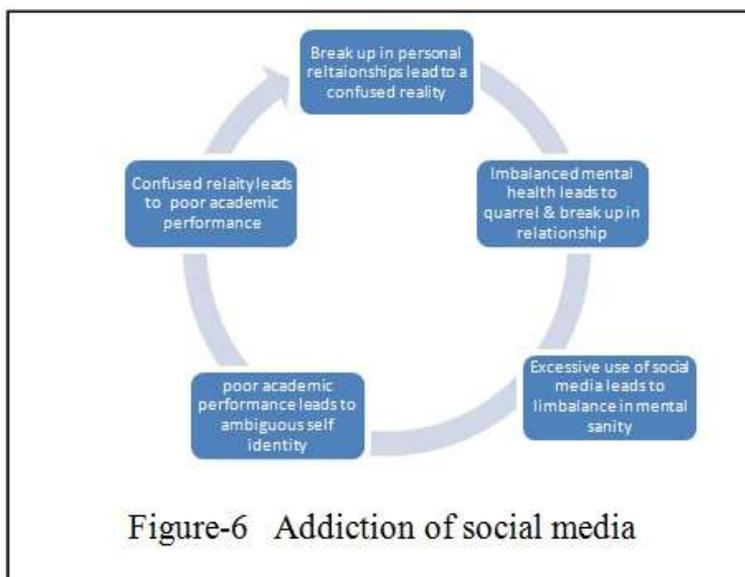


Figure-6 Addiction of social media

Table-5 Effects of addiction of social media upon student life

Sl. No.	Addiction of social media cause loss of faith in human life	Agree	Disagree	Undecided
1	Social Media is addictive	25	16	09
2	Lack of face to face communication causes mental disharmony	34	10	06
3	It causes formulation of ambiguous self-identity	35	11	04
4	Absence of cultural values leads to demoralised social standards	32	14	04
5	Failure in personal achievements leads to loss of self confidence	50	00	00

**6. FINDINGS**

Social media, no doubt, has turned out to be the biggest pool of information, which aids to the student’s world of learning - to study, entertainment, making friends, dating, innovation, and for seeking job opportunity. Whatsapp groups and Facebook pages have made sharing of notes, classroom teaching, assignment making, studying online together and above all maintaining a kind of extra tutoring relationship with the teaching faculties of the university – a possibility. Thus it is concluded that social media is

happening as a technological blessing for the students. But there is a “*cultural lag effect*” for which its usages are becoming gradually difficult and harmful for the students. It has a long term negative effect for the society as well. Ogburn Nimkoff has rightly put it that every society undergoes a phase of cultural lag when there is disparity between the invention and advancement of technological resources of material culture and the acceptance and adjustment of the same in the immaterial culture.

Indian youth is experiencing the effects of cultural lag who are availing the opportunity of economical usage of social media. Compared to the western countries where the cultural lag is almost bridged. Indian youth is suffering from maladies of accessing social media. In developed western societies where the materialistic achievement has already settled in, students are availing other practical sources of networking. such as working out in gym, relaxing in spa, joining clubs that teach extra-curricular activities and sports such as, rowing, mountaineering, diving, swimming, playing basketball, football, badminton etc and rejuvenate their energy and vigour. They get the chance and opportunity to form various physical groups there, to meet the members frequently and spend time with the real people. They know how to maintain a balance between the real and virtual social life. But this is hardly the case with developing countries like India. Here not everyone can avail these modern day facilities that are appealing to the youth’s mind because of financial restraints and absence of the attitude to make it a part of daily life. So the Indian youth is helplessly exposed to the extreme negative sides of social media. Overuse of social media has been linked to addiction that ultimately leads to inattentiveness, stress, jealousy and depression. Besides these adversaries, social media also has played the role for misleading information. Such falsehood has been documented in the 2016 U.S president election and also in the appearance of a five hooded snake in India. Such phenomena leverage the power of social media, allowing anyone to reach an audience of millions with content that lack coverage or fact checking. Cyber crimes such as Fraud and Identity theft, hacking or phishing, and spasm and scams are on the rise. It can be defined as offences that are committed against a individual or group of individuals with a criminal motive to intentionally harm the reputation of the victim or cause physical or mental harm or loss to the victim directly or indirectly using social networking sites. It may threaten a bank’s or nation’s security.

### 6.1-Social Media Communication Hub

Indian government has been seriously thinking to check the malicious effects of social networking sites. Recently Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has decided to start a checking system called *Social Media Communication Hub*. The proposed project that comes under “New Media Cell”, set up under a notification in 2013 seeks to monitor social media platforms and analyse the data to provide feedback to the government. The major issue it confronts is analysing and disseminating personal data posted on social media such as crucial information in whatsapp or emails is a violation of the Right to Privacy. According to critics of the Social Media Hub, data posted on social media cannot be analysed further by third parties without consent of the concerned person as it violates the right to privacy. In a landmark judgement, **Justice K.S. Puttaswamy (Retd.) vs. Union of India Judgement, 2017**, the Supreme Court acknowledged the right to privacy as a fundamental right. It upheld that privacy is a constitutionally protected right which emerges from the guarantee of life and personal liberty in Article 21. In the absence of strong ethical and legal safeguards against breach of privacy, the proposal to set up Social Media Communication Hubs is highly controversial. There have been various instances of Aadhaar data leak. Further, the recent Cambridge Analytical Data Leak Scandal shows the political ramifications of data collected from social media without an informed consent.

### 6.2- Prism- USA

Unlike social media communication hub, PRISM is a tool used by the US National Security Agency (NSA) and backed by The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act to collect private electronic data belonging to users of major internet services like Gmail, Facebook etc. Edward Snowden, an intelligence contractor had leaked PRISM data, criticised various surveillance programs and other snooping activities of the U.S. government. This had led to many international debates on mass surveillance and privacy of citizens.

## 7. SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings drawn from this study, the researcher has made the following recommendations:

- Educational institute should make sure that students do not use mobile phones in the class room.
- Organize a seminar to enlighten students on the not too-good aspects of virtual interaction. This can be done by exposing students to the importance of physical socialising.

- A joint venture between government and educational institutes is to be carried out to make extra-curricular activity as a compulsory course curriculum to help the students reach the physical, aesthetic and cultural harmony of life.
- Students should be given discounted access to various sporting clubs. It should be the duty of the educational institutes to either open up such streams that facilitate such aesthetic, sportive or cultural activities or tie up with organisations that do it by default. They should make it mandatory for every student to join such organisations that would be teaching extracurricular activity seriously.
- Organisations that profess fine arts such as acting, film editing, singing, music composition, instrumental music, dancing etc; the literary community that practices writing poems, short stories, novels, drama, and essays; and the sporting academy that teaches rowing, mountaineering, diving, shooting, swimming, horse racing etc.; and organisations that teach defensive activities such as Karate, Judo, Taekwondo, Kung Fu should be encouraged by government and should be carried out by educational institutes.
- New forms cultural organisations should be started that would be teaching the rich essence of traditional rituals of Indian societies.
- Different cultural levels of stages, socialising centres and competitive grounds should be arranged through TV or real life to encourage the youth to lead a practical rich life. That way the distance between virtual and real life can be met. This will further facilitate the Indian youth to recover the lost heritage of Indian community that once made them proud as the leader of the world.
- This study provides the following suggestions to the Ministry of Communications & Technology
- Enactment of Social Media Use Act: The ministry has to propose to enact a new law that would guide the users of the social network sites with the do's and don'ts. Some of the students use the social networking sites to engage in cyber-crimes. Such act shall provide the legal framework that would help Law courts to adjudicate on cyber-crime cases.
- Social Media Communication Hub has to be practised with due respect to personal privacy of the users with an appropriate ethical angle

## 8. CONCLUSION

Consequently, the present study concludes that social media is really a blessing of the hi-tech era and is decidedly an advanced feature of the post modern society. India is still struggling to be a modern society. Part of it in metropolitan cities has achieved the features of the advanced society. The virtual value, alertness and speed of the social media are yet to correspond to the socio-cultural values of the Indian society. This is the cultural lag. The effect of which is found upon Indian youth who use it to its maximum. Lot of lacunas and maladies are found due to the maladjustment of material culture that represents the advent of social media in India with the immaterial culture that holds the age old values structure and is not ready to catch up with the material culture. Indians who had lived life as gregarious simple people are not able to lead a life that is completely virtual. The attitudes, the viewpoints of people and adjacent social structure have to change to give way to the upcoming social media and its consequential changes in both material and immaterial culture. The bridge of the gap between technological and cultural aspect of society can lead to the healthy and effective use of social media. This will further the maintenance of social order in a post modern society thus extending human wellness in general.

## 9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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