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Psychology

IMPACT OF DIGITAL AGE ON CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS: A PSYCHOSOCIAL PERSPECTIVE

Narendra Kumar Singh	PSW Officer, Department of Psychiatric Social Work, Central Institute of Psychiatry, Kanke, Ranchi, Jharkhand, India-834006
Vikas Kumar	Jrf, Clinical Research Centre For Neuromodulation In Psychiatry, Department of Psychiatry, Central Institute of Psychiatry, Kanke, Ranchi, Jharkhand, India-834006
Nirmala Kumari Ahirwar	Ph. D Scholar, Department of PSW, RINPAS, Kanke, Ranchi, Jharkhand, India-834006.
Laxmi Narayan Rathore*	Assistant Professor- Clinical Psychology, Department of Clinical Psychology, School of Medical and Paramedical Sciences, Mizoram University, Aizawl, Mizoram, India-796004. *Corresponding Author

ABSTRACT

Children and Adolescents are seen to be using cell phonesand the internet to gather information and communicate with each other across the country. This way of communication with others is the unique feature of the Digital Age which gives powerful new styles for children and adolescents to create and peregrinate their social environments. Digital Age has a simultaneous impact on Children and Adolescents along with their physical development and development of identity, morality, and sexuality. Existing Published literatureindicated that connections between children and adolescents playing violent video games can cause aggressive behavioral problems later on. Digital Age has been known to have its impact on children and adolescents in form of diminished cognitive skills and poor academic and social development in addition to poor relationships and perceptions of reality.

INTRODUCTION

Digitalization has already changed the world as does globalization and urbanization. India is quickly catching up with the rest of the world in the adoption and integration of digital technologies in everyday life.Digital technologies are nowadays swiftly remodeling the society at one hand, and, at the same time allowing new advances within the human condition and giving rise to profound new challenges.

Today Digital devices play a key role in children's lives.They are screen-based and embrace smartphones, tablets, computers, game consoles, and even tv (Blum Ross & Livingstone, 2016).As children& adolescents grow, the capacity of digitalization to shape their life experiences grows with them, offering seemingly limitless opportunities to learn and to socialize, to be counted, and to be heard.Digital advancements are all the more significant for kids living in remote locations, or those command back by poorness, exclusion, and emergencies that force them to flee their homes, for them, digital technology and innovation can open a door to the next future, giving larger access to learning, communities of interest, markets and services, and completely different edges that will facilitate them fulfill their potential thereby help them break the cycle of disadvantage. The growing access to and use of technology by children also increases their exposure to potential risks of online abuse and exploitation. In particular, the scope of cyber offenses against children appears to be expanding as new and creative ways are identi ed and employed to harass abuse, and exploit them, however in many instances, children are also the offenders.

The internet and digital entertainment have also raised questions of digital dependency, and 'screen addiction', among children and adolescents. And as such technological advancements have greatly enlarged the platforms for the free expression of concepts, they inadvertently broadened the distribution of hate speech and different negative content which may shape our children's view of the world and themselves.

Online Risks And Threats For Children And Adolescent

Digital technology and interactivity conjointly may cause vital risks to children's safety, privacy, and well-being, magnifying threats and harms that several youngsters already face offline and creating more vulnerability in alreadyvulnerable youngsters Information and communications technology provide platforms to share knowledge and collaborate, so, too, has it made it easier to produce, distribute and share sexually explicit material and other illegal content that exploits and abuses children.

Such technology has opened new ways for child trafficking and concealing from law enforcement agencies. This advancement has made access so much easier for kids to access inappropriate and probably harmful content. Shockingly enough, to provide such content themselves, to use those new channels of property and communication for online bullying, with a far larger reach and probably larger risk, than offline bullying.Similarly, it's hyperbolic opportunities for wider misuse and exploitation of children's privacy, and adjusted the method kids regard their data.

Three forms of risk:

Livingstone et al (2015) has organizeda wide range of risks encountered online by children's and adolescents into three broad categories –

1. Content
2. Contact
3. conduct

- **Content risks:** Where a child is exposed to unwelcome and inappropriate content. This can embrace sexual and violent images; some kinds of advertising; racist, discriminatory or hate-speech material; and websites advocating unhealthy or dangerous behaviors, like self-harm, suicide, and overconcern with body image.
- **Contact risks**: Where a child participates in risky communication, such as with an adult seeking inappropriate contact or soliciting a child for sexual purposes, or with individuals attempting to Persuade the child to do unhealthy or dangerous behaviors.
- **Conduct risks**: Where a child behaves in a way that contributes to risky content or contact. This often embraces kids writing or making hateful materials regarding other kids, inciting racism, or posting or distributing sexual pictures, together with the material they made themselves.

Indicators Of Child & Adolescent Online Threats, Abuse And Exploitation Within Indian Context-

* **Cyberbullying**: emotional harassment, defamation, and social exposure, intimidation, social exclusion, Grooming.
* **Online sexual abuse**: distribution of sexually explicit and violent content, sexual harassment, Blackmail, and nancial extortion and Grooming.
* **Online sexual exploitation**: production, distribution, and use of child sexual abuse material (CSAM) (child pornography), Sexual solicitation, Aggressive Grooming, and Commercial sexual exploitation and traf cking
* **Cyber extremism**: ideological indoctrination and recruitment, threats of extreme violence
* **Online commercial fraud**: Grooming, Attack on devices: Exposure to inappropriate content: Pharming Identity theft: phishing, hacking, privacy breach mall advertising Production and consumption pirated music and videos financial fraud Enticement to drug traf cking
* **Habit formation and online enticement to illegal behaviors**: Access to alcohol, cheating, plagiarism, gambling, drug traf cking, sexting and self-exposure
* **Online enticement**: Grooming, Harmful behavior: exposure to inappropriate content, access to alcohol and drugs, Illegal behavior: cheating, plagiarism, gambling, drug traf cking, and Self-harm: sexting, self-exposure

Impact Of Digital Age On Children And Adolescents:

Addiction: published literature advocates that social media is more addictive than cigarettes and alcohol. Technological addictions have the similar core features of any behavioral addiction, including withdrawal, and euphoria and also have reinforcing aspects that can negatively affect psychological, interpersonal, and occupational functioning (Griffiths, 1996; Davis, 2001; Young, 1999). In a recent case from India, 2 gaming-addicted brothers underwent a month-long rehabilitation at Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital in New Delhi. This case has opened our eyes towards gaming addiction, and media had highlighted this case as an example of the perils of children spending excessive amounts of time on online gaming (India Today, 2016)

The DSM diagnostic criteria for IGD (Internet Gaming disorder) refer to an "inability to control one's gaming" as one of its central psychopathologies and as "Gaming disorder" in the draft of the 11th revision of the World Health Organization's International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11). Gaming is being known to affect significant regions of the brain like those liable for reward, impulse management, and body process co-ordination (Weinstein and Lejoyeux, 2015) and literature advocates a link to dopaminergic or reward pathways (generally related to substance addiction) with gaming behavior (Kuss and Griffiths, 2012). However, the research in this domain is not robust enough to liken "internet addiction" or "gaming addiction" to substance addictions (Weinstein and Lejoyeux, 2015)

Health-related problem:

Physical changes: In recent researches, extended screen time, in form of watching television or using computers, has been linked with excessive weight gain to the tune of obesity in kids (Subrahmanyam et al., 2000). Spine surgeons have rumored a rise in young patients with neck and back pain, seemingly associated with dangerous posture throughout long periods of smartphone use. however, with the increasing range of apps and devices to observe physical activity levels, the answer can be digital, too. during a survey of Australian kids (2000), the hour of respondents rumored discomfort related to laptop computer use, and sixty one rumored identical once carrying their laptop computer (Harris and Straker, 2000). More recent evidence point towards increase in neck symptoms related with excessive television, phone, and tablet use and visual symptoms due to increased use of phones and tablets in particular (Straker et al., 2017)

Sleep Disturbance: 50% of young individuals will check their phone immediately if they wake in the night. Less sleep Has been connected to an enlarged risk of polygenic disease, Stroke, High pressure, cardiopathy, Obesity, Poor psychological state. during a cross-sectional study of 11-13-year-olds within the UK, the issue of falling asleep was related to social networking, frequent transportable use, and video gambling, with those that listened to music showing the best result (Arora et al., 2014).

Fear of Missing Out: Social Anxiety that you are missing a potential connection, event, or opportunity. When people post their fantastic times online, it gives them glimpses into a world that they are not a part of. Hence the term the "fear of missing out," (FOMO) is strongly related to worried that everyone else has a better life than they do, and then when it would happen in my case. It is expected that more than half of social networkers are experiencing Fomo.

Mental illness: literature points out that Half of all mental illnesses begin by the age of 14 and three-quarters by the mid-20s (Kessler et al., 2007). Among others, mental health issues represent the biggest burden of sickness among teenagers and are found to be as frequent as in adults. (Oecd, 2015). The National mental state Survey 2016 reportable that the prevalence of mental disorders is seven.3% among youngsters aged 13–17 years and it's similar in each gender. The prevalence among urban children is nearly double (13.5%, 10.4–16.5, 95% CI) compared to rural children (6.9%, 4.0–9.7, 95% CI). Prior research had linked social media activities in particular and Internet use, broadly with a host of negative mental health issues such as poor psychological functioning and distress (Sampasa-Kanyinga& Lewis, 2015), low self-esteem (Fiovaranti, Dettore, &Casale, 2012), anxiety (Xiuqin et al., 2010), depression (van den, et al, 2008), loneliness and even suicidal ideation (Mitchell, et al,2015).

The amount of violence on television is on the rise. On average, a kid sees about twelve thousand acts of violence together with several depictions of murder and rape on television annually. More than 1000 studies confirm that exposure to heavy doses of television violence increases aggressive behavior, particularly in boys (Johnson et al. 2002 & Green, 1994). Other studies link television or newspaper publicity of suicides to increased suicide risk (Center for Media and Public Affairs, 2003). As reported by Dr. Sonakshi Singh, reported, adolescents are exposed to approximately 9-15 hours of television/internet per week, the web being the strongest of all media tools. She stated that adolescents experience physical and mental maturity much earlier. The 19-year-olds are no longer referred to as teenagers but as young adults. Having mentioned this, she advocates controlled use of the internet by children. The excessive usage of laptops and tablets will create an increasingly detrimental effect upon the health in several psycho-socioeconomic ways leading to issues such as obesity, depression, and low motivation. She also stated that how men and women react to similar advertisements in a very different manner. While women are influenced by emotional and positive content, men get influenced by competitive and adventurous content. (Barve, Sood, Nithya, Virmani, 2015).

Selfie Disorder: American Psychiatric Association (APA) had classed "Selfitis" as a new mental disorder and defines it as "the obsessive-compulsive desire to take photos of one's self and post them on social media as a way to make up for the lack of self-esteem and to fill an intimacy gap." The increase in the number of cases of fatal accidents during sel e sessions is also a matter of concern. According to a report in the Washington Post, India suffered more sel e related deaths in 2015 than anywhere else in the world. Approximately half of the world's 27 deaths linked to the pictures people took of themselves happened in India. Indeed, Mumbai police

identi ed 15 sites around the city as "No Sel e Zones" after two people drowned in the Arabian Sea in January 2016 and announced plans to install warning signs and deploy lifeguards (The Washington Post, 2016)

Screen time: Many groups concerned with children's health, including governments and medical societies, advocate for partially or fully limiting screen time for children and adolescents. For instance, one of the pioneer agencies in child well-being, the American association of pediatrics has published tips for screen time in youngsters, recently in 2016. These tips talks of a variety of provisions like dodging of screens for youngsters below eighteen months (except for video-chatting), and limits of one hour per day of high-quality programming for youngsters up to the age of five.

Emotional Problem:
- *Interpersonal Relationship*: Social networking sites and internet use can cause dysfunction, in interpersonal relationships between parents, children, friends, and significant others. It is also creating negative issues in our understanding of community, privacy, and intimacy (Turkle).
- *Self-Esteem*: Facebook and other social networking sites can temporarily affect states of self-esteem. The sites are designed to share information by "likes/dislikes, wall posts, and status updates." This can affect an individual's view of themselves which in turn can negatively affect self-esteem.
- *Negative Emotions like Jealousy and Envy*: Browsing through friends and family's pictures does lead to giving rise to negative feelings of jealousy and envy. There-by developing a need to do tougher acts or things to feel accepted
- *Feeling unproductive*: Social media also keeps a person busy without really doing much productive work. It feels like an epidemic, engulfing an entire generation, where all are, into their phone screens always without benefiting anything relevant.
- *Lack of Pursuing Interests and Hobbies*: Meaningful activities like outdoor activities, games, and connecting with nature seem to have evaporated, causing a lot of harm to our emotional well-being and leading to a monotonous and sedentary lifestyle.
- *Body Imaging:*Social media has pressured women to fit into what society portrays as beautiful and perfect.Body dissatisfaction is the experience of negative thoughts and feelings about an individual's own body. It can have several significant and negative consequences, including depressive symptoms, eating disorders, and negative self-perception. It impacts the mental as well as physical health of young girls and women in addition to their physical health. It has been proven in some studies, that viewing media images depicting the modern thin ideal female bodies, women exhibited increase in anxiety, depression, anger, and dissatisfaction with their bodies (Women's Body Image and BMI).
- **Social Media Pressure:** The "Kiki challenge" or an "ice-bucket challenge"are trends that people feel compelled to follow. Clients undergoing psychotherapies usually reported engaging themselves in activities on social media only for an image and not due to their likings.
- Where does this all can lead to, possibly loneliness. And over time, this loneliness can paved the way to more serious things like depression or other mental health issues.
- **Social Problem:** Social problems such as Loss of real-world friendships, Social isolation, Conflicts with family members, Separation and divorce, Major disruption to work and productivity affected by the technologies addiction as well as excessive use.

Preventing Harm In The Digital Age:
A framework for preventing and responding to violence against children – developed by the World Health Organization in collaboration with UNICEF, the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children and others, and promoted by the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Violence against Children – identifies seven strategies for addressing violence, abuse, and exploitation:
- *Implementation and enforcement of laws*: The Constitution of India provides for special legislation, policies, and interventions for children like The Information Technology Act, 2000, the National Cyber Security Policy,2013. The provision of protecting children from abuse can be interpreted to include online abuse, which allows for the establishment of appropriate Legal protection and systems. Based on these commitments, children are to be given opportunities to develop healthily with freedom and dignity.
- *Norms and values*: Changing adherence to restrictive and harmful gender and social norms; community mobilization programs; and bystander interventions.
- *Safe environments:* Reducing violence by addressing 'hotspots'; interrupting the spread of violence; and improving the built environment
- *Parent and caregiver support*: Delivered through home visits, in groups in community settings, and through comprehensive programs.
- *Income and economic strengthening:*Through cash transfers; group saving and loans combined with gender equity training; and microfinance combined with gender norm training.
- *Response and support services*: Counselling and therapeutic approaches; screening combined with interventions; treatment programs for juvenile offenders in the criminal justice system; and foster care interventions involving social welfare services.
- *Education and life skills*: Increase enrolment in preschool, primary and secondary schools; establish a safe and enabling school environment; improve children's knowledge about sexual abuse and how to protect themselves, life and social skills training; and adolescent intimate partner violence interference programs.

Prevention Through Education For Digital Literacy And Safety:
Today's children are digital natives, but that doesn't mean they do not require guidance and support to make the most of connectivity Likewise, children, do not perceive their vulnerability to online risks or their responsibility to be sensible digital users. Digital attainment encompasses these areas, implying a collection of competencies that goes on the far side of digital and technical skills. It includes the ability to search, evaluate, manage online information and interact, share or collaborate online; develop and create content; use safety and protection features, and solve problems and be creative. The focus could be on-

A. To improve digital literacy and make better use of ICTs in education
- Explain digital literacy in schools
- Provide children with access to proven online education opportunities
- Develop opportunities to learn ICT skills in non-formal education
- Support the development of teachers' digital skills and literacies
- Support the establishment of online libraries

B. To teach children to keep themselves safe online and respect other users
- Understand the risks of content creation and sharing
- Learn how to protect the privacy and personal data online
- Strengthen the teaching of online tolerance and empathy
- Be good digital role models for children

C. Technology and Cyber Safety For Children and Adolescents:

- Learn about and use the privacy and security settings on social networks. These gives control about who sees what you post and manage your online experience positively.
- Keep personal details such as your address, email address, phone number, and birthdate private.
- Be mindful that 'Friends' or 'Followers' may take screenshots of your posts, or save photos and videos and share them with others. Don't post something objectionable that will place you at risk or have an impact on your family image.
- If you don't want people to know where you are, disable the location services on your device and avoid 'checking in' to places and venues.
- Do not respond to the abuse. Keep proof of the abuse like a screenshot or image together with your phone.
- Reporting the abuse to the website it was posted on is a good first step to take unless this will make the abuser angrier and put you in greater danger. To see instructions on how to do this, visit our Social media page and select the relevant social media service.
- Tell a trusted friend. This seems awkward, but it is a good thing to share your concerns with others who care about you. Seeking help is your right and it could mean the abuse stops more quickly.
- When in doubt, throw it out: Links in email, tweets, posts and online advertising are often how cybercriminals try to steal your personal information. Even from the known source, if anything appears suspicious, delete it.
- Be honest if you're uncomfortable: If a friend posts something about you that makes you uncomfortable or seems inappropriate, let them know.
- Know what action to take: If someone is harassing or threatening you, remove them from your friend's list, block them and report them to the site administrator.

For parents:

- **Set Rules & Expectations** – establish limits for which online sites children may visit and have a time limit for how long
- **Use Parental Controls** – install blocking, filtering, and monitoring software to restrict access to sites with adult content and see which sites your children visit
- **"Friend" or "Follow"** – Friend or Follow your child's social media accounts to be aware of their online activities and monitor what they're posting
- **Use Privacy Settings** – teach your children how to protect their personal information that gets posted online
- **Guard Against Predators** – turn off location services on mobile devices and discourage the use of webcams and chat rooms
- **Teach Your Children How to Respond to Cyberbullying** – report to an adult, block and delete

Management Of Psychosocial Problems Due To Digital Age

- **CBT and Counselling**: Therapy can give a tremendous boost in stopping excessive technology use. CBT gives step-by-step ways to stop compulsive social media, gaming behavior, changing your thought and behavior surrounding internet use.
- **Support group**: This Will help you interact with other people experiencing your addiction
- **Family intervention:** May be useful when the technology has affected your marriage or family relationship.
- **Self-help tips for Managing your addiction/ excessive use of technology(internet, social media, gaming, etc):**
- Identify and the underlying reason that needs treatment.
- Increasing your coping skill.
- Strength your support network.
- Focus on your work. Decreasing the number and selecting the most relevant social networks for your personal or occupational life is important.
- Schedule your use of social media and turn of notifications of social media.
- Put the phone before 30 minutes of sleep and don't use mobile as an alarm clock
- Try to make less use of the internet.
- Stop using your phone or computer after a certain hour unnecessarily.
- Replaces the habit with something else
- Move social apps to the second screen.

CONCLUSION:

Overall it can be said that the technology revolution-driven digital age, has certainly affected our children and adolescent to a larger extent. This impact is multifold and is visible in the personal, social, emotional, and academic dimensions of a child's life. It's high time that the caregivers should take note of this impact and must take serious and timely steps to manage this. Otherwise, there is high fear that digital age-related mental health issues may engulf our children's future and lead them on the wrong path.

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