

# The Reason, Impact, and Inevitable Educational Strategies to Reduce Social Media Addiction of Adolescent's Mental Health: A Systematic Review

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**Abstract:** Education is an integral key to reduce all types of social vulnerability. In the beginning of the 20th century, the use of the nature of smartphone users was deliberately changed through several reasons. In recent years, the emergent rise of the internet leads to several social networking sites that hamper the social life of every citizen worldwide. Social media addiction is becoming the major reason for maladaptive behaviour among the people, particularly adolescents. Social media is an online platform, that allows users to create, generate, share content like text, images, videos, and interact with each other. Excess use of social media majorly impacted individuals' mental health and reduced their mental ability. Social media significantly impacted on school and College goers' students and reduced their academic outcomes and creative ideas. According to a study of medical students in Gujarat, India, 32.1% of the learners became overly dependent on several social media platforms which were associated with higher stress, anxiety and depression. The major objectives of this review study are to find out the reason of social media addiction among adolescents, to find out the impacts of social media on adolescent's mental health, and to identify inevitable educational strategies to reduce social media addiction among adolescents. The findings revealed that the major reasons for social media addiction among adolescents are social acceptance, dopamine release, impulsivity, algorithmic design strategy, peer influence, escapism, and lack of face-to-face communication. The reason for loneliness plays a significant role in social media addiction, which majorly impacted their mental health and mental well-being. Increasing anxiety, depression, stress, sleep disruption, addiction, compulsive behaviours, suicidal thoughts, lack of self-esteem, poor concentration, maladaptive behaviours are you the most significant impacts of social media addiction on adolescents mental health. To reduce all kinds of social media addiction, there are several educational strategies are confirmed such as digital literacy campaigns, parental education, peer support networks, prevention programs, positive skill enhancement activities, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, and support groups and counseling.

**Key Words:** Social media, Addiction, Impact, Reason, Educational strategies, Adolescent, Mental health.

## Introduction

Education plays a significant role for the overall development of an individual. Development is an ongoing process. There are several forms of development that exist. Mental development plays a significant role for upbringing the child. Mental development refers to a change in cognitive abilities, including memory, reasoning, problem solving, thinking etc. According to WHO (World Health Organization),

“Adolescence is the phase of life between childhood and adulthood, from ages 10-19”. During the adolescent period, human development is at its peak and it's also an important phase for laying several foundations of the good health of an individual. In the 21st century, through the rapid growth of information and communication technology, adolescents are majorly addicted to social media. Social media refers to an electronic communication through which an individual can communicate, share information, personal messages, ideas over the networks. In the 21st century, adolescents are used in several forms of social networking sites including Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat, Tik Tok, Instagram etc. The adolescents are highly addicted to social media, which significantly impacts their life and also their mental health and mental well-being. In the year of 2015, the office of National Statistics reported that there is a clear association between time spent on social media and mental health problems. However social media use also reduces the ability of critical analysis, creative abilities, productivity, and innovative ideas of a young adolescent. According to recent data by Kantur, a market research agency, in India over 900 million internet users present by 2025. According to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2024, about 80.9% of teenagers know how to use an Android phone, nevertheless only 61.7% use the smartphone for educational purposes, while 77.6% people used it for social media. Gabrielle et al. (2025) in their study *The impact of social media on adolescent mental health: A meta-analysis*, provide a comprehensive assessment on the relationship between social media use and various mental health outcomes in adolescents. Through a systematic search of databases from 2018 to 2024 the relevant studies were identified. The random effects models were used. The meta-analysis revealed that a small but significant association between increased social media use and increased depressive symptoms, anxiety, loneliness was observed. Gender, age, and type of social media platforms were the moderators of these effects. The study concluded that increased social media use is associated with a range of negative mental health outcomes in adolescents, Plackett et al. (2023) in their study *The longitudinal impact of social media use on UK adolescents' mental health: Longitudinal observational study*, examined the longitudinal relationship between social media use and young people's mental health and the role of self-esteem and social connectedness as potential mediators. The sample size was 3228 10 to 15 years old adolescents. A household survey was employed to collect the data from the respondents in the UK. A 5 - point rating scale was used to measure the number of hours spent on social media and mental health problems measured through the use of strength and difficulties questionnaires. Unadjusted and adjusted multi-level linear regression models were used. To investigate the mediation pathways a path analysis with structural equation models was used. Through adjusted analysis, the findings revealed that there was a non-significant linear trend showing that more time spent on social media was related to poorer mental health 2 years later. Through the unadjusted path analysis, it was revealed that 68% of the effect of social media use on mental health was mediated by self-esteem. The study concluded that more time spent on social media was associated with mental health problems in UK adolescents, Coyne et al. (2020) in their study *Does time spent using social media impact mental health? An eight-year longitudinal study*, examined individual change over time. The cross-sectional research approach was used in this study. An eight-year longitudinal study conducted to examine the association between time spent using social media and depression and anxiety at the intra individual level. The data were

collected from 500 adolescents between the ages of 13 and 20. The data was collected through the questionnaire. The study revealed that increased time spent on social media was not associated with increased mental health issues across development, Schonning et al. (2020) in their study Social media use and mental health and mental well-being among adolescents - A scoping review, explored the reason for social media use and its association with mental health and mental well-being among adolescents. In this study, relevant databases were searched for social media use and mental health and mental well-being over the past five years. The findings revealed that among the 79 studies, the majority (94%) studies were quantitatively enriched with a cross-sectional design. The majority of studies focused on mental health and depression was the most aspect of those studies. By the use of frequency and duration the social media use was measured. In most of the studies, both male and female were included. The study also revealed that 3/4 of the included studies focused on several aspects of social media, Aksoy (2018) in his study A qualitative study on the reasons for social media addiction, determined the causes of social media addiction of individuals. The data was collected from 25 university students. The study revealed that the major reasons for social media addiction were lack of friends, social necessity, fear of missing out. The study also revealed that the beginners of social media users tended to use social media for such reason of not being able to find friends, lack of socialization, and monotony of life. Social media is the cheapest fast accessible site to the people, which is the major reason for severity use of all ages of people. There are several significant reasons for prolonged use of social media are existing viz entertainment, social connectivity, watch videos, TV shows, short clips of movies, connect with friends, find new friends, generate new Ideas, and information seeking drives of an individual.

### **Statement of the Problem**

What are the reasons, impact, and inevitable educational strategies to reduce social media addiction of adolescent's mental health.

### **Rational of the Study**

Education is an emergent instrument to develop all kinds of changes and also rebuild the human resources. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health, mental health as a complete state of physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Mental health is a positive state of an individual. An individual upbringing through various states of growth and development viz infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and old age. Adolescence is a sensitive period of emotional, psychological, biological, and social change. In recent years, young people, particularly adolescents are severally addicted to various social networking sites viz Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram etc. which majorly impacted their mental health. More time spent on social media reduces their learning abilities and hampers their academic intelligence. Although social media has become a new form of communication and information gathered, besides these social media negatively impacted youth and reduce their critical analytical skills. There have been various studies done on the impact of social media on adolescent's mental health, nevertheless what are the reasons, impacts, and educational strategies to reduce social media addiction have not yet explored. To fulfil these knowledge gaps, the present review study is needed to explore. The present study examines the reasons, impacts,

of social media addiction on adolescent's mental health and provides educational strategies to reduce social media addiction of adolescent's mental health.

## Objectives

- (1) To find out the reason for social media addiction among adolescents.
- (2) To find out the impact of social media on adolescent's mental health.
- (3) To identify inevitable educational strategies to reduce social media addiction among the adolescents.

## Research Questions

- (1) What are the reasons for social media addiction among adolescents?
- (2) What are the impacts of social media on adolescent's mental health?
- (3) What are the inevitable educational strategies to reduce social media addiction among adolescents?

## Delimitations of the Study

- (1) The present study delimited with only the reasons of social media addiction among adolescents is selected for this study.
- (2) The present study delimited with only the impacts of social media on adolescent's mental health is selected for this study.
- (3) The study delimited with only inevitable educational strategies to reduce social media addiction among adolescents is selected for this study.
- (4) The study delimited with only adolescents are selected for this study.
- (5) The study delimited with only mental health is selected for this study.
- (6) The study delimited with only social media is selected for this study.

## Major Findings of the Study

### Reasons of social media addiction among adolescents:

#### Social acceptance

Several factors influence in social media addiction. Adolescents are majorly use social media to seek desire for peer and social acceptance. The 'likes' and positive comments triggered a reward response in the brain of adolescents. If the adolescents don't receive the desired validation, they feeling distress or lower self-esteem.

#### Dopamine release

Through positive reinforcement viz likes and comments in social media increases dopamine levels of adolescents, which creating a pleasurable sensation. Social platforms are designed to trigger pleasurable sensation in the brain of adolescents, which encourages them to more use of social media.

#### Impulsivity

One significant cause of social media addiction is the impulsivity of the adolescents. In a human life, adolescent is stage of impulsivity and a significant drive to create a group identity, which making this stage particularly vulnerable to the addictive nature of social media. Impulsivity strongly linked to a lack of self-control, executing

without proper planning, and a strong sensitivity to received rewards, that several social media platforms are designed to provide.

### **Algorithmic design strategy**

Each and every social media algorithms are deliberately designed to exhort addiction by exploiting human psychology and human brains reward system for the intension of maximizing social media users' engagement and profit. Social media platforms use several algorithmic strategies viz variant reward systems, personalized content feeds, push notifications, targeting vulnerable users, social validation and peer pressure, which significantly foster social media addiction.

### **Peer influence**

Social media has become an integral part of adolescent's life. There are several reasons for social media addiction. One of the major causes of social media addiction is the peer influence, as it driven a desire for social acceptance and validation from peer groups. Several factors influence peer influence to leads social media addiction viz validation and social proof, conformity, desire for social acceptance, increased activity, amplification of negative behaviours of an individual.

### **Escapism**

Escapism is an integral reason for social media addiction. Escapism offers a pathway to avoid stress, negative emotions, problems by retreating into a virtual world. Escapism fuels social media addiction of an individual by distraction from reality, virtual identity, loss of control, avoidance of difficult emotions etc.

### **Lack of face-to-face communication**

In 21st century, one of the major reasons of social media addiction is the sudden rise of smartphones and internet access that vulnerably impact the psychological development of an individual. Lack of face-to-face communication can lead to social media addiction fueled by creating a preference for the controlled less demanding interactions online, that also fueled by social anxiety, loneliness, poor social skills etc.

### **Impacts of social media on adolescent's mental health:**

#### **Increased anxiety, depression, and stress**

In recent years, several social media platforms viz Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram etc. have become integral parts of an individual life. However, the rise of social media use increased several mental health problems viz anxiety, depression, and stress among the adolescents. The severity use of social networking sites increases loneliness and create anxiety, depression, and stress, which majorly impact their overall mental development and reduce their creativity and academic outcomes.

#### **Sleep disruption**

The impacts of social media are associated with several psychological, behavioural, and physical problems. Excessive use of social media impacted adolescents' mental health. Frequently used social media can result in sleep disorder among adolescents. Social media users constantly stay up to scroll social networking sites throughout the night time, which creates sleep disruption and affects their physical and mental health.

## **Addiction**

In the new age generation, the overuse of social media leads to social media addiction, which is associated with constant engagement and notifications. The overuse of social media resulting in reduced concentration and academic outcomes.

## **Increasing compulsive behaviours**

The significant negative impact of social media is increased compulsive behaviour among adolescents. Social media users constantly faced anxiety, depression, loneliness which results in compulsive thoughts and associated with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) viz repeating words, ordering objects, excessive checking etc. Obsessive Compulsive Disorder significantly impacted their mental health and mental well-being.

## **Suicidal thoughts**

Excessive uses of social media can lead to increased anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem, which reporting suicidal ideation. Overuse of social media can lead loneliness and reduce mental functioning which creates maladjusted behaviour.

## **Lack of self esteem**

In India, a significant number of adolescents exhibit features of social media dependency. Through social comparison, fear of missing out, and pressure to reach validation through likes and comments, an individual leads to a lack of self-esteem, which fosters dissatisfaction and inadequacy among adolescents.

## **Poor concentration**

Excessive use of several social networking sites leads to poor concentration, which reduces academic performance and productivity. Rapid use of social media can decrease creativity and reduce their concentration.

## **Increased maladaptive behaviours**

Rapid social media users faced several mal adaptive behaviours through reinforcing negative feelings, addictive cycles of use, harmful social comparison, isolation, and boosting risky behaviour for attention. Prolonged use of social networking sites can lead to a more sedentary behaviour, which affects their mental health.

## **Inevitable educational strategies to reduce social media addiction among adolescents:**

### **Digital literacy campaign**

Prolonged use of several social media platforms reduced by several educational strategies. Digital literacy campaigns reduce social media addiction among adolescents. Education plays a very important role in reducing social media addiction among adolescents. Through the use of digital literacy campaigns, it educates people on skills viz online safety, critical thinking, and several approaches to identify fake news. Digital literacy campaigns create more safety and critically handle the digital world.

### **Promote parental education**

Excessive use of social media can reduce interaction among society people. Through the help of promoting parental education, social media addiction can be reduced by equipping parents with knowledge and strategies for modelling in a healthy environment, fostering and creating a communicative environment.

### **Establishment peer support networks**

Create an environment by peer support networks where adolescents can share their experiences, feelings, and several challenges that they face with social media. For reducing social media addiction, a significant educational strategy is to establish peer support networks within an educational institution or any other place. In a peer support network, adolescents can share experiences, provide psychoeducation, and build healthy coping mechanisms through online and offline interaction to reinforce the changes.

### **Organized prevention program**

Prevention programs are also an effective intervention to reduce the prevalence of social media addiction among adolescents. Heavy social media use was associated with psychosocial problems in adolescents. Through the integration of educational initiatives, behavioural intervention and strong social support systems, multifaceted prevention programs are organized to reduce social media addiction.

### **Encourage them to enhance positive skill enhancement activities**

An emergent strategy to reduce social media addiction is encourage adolescents to enhance positive skill enhancement activities. Which replace the addictive behaviours and enlarge with good skill enhancement activities viz writing, arts and crafts, playing musical instruments, baking etc. that support their personal growth and development and mental well-being.

### **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)**

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy helps individuals to recognize and change unhealthy social media habits, improving self-awareness and impulse self-control. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is a significant treatment approach for reduce social media addiction. CBT helps an individual to identify and change unhealthy though patterns.

### **Support groups and counseling**

An emergent educational strategy to reduce social media addiction is create support groups and counseling. Support groups reduce isolation and provide peer-to-peer liability. Counseling provides professional guidance to identify the root causes of social media addiction and provides guidance.

### **Conclusion**

Education plays a significant role in the life of a child. Education provides a structured environment for the overall development of a child which includes physical, mental, social, emotional, psychological development. Mental health of an individual Plays a major role for a balanced lifestyle. In the rising nature of the internet, a child's mental health is majorly impacted particularly adolescents. In the 20th century the number of internet users was growing rapidly, which enabled a vulnerable environment for society people. The major causes for social media addiction of adolescents are social acceptance, dopamine release, impulsivity, algorithmic design strategy, peer influence, and escapism. Excessive use of social media can lead to a vulnerable maladaptive situation, where people lose their mental well-being. The major impact of social media addiction on adolescent's mental health is increasing anxiety, depression, and stress, sleep disruption, addiction, compulsive behaviours, suicidal thoughts,

lack of self-esteem, poor concentration, and maladaptive symptoms. Education is an emergent key instrument to reduce these addictions. Through several prevention campaigns, seminars, workshops on the addition of social media can lead the changes and provide a healthy environment.

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