Research Paper

Impact of Internet on Teenagers

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ABSTRACT   *In twenty-first century, internet has become a major learning, knowledge, education and knowledge based technology. Due to its communication applications and social networking such as Face Book, Twitter, etc, the teenagers are attracted towards it. On the one hand, it enabled learning new things and helps in education and on the other, with objectionable content, pornographic materials, etc, it has become major cause for crime in general and cyber crime in particular. The paper discussed few studies that are made on the effects of internet on teenagers.*

Introduction:

During the last two decades the world in general and India, in particular has witnessed for remarkable changes in Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Many psychologists, educationists and researchers proved the great role of ICT in the educational world for helping in the development of inherent capacities of adolescents, increasing their knowledge and skills and desired change in their behaviour. It affected not only to the educational world but also to the whole human life in such an extent as there is no aspects of life that it doesn't touch and in the current society, the modern human life can't be imagined without it. 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 life (Pandey, 2014). The Internet exerts increasingly more influence on our everyday life. Especially, teenagers are influenced much by internet as they learn technological advancements and applications and use the same.

Internet has consolidated itself as a very powerful tool for information, communication and entertainment that has modified the human behaviour by entering in its life. In present digital era, easy and continuous access to internet provides tremendous opportunities to teenagers for education and entertainment, allowing them to connect with their peers as well as with complete strangers from across the world. Teenagers use a variety of internet applications such as instant messaging, bulletin boards, chat rooms, and blogs to connect with their peers.

The facts about Indian teenagers:

❖ 47 percent of India's 1 billion population are under the age of 20
❖ Number of teenagers – 160 million
❖ 22 million of the teenage population belongs to the urban middle class
❖ India's young consumer's annual spending power is estimated at US$6.5 billion
❖ By 2015, Indians under 20 will make 55 percent of the population (Mohan Ram, 2012).

Impact of Internet on Teenagers:

The US Center for Media Education declared teenagers to be "the *defining users* of [the] digital media culture" who are "as comfortable growing up with digital media as their parents' generation was with the telephone and TV" (Montgomery, 2001). The use of internet among adolescents in India has led to a vast change in their life styles and study habits. It is a general observation that the use of internet can lead to improve student's performance in thinking logically, formation of concepts, problem solving procedure and understanding relationships (Temple and

Gavillet, 1990).

While emphasizing on the impact of internet on present teenage students, Lajwanti and Sharma (2013) have stated that, internet use not only affects physiological and psychological variables but also educational and study habits of students. Success of students in their education is very necessary for good health of our society and nation but success in study depends not only on ability and hard work but also on effective method of study and study habits. Nowadays, students have not keen interest in traditional styles of study. It shows that current study habits of adolescents are much revolutionized by internet.

Statistics on internet studies as stated by Saluja, et al (2012), conducted last year showed the rapid adoption of the internet by the youth and some of the dangers caused by it. Out of the surveyed youth in urban Indian schools, 84% had an internet connection at their homes. Internet use at home was highest among students between 13 and 14 years of age, with some spending as much as 8 hours online daily. Another survey by Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) survey in 2010 revealed that about 52% of children in the 8-11 age group daily spent over five hours online - chatting and playing games. In the same age group, 30% spent between 1-5 hours a day on the net while 18% said they didn't surf daily. The usage was higher among 12-15 year olds, 58% of whom fell into the "excessive use" category. Only 10% of these children didn't surf daily and 32% spent up to five hours a day on Internet.

Among 16-18 year olds, only 4% didn't go online daily. While 56% spent more than five hours on Internet, 40% were online for less than five hours. Children of working parents were found to be more addicted to the internet due to the lack of parental supervision. Although 31% of these children use the internet just for academic purposes, the remaining use it for social networking and recreational purposes. About 45% have an internet connection in their own room. 80% of the children browse internet either alone or with friends but without their parents. About 70% of the surveyed youth have online profiles on social networking sites such as Orkut, Facebook etc. Nearly 50% of these students uploaded their photos or videos on their profiles. The most undesirable cases including online harassment (15%) and unknown acquaintances (33%) are most common on social networking sites frequented by the youth. The survey also underscores the strong need for sensitizing the youth because one in ten teenagers post their phone number and information about their city and school online. 33% of the young internet users reported interaction with unknown people, although just 15% reported harassment on account of such interactions. 79% think that posting

personal information online is very unsafe and that this information might be put to negative unwanted use. Of the teenagers who interacted with unknown people, 10% actually met such people in real life (Saluja, et al, 2012).

Internet has become a highly effective and profitable means of distributing sexually explicit material as well as a sophisticated channel for compulsive sexual behaviour, sex trafficking and sex crimes (Galbreath and Berlin, 2002). Such free access and exposure to this information by adolescents who have not yet developed a full maturity could pose negative impact on adolescent development and could potentially manifest in their social interactions with peers, their sexual activity and their emotional developments (Subrahmanyam et al., 2006). Due to such exposure towards the sexual activities, there is increasing interests among the teenagers with regard to sex at an early age. Such interests may encourage teenagers to go for crime such as rape, abduction, etc in society. In this way, there is increase in teenagers who are involved in crimes especially in metropolitan cities in India.

Suggestions:

From the above discussion on different studies, it is summed up that, internet is useful and powerful tool, which has influenced knowledge, information, learning and communication for teenagers. On the other hand, it has also negative effects such as excessive dependence decreases reading habits and intelligence of teenagers, trap of strangers through web, online sexual harassment, indecent representation of women, etc. Realizing the advantages and disadvantages of the internet for teenagers, it is suggested to the Department of Telecommunications and Ministry of Broadcasting to block illegal and sexual web sites in India. Severe punishments should be fixed on creation, display and telecast of such socially harmful web sites. In his regard, it is essential to improve and strengthen Cyber Crime Police. It is also suggested to the parents and teachers of the teenagers to observe their students and children and restrict them from use of internet for purposes other than their academic and educational interests.

Conclusion:

To conclude, it has been already discussed that internet has made world as global village. It enabled seamless learning and faster communication for people. On the other hand, it has disadvantages as discussed above. Teenage is psychologically learning age and during such age, the teenagers must have to cultivate good habits and culture. Many of the external environments such as schools, teachers, parents, friends, etc are influencing the teenagers at such age. Internet is technological trend which is influencing teenagers very much in twenty-first century. Now, it is bounded duty of parents and teachers to observe teenagers at the early age to get only best use of internet and its applications and also create awareness on demerits and cyber crimes associated with internet.

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