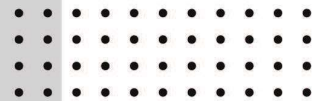


# IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

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## Abstract

A large majority of the people throughout the world own smartphones and laptops and access social media on a daily basis. Because of this digital attachment, the author looked up to understand to what extent this use has impacted the user's emotional wellbeing and offline interpersonal relationship. According to Media Dependency Theory, the higher dependence a person has on social media, the stronger the influence of media on the individual's perceptions and behavior. The impact of social media on human relationships is both positive as well as negative. Positive impacts of social media

are homophily, possible interaction among individuals eliminating time and space barrier, formation of romantic relationships, etc. Some of the negative effects of excessive use of social media use on interpersonal relationships are distraction, irritation, comparison and decreased quality time with their relatives. An analysis of these effects are discussed in this article.

## Introduction

Social media are a collection of technologies that allow individuals to communicate, share information and digital artifacts with one another. Social media systems are very diverse. Social media is a digital technology that allows people to interact with each other through various applications and platform. It allows individual to get connected with other people whenever and whatever they want to share with them. To the prevalence of social media in our lives, the people of the world are more interconnected than at any other time in history. Their relationship with other people largely depends on how social media is used, what type of information is shared and what kind of communication is occurred between them. Understanding the full potential, impact and limitations of social media requires an analysis of how they are affected by and affect interpersonal relationships. However, social interaction in the

virtual world elaborates a different story, especially when these online connections impact our offline interpersonal relationships. The primary purpose is to determine impact of social media on various relationships.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA & TYPES OF RELATIONSHIP**

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With a large portion of the world accessing social media on a daily basis, there is ever increasing evidence that social media provides a varied experiences for each user and that some of those experiences produce positive results. One of the most common reasons of using social media by people is to stay connected with their family members and friends. Individuals use social media differently with different types of relationship. With friends they share joyful moments, funny images or videos; with family members they share news of accomplishments and significant life events, with their professional colleagues, they share business and market information or information related to their professions. In each case social media has huge potential to affect individual's interpersonal relationship either positively or negatively. Various type of impacts can be seen in different types of relationship.

### **(1) Relationship with Family members**

The family is the basic unit of a society. Family is the first social institution to which an individual interacts and learns

the moral values through the process of socialization. Individuals have relationship with their family members either by birth, adoption or marriage. At one level, these relationships are different from friendships because they are often not voluntary or reciprocal. In spite of this, however, kinship relationships have elements that are similar to friendships and other relationships. Social media plays an important role in family relations these days both in positive as well as negative sphere of their lives. With increasing technology social networking sites, photo sharing platforms allow family members to get connected with one another across distance, time, national and international boundaries. It eliminates feeling of getting depressed, anxiety, loneliness etc. For example, a blissful and cheerful atmosphere among family members through video call will develop confidence, love, affection and belongingness.

### **(a) Romantic Relationship**

The term "romantic relationships" refers to mutually acknowledged ongoing voluntary interactions. This definition can be applied to same gender as well as mixed gender relationships. This relationship is a meaningful exchange of thoughts, feelings, emotions, desires, deep and passionate love etc. In romantic relationships, social media plays an increasingly significant role these days. Social media allows individuals to remain connected every time and allows them to discover, evaluate and interact with one another through both formal and informal services. Many social media platforms are established, providing a large number of choices to individuals in selection of their partners. Matrimonial



websites, like shaadi.com, jeevansathi.com are preparing grounds for those individuals who want to select their partners according to their choice and profile where they can interact in a simple way and built healthy relationships. Social media impact these relationships both positively and negatively. Here we will discuss some positive and negative effects of social media on romantic relationships.

Positive impacts:

- (1) Social media platforms are quick and convenient ways for long distance loved ones to stay in touch.
- (2) Communicate through writing over social media allows a person time and space to formulate the right and appropriate words when face to face conversations proves difficult.
- (3) It can give an overview of one's partner's opinion, attitude, profession and personality and help individuals to decide compatibility with each other.
- (4) Matrimonial sites supply free matchmaking as well as dating solutions. These are economical in terms of time, money and other initiatives.
- (5) Online counseling and personal privacy are also some positive impacts of social media for romantic relationships.
- (6) Couples can capture and share memories on social media and even gain publicity and praise from the people.

Negative impacts:

- (1) It also creates a false image of love and relationships which leads to the relationship in unnecessary comparisons and unrealistic expectations.
- (2) Research shows that social media can cause increased jealousy which leads individuals to get stuck in a cycle of endless scrolling to keep an eye on partner's activities.
- (3) Constant scrolling through social media can cause one to be less engaged or excited in his/her relationship.
- (4) Fake profiles on matrimonial sites affect romantic

relationships in the future as well as affect psychological and emotional health.

(5) Online matrimonial frauds are committed under the pretext of marriage through the social media. Under this, women sometimes get sexually abused and are economically exploited. Victim can be male or female in these frauds.

(6) They hesitate to share their personal details of family, friends and avoid answering many questions to hide their true identity.

(b) Parent- child Relationship

The parent- child relationship consists of combination of behaviors, feelings and expectations that are unique to a particular parent and to a particular child. This relationship involves the full extent of a child development. One of the most vulnerable relationship is between parents and their children and social media have huge potential to influence this relationship either positively or negatively. Ideas and values from family members are transferred from parents to children through voice calls, video calls, sharing valuable information either living at nearby distance or

far away. By connecting with parents through social media it makes a strong sense of what is right and wrong and are less likely to become victims of deviant influences. These teachings are helpful in each and every conversation of their child in social media. Their regular interaction through social media helps in removing fear, anxiety, long distance issues, communication barrier and improves their mental and emotional health. Social media also helps in reducing age gap among parents and children in some way or the other resulting in strong friendly relationship among them. Apart from positive impacts social media have negative impacts too on such kind of relationship. Let us take a look on positive and negative impacts of social media on parent-child relationship.

Positive impacts:

- (1) Social media can allow parents to learn parenting tips from the experience of others.
- (2) It helps parents to minimize or neutralize the generation gap between them and their children.
- (3) It can allow parents to keep an eye on their children's daily activities.
- (4) It allows children those are far away from their parents to remain connected with them.
- (5) Parents can monitor their child's behavior and activities whenever required.
- (6) Old members of the family can interact with family members and others even after their ability to travel becomes impaired.
- (7) There are many forums or groups available online where you can join

in and support each other, ask as many questions as you can and parent child counseling.

(8) By sharing victorious and successful moments with their family members boosts a sense of proud, glory and impact society in a positive way.

Negative impacts:

- (1) Parents and children no longer have conversations face to face but rather text each other even when they are only few distance away or within the same house.
- (2) Children find more games to play and videos to watch, which leads them to disconnect from their parents and go away from them while finding comfort in something else.
- (3) Children on social media may be more likely to be exposed to violence, bullying and hate which can have detrimental effects on their psychology as well as on their relationship with their parents.
- (4) Affect relationship where the individuals in the groups are present but ignoring one another because they are focused on their mobile devices.
- (5) Parents are generally the role model for their children so the way their parents use internet is often noticed and imbibed by children affecting their relationship.
- (6) Addiction to games and scrolling stories and videos tend to reduce time duration between a parent and a child.
- (7) The age gap between them starts increasing with time due to excessive use of social media and less focus on their relationship.

(2) Friendships

A friendship is a relationship or state of being friends with someone. This is a



common type of relationship found among individuals of all ages. Friendship relationship provide attachment, companionship, emotional & psychological support. Friendships vary in intensity, and the closeness among friends is often used as a measure of relationship strength. Social media and technology have made people to remain connected to friends who are far away or whom they do not get to see regularly in person. Social media offer a variety of ways for individuals to enact reciprocity through applications like instagram, facebook, etc. This makes it easier to keep up more connections at a lower cost in terms of their investment. Social media platforms made it technically possible to maintain more friendships simultaneously removing many barriers at the same time. Social media allows individuals to share their joyful moments as well as emotional breakdowns with their close friends those are miles away from them. Besides all these positive aspects, social media also have some negative effects on friendship.

Positive impacts:

- (1) Friends exist to provide us with shoulders to cry on when things fall apart and this is now possible even through social media by chatting, videos calling, ending some motivational and inspirational stories.
- (2) Social media impact teenagers in another way by sharing new feelings, emotions and making new friends of various age groups.
- (3) They can get knowledge of biological changes happening in their body so that they can understand these changes and taking it in a positive way.
- (4) This will lead to a mutual understanding and respect for opposite sex.
- (5) Through social media various knowledgeable and important data, facts and information can be shared either personally or in a group where they can study simultaneously as well as saving money and time which was earlier possible only through face to face meeting.
- (6) Through social media one can be with his friend within few seconds, celebrate their birthdays and special moments easily.

(7) Sometimes, offline communication is tricky and difficult for many people but through social media people can freely share their real personality, **more** easily and impacting offline relationship more better with time.

(8) They can build a business thought, idea, plan and other things by interacting with the individuals of same mindset across social media.

(9) Individuals tend to form relationship with others who are like themselves. This tendency is known as homophily, results in relationship network consists of people with similar attitudes, beliefs, perceptions etc.

(10) Relationships formed online are often continued offline as they develop in the process of online interaction through social media. Online and offline relationships function either independently or as competing substitutes, but in most cases they act as complements.

Negative impacts:

(1) These days, people are mostly involved online in social media leading to loss of unique and valuable bonds.

(2) Social media creates a factor of jealousy among friends without knowing the real cause of any incident.

(3) This online friendship impacts their relationship with their family members.

(4) Showing off trend is dominant in the world of social media impacting friendships negatively and sometimes walking through unethical ways to fulfill and justify their friendships.

(5) Actual intension and real nature of any person cannot be evaluated in social media leads to crimes like murder, abuse, fraud etc.

(6) Online bullying and cheating are other negative impacts of social media on friendships.

(7) Having a large number of friends on social media platforms but at required or needy situation no one to find among those and this creates a feeling of loneliness, anxiety and depression.

(8) People used to maintain their identity and personality as per societal norms and tries to hide their problems and reality to avoid any judgement from the friend on the other side resulting in a planned conversation and creates trouble, fear, anxiety and confusion.

### (3) Professional Relationships

Social media is not only helpful in personal sphere of life but is also helpful in the professional sphere of life. Professional relationships vary with respect to their strength. A variety of social media systems have been developed to enhance and facilitate professional relationships, the most prominent is LinkedIn. Many positive and negative impacts can be seen in this kind of relationship. These days, people are connected to each other

through various socialmedia networks where lots of information are shared between them. Various ethics and morals are involved while delivering any message or content.

### Positive impacts:

(1) This makes work easier for all the workers as efficient work will be done in short period of time.

(2) Barrier of time and space can be reduced or even eliminated.

(3) Many professional colleagues became best friends and sometime life partners too through interaction with the help of social media.

(4) A group of similar talented people can be established resulting in personality development, healthy competition and boosting confidence.

(5) Lots of various skills can be learned and improved through online interaction with professionals.

(6) Consumers interact with one another and with representatives providing product and services.

(7) Research collaborators plan and execute projects sidelining space and time barrier.

(8) The boundaries and differences between private and professional relationships are now blurred through social media interaction.

(9) Employees are interacting more with coworkers, supervisors, and other professional workers.

### Negative impacts:

(1) Sometimes, when professional life merges with close or friendly relationships, hinder professional life in a different way.



(2) Showoff, jealousy, fake personality are some other negative impacts of this kind of relationship.

(3) Lack of quality time to their near and dear ones by indulging themselves more in improving their professional relationships.

## IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

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All those relationships which are neither personal nor professional comes under this kind of relationship. Interaction between new people on social sites like facebook, instagram etc. for any specific requirement like job opportunities, for shopping materials, any query where interaction is not regular but establishes a relationship of trust can come under this. These kind of relationships are totally different from personal and professional relationships. This kind of relationship is different or unique for everyone.

- Consumer relationships, either consumer-consumer relationships or producer-consumer relationships play an important role in retail commerce as in many purchases, they are relied on each other for products, services, etc.

- Charismatic relationships in which individuals get attracted or attached by emotions, feelings, values to a charismatic person. In this kind of relationship they are mostly unaware of their actual personality but being a charismatic figure they assume and attach their feeling with that individual.

They can interact with them through their pages, their verified id's by live streaming, commenting, through likes, tweets and in many other ways. Social media boosts such kind of relationships as people used to feel inspired, motivated from their thoughts, works, talent etc. This latent relationship is unique in itself and connects individuals from various backgrounds, status, countries, gender removing many barriers that prevails in any society. People used to follow them and became a part of such kind of relationships. This kind of relationships has its own positive and negative impacts.

Positive impacts:

(1) New relationships can be built and maintained for a longer time.

(2) Removing barriers, various people of different regions, class, caste, religions, etc. came together through social media.

(3) Reducing differences between various age groups by interaction through social media and following a specific group or an individual.

(4) Motivation and inspiration from different people coming from different or similar backgrounds.

(5) Boosts sense of belongingness among individuals.

(6) Positive and negative feedbacks on stories, status, images helps in one's own personality assessment.

(7) Provide various platforms to individuals through interaction among different individuals.

(8) In removing depression, anxiety by involving in healthy gossips.

Negative impacts:

(1) Sometimes, excessive involvement of individuals on these kind of

relationship affect their real growth and development as people used to be dependent on external factors for motivation.

(2) In some cases clashes, fights, misconducts can be seen between individuals even due to differences in choices.

## **CONCLUSION**

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Social media has become an integral part of our lives, with billions of people using it to connect with family and friends, share experiences, and even find love. While it has undoubtedly changes the way we communicate and interact, social media also has played an important role in our relationships. Being on your smartphones can drain the energy that could've been spent engaging in real-life interactions with your friends or family. Science came as opportunity for development but has some ill effects too. Sustainable use of social media can impact our lives in more effective way. A balance between personal, professional and other kind of relationships should be maintained where more emphasis should be given on relationships improving our mental, emotional and physical wellbeing.



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