Research Paper

A Study on the Impact of Internet Addiction Among Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

Decades before parents complained about children that they had been addicted to drugs and alcohol .But now the situation changed , children are being addicted to internet. In some respects, addictive use of the Internet resembles other so-called "process" addictions, in which a person is addicted to a behavior or activity (including gambling, shopping, or certain sexual behaviors) rather than a substance (mood-altering drugs, tobacco, food, etc).Adolescence is a transition period and most of the boys and girls think of personal identity. Hence, clash in the outlook and opinion of parents and children is common at this stage of the boys and girls. Internet is a very virtuous source of information, but the over usage can cause significant impact on their life. Here the researcher tries to find out the extend of using internet and the impact of internet addiction in the academic performance, social life, economic condition and psychological wellbeing.

Introduction

Now we are living in digitalized era.It seems to be difficult to survive without computer or internet. Although the Internet has become one of the most significant sources of information for adolescents, addiction to the Internet can make negative impact on their life.

Internet addiction is a recently originated term. Research on Internet addiction originated in the US by Dr. Kimberly Young. In 1996, she presented the first paper on the topic at the American Psychological Association's annual conference held in Toronto entitled, "Internet Addiction: The Emergence of a New Disorder". Now it is difficult to estimate how widespread this problem in adolescents is. The major symptoms of internet addiction include Preoccupation with internet, Withdrawal symptom –restless or irritability (including feeling of anger, tension, depression when the computer is inaccessible), Repeated unsuccessful effort to control, cut back or stop internet etc.

"Healthy internet use" is the use of the internet for an expressed purpose in a reasonable amount of time without cognitive or behavioral discomfort. Problematic internet use is "a psychiatric condition which involves maladaptive thoughts and pathological behavior" (Davis, 2002). Problematic internet use is excessive time spent on various activities on the internet to an extent that might have negative effects on the user's physical and psychological health; social, academic, professional, and marital relationships, and other areas of life (Young, 1997)

Adolescence is a process rather than a period, a process of achieving the attitude and believes needed for effective participation in the society (Dorothy Rojer)It is the stage of transition. Adolescence is a period of excitement and stress due to different physical and psychological factors and development of sexual feelings.Though the Internet is a useful source of information and channel for speedy communication, its abuse among the adolescents is of much concern. They may be interested in information relating to violence, sexual content, adventures etc. Their over anxiety may lead to cybercrimes including the intrusion to others' data, plagiarism, using and spreading pornographic material and sending anonymous messages.

Objectives

- To study the extend of using internet.
- To study the impact of internet addiction on the academic performance.
- To study the impact of internet addiction on social life.
- To study the impact of internet addiction on psychological well being.
- To study the economic aspect of using internet.

Methodology

A descriptive study was conducted among 30 higher secondary students (15 boys and 15 girls) who were studying in a govt. school at Kerala. The data was collected by using both primary and secondary sources .An internet addiction test scale developed by Dr. Kimberly Young, and a structured questionnaire; specially drafted for the purpose were used for collecting the data. The collected primary data was analyzed by using percentages and proportions..

Analysis and findings:

The given table reveals the level and severity of using internet.

TABLE 1

Level of addiction	Frequency		Percentage	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Mild	2	5	13.3%	33.3%
Moderate	8	8	53.4%	53.4%
Severe	5	2	33.3%	13.3%

With reference to the internet addiction test scale if the score is-

20 - 49 points the respondent is a mild on-line user. He may surf the Web a bit too long at times, but he has a control over his usage.

50 -79 points: The respondents are experiencing occasional or frequent problems because of the Internet. They are the moderate users should consider the full impact on their life.

80 - 100 points: Their Internet usage is causing significant problems in their life. They must evaluate the impact of the Internet on their life and address the problems directly caused by the Internet usage. They are coming under severe category.

The study shows that 76.6% of the respondents are browsing the internet through mobile phone and the rest (23.4%) use computer for browsing internet .This result also shows the extend of using mobile phone by students . In the ancient period toys or sweets were gifted by parents to the children when they had success in life. But now parents offer mobile phone or laptop when they win anything in life. It is evident from the study that 53.3 % of the respondents have mobile phone with internet connection. 56 % of the respondents spend one to two hour per day in internet and 18 % of the respondents spend more than two hours and the rest spend less than one hour.

Majority of the respondents that is 86 % are having accounts in social networking sites and 14 % of the respondents have no accounts in social networking sites. Even though social networking site is a suitable mean for communication, it pickings the valuable time of individuals. 65.3 % of the respondents started browsing social networking sites between 10 to 15 years old and the rest 34.7% started after 15 years old. It is understood from the study that 69.2% of the respondents have uploaded their personal photos in social networking sites. Among these 44% are girls. The uploaded photos can be easily abused by

strangers. But nobody takes it to consideration. 60 % of the respondents agreed that they have the habit of internet chatting .Among these 26.6% are interested in chatting with strangers and others chat with friends and family members. We know now most of the girl's abuses or sexual abuses are starting from internet chatting or mobile phone communication.

TABLE- 2
Internet over usage spoils the study time of the respondents

Spoils Study time	Frequency	Percentage
Always	4	13.4%
Some times	18	60%
Never	8	26.6%
Total	30	100 %

The above table reveals that 13.3% of the respondents think that they are not getting enough time to study purpose because of the over usage of internet and the 60 % reveals that sometimes browsing spoil their study time . It may lead to scholastic backwardness and indirectly affects   the psychological wellbeing of students.

TABLE -3
Reduction in marks due to the dangerous use of internet

Reduction in marks	Frequency	Percentage
Always	5	16.7%
Sometimes	18	60%
Never	7	23.3%
Total	30	100%

The study shows that 60% of the respondent's marks have reduced sometimes after starting internet browsing and the 23.4% reveals that always there had reduction in marks due to the excess of internet usage. It can reduce the self-esteem and the rising of inferiority complex. The above mentioned result reveals how tragically internet affect the academic performance of the students.

TABLE -4
Reduction in time of being with friends

Reduction in time with friends	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	13	33.3%
No	17	66.7%
Total	30	100

The social implication of internet addiction is also remarkable .33.3% of the respondents agree that their time which they spend with friends has reduced due to the increased urge of internet.Because they like to bein the world of internet than being with friends. It may reduce their social interaction. Nobody will be there when they needs the presence of friends and leads to social isolation of individuals. It compels the children to live in the fantasy of online world.

TABLE -5
Habit of watching prone videos

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Always	9	30
Sometimes	9	30
Never	12	60
Total	30	100

The study reveals that 30 % of the respondents always and 30 % of the respondents sometimes watch prone videos. In the ancient period only limited magazines or weeklies are available with prone pictures .But now the 3-D videos are available in internet. Adolescence is the period in which the sexual urges starts to appear. When they get opportunity to watch this type of videos their latent may divert to sexual energy.

TABLE -6
Habit of downloading prone videos

Downloads	Frequency	Percentage
Always	0	0%
Sometimes	12	40%
Never	18	60%
Total	30	100%

The study disclose the adolescent's habit of downloading prone videos.40% of the respondents reveals that sometimes they have downloaded the prone videos .Being a serious offence with reference to cyber law the offender may be punished. But most of the adolescence seems to be unaware of it.

TABLE -7
Prominent feelings after watching prone videos

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Wants to watch it again	2	11.1%
Tries to make it practical	5	27.8%
Feeling of guilt	11	61.1%
Total	18	100%

The study discloses that 27.8 % of the respondents confess that after watching the prone videos they try to make it practical somehow. Now a day mostly we hear the rape news .Even small kids are victimized to rape. Even though 61 .1% say that they will have guilt feeling after watching this type videos , 11.1 % shows that they urge to watch it again .

TABLE -8
Source of money to brows internet

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Taking pocket money	17	56.6%
Self-earning	10	33.4%
Steal from family	3	10%
Total	30	100%

We must think of the economic aspect of internet addiction also .56.6% of the respondents say that they take the pocket money what they got from parents and relatives.10 % of the respondents confess that they have stolen money from the family.33.4% says that they go for part time job and earn money . It is happening in poor families. There the students themselves collect money by involving in part time job such as salesman, washing vehicles etc. Fortunately girls are exempted from this. It also reveals that even though article 24 of Indian constitution prohibits child labor, it has been existed here in different forms. In most cases parents are not aware about the children's financial sources and they don't know how they spend it.

TABLE -9
Feeling of loneliness and moody when they are in off-line

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Always	4	13.3%
Sometimes	9	30%
Never	17	56.7%
Total	30	100%

The above table shows how the internet over usage causes disturbances in psychological wellbeing of individuals. 13.3% of the respondents are having the feeling of loneliness always when they are in offline .30 % of the respondent reveals that sometimes have such problem and 56.7% have never faced such problem. The loneliness may later result in depression. The previous studies reveals that the simultaneous occurrence of guilt feeling and loneliness can create the situation of suicidal tendency.

TABLE -10
Feeling when fail to cut down the time of browsing

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Guiltiness	7	29.16%
Angry	4	16.6%
Sadness	13	54.24%
Total	30	100%

Most of the respondents are bothered about their over involvement in the online activities. Hence they try to cut down the time spending to browsing. Majority of the (54.4) the respondents say when they fail to reduce the time feel sadness ,16.6% feel angry and the rest (29.16%) feel guiltiness.

Recommendations
➢ One of the major reasons of the problem is surplus pocket money. The parents must know the financial sources of children and how they spend it.
➢ In the current scenario, innovative facilities are the part of social status. In the younger period onwards our children get advanced facilities in home. The parents must be careful in giving facilities to children especially computer.

➢ Peer groups has important role in making a person addicted to anything ,it may be alcohol ,drugs ,or internet .The peers express the experience of wonderful moments of online life .It persuades others to enjoy the same. Hence it is better keeping friendship with noble students.

Conclusion
Although the Internet has become one of the most significant information resources for adolescents, its impact is remarkable. It makes countless disturbance in academic performance, social relationship, emotional wellbeing ect. The study results shows fortunately severe cases are rarer than that of moderate cases. But there are further chances to fall down the moderate cases to severe cases. The boys are more addicted to internet than girls because they are getting more opportunity to mingle with friends and different people in the community. They are allowed to spend more time in internet café even in night than girls. We can understand from the study that the academic and social impact is prominent than psychological impact .It may due to the unique nature of respondents. Adolescents give more important to the instant pleasure. No more people are concerned about after effects. Hence in this progressive world we -the society, the family, and the parents- must be aware of the trap around of our children .Good parenting is the only way to save them.

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