

# SMARTPHONE AS A TOOL OF SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE AMONG THE TEENAGERS- A LITERATURE REVIEW

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## **Abstract**

Media has become very important and inseparable part of our society. With a smartphone in the pocket, the people are not just limited to their home, village or town but a smartphone and an internet connection is sufficient to get all the information. Apart from affecting the communication patterns of people it has affected the social behaviour also. The way we interact, communicate, meet people and do the things in our social life has been changed totally. The present paper put some light on the change in social behaviour due to smartphone usage.

**Keywords:** Addiction, smartphone, social behaviour, iGens, net-generation, iDisorder

## **1. Introduction**

In the world of today, Smartphones have become a necessity. There was a time when people remained unaware of the important incidents and activities of the world. Their information or knowledge was just limited to their home, village or town only. With the advancement of media technology, they get the information within a fraction of a minute. But now, the media is so vast that a mobile phone and an internet connection are sufficient to get all knowledge. Mobile phones have become very important part of everyone's life. People not only get used to the medium, but they suddenly cannot imagine living without this medium any longer (Hoflich & Hartmann, 2006, p. 11). Recent advancements in the technology have provided the facility to access the internet through the mobile phones. These days mobile phones are not only used for texting or to make calls, but people use it for banking, shopping, blogging, business and many more. The reasons for the acceptance of this technology on a large scale are its accessibility and reliability. Texting on WhatsApp and Facebook has changed the nature of mobile communication. It has opened a new way of communication and changed the way we orient ourselves to group co-ordination (Ling, 2004, p. 22). Individuals are so dependent upon their mobile phones that this device has become critical in many aspects of everyday life.

This device is affecting people of every age group positively as well as negatively, but has a great impact on teenagers. All the mobile phone and telecom companies attract the youngsters by providing new functions like cool ringtones, games, different applications (apps), attractive screensavers, attractive internet packages and many other functions. The youngsters use all these functions not only to organise their lives, but for entertainment as well. Although mobile phones are convenient and useful for the people of almost every age group, but it is more appreciated by the youngsters and they are more dependent on this device. Surveys and studies from a number of countries indicated that the use of mobile phone is increasing rapidly among the youngsters and it is starting at a younger age. Almost half of the mobile internet users are between 18 and 25 years (Sundari, 2015). These days it is very common to see the school going students having an expensive and sophisticated mobile phone in their pockets. Internet access through these mobile phones have not only made adolescents to communicate in the virtual world, but exposed them to various pornographic websites also. The usage of mobile phones has re-shaped, re-organised and altered several social facets (Ravichandran, 2009). The result of different researches and news has provided the essential information about the consequences of mobile

phones usage by the teenagers. Parents, researchers, academicians are concerned about the negative impact of this device on the children.

## **2. Origin and growth of Mobile phones**

The word “Telephone” came from the Greek words tele, meaning “far” and phone, meaning “sound” (Banting, 2006, p. 9). Martin Cooper, employer and researcher of Motorola, invented the first mobile phone that closely resembles today’s mobile phone. In 1990’s, the cell phone market began to emerge from its primitive state. 1990 to 1995 represented an upward swerve in design and portability, with mobile devices gradually starting to appear in the hands of average consumers for the first time. (Mertens, 2018, p. 54). Mobile phones came to India in the mid of 1990s, when the Indian government liberalized the economy to let western companies and products enter the Indian market. In India, the first commercial cell phone service was launched in July 1995. The lowering of costs, which encouraged price wars among the cellular operators and their promotion as fashionable technology has led to a massive boom in the mobile phone subscription levels, especially among the younger population (Matanhelia, 2010).

## **3. Mobile phone to Smartphone**

With the advancement in technology the mobile phones are replaced by smartphones. According to the Oxford dictionary, ‘Smartphone is a mobile phone that performs many of the functions of a computer, typically having a touch screen interface, Internet access, and an operating system capable of running downloaded apps.’ The smartphone offers different applications like video calling, web browsing, weather information, calendar, camera, navigator and many more. It is a portable device that combines the functions of cell phone with the functions of computer (Hamblen,2009). Because of their function and cheap cost, smartphones are very popular among the users and have become an important part of our life.

## **4. Mobile phone and communication today**

Although it is a convenient way of communication, information and entertainment, but it has affected the communication in a negative sense also. It has created a tendency of individualism. We can take example of any situation of our life. People use mobile phones while travelling, during seminars, classes, in buses, on the streets, while driving, in shops, restaurants, theaters, offices and in bathrooms also. Instead of interacting with each other during family functions, social gatherings, while watching television or having a meal with the family, people remain stuck to their mobile phones. So in a way there is a decline in the real space communication and people prefer to interact with Facebook friends i.e. virtual space communication has been increased and people prefer to interact with unknown people and sometimes it is responsible for molestation also. So in simple words, we can say that there is connected homeliness that this device has connected the people in the whole world, but relations with our family have been affected in a negative way.

With a mobile phone in the pocket everyone is a journalist. People click the photographs or capture the videos of different happening on the spot and upload them on the social networking sites. In some cases, Instead of helping the accident victims people prefer to click the photographs and that kind of news are very common in the newspapers these days.

## **5. A technological object to social object**

Mobile phones have been turned from technological tool to social tool and have dramatically changed the people’s social and communication behaviour. It has touched so many lives in so many ways that it has become an essential communication device. Smartphone users are increasing tremendously. In modern society, people are living in radically changing times. Many things are changing rapidly, especially the change of communication style. Mobile phones have changed how we negotiate our relationship with family and friends. Today a mobile phone is more than just a device that is used to make phone calls. It is a companion that acts as a guide, a friend, a communication device, a computer or a personal secretary. Mobile phones have affected our lives tremendously and changed in a number of ways. We are that much addicted to mobile phones that we never leave home without the mobile phone and keep on checking mobile phones after every five minutes. It is the most convenient tool of communication and is playing a very important role in connecting the people all over the

world. It is helpful in maintaining relationships with family, friends, relatives, peer groups, etc. Internet access on smartphones has made it easier. People not only share the thoughts and information, but they share their private information like their photographs, life events, places etc.

The sociological perspective of mobile phone use includes the effects on social behaviour. According to Wikipedia, "social behaviour is the behaviour directed towards society or taking place between members of the same species". Mobile communication technologies impact how we organize our days and our evenings, how we work, and even how we make friends. Public places now contain private conversations (Peters, 2007). Mobile phone usage can be studied from two main perspectives: how social norms of interaction in public spaces change and remain the same and how mobile phones become markers for social relations. Mobile phones do privatise and atomise public spaces as mobile phone users block out others nearby; however, mobile phone users can publicise their private information when they use their mobile phones loudly in public. Mobile phones may allow for greater mediated contact between persons due to their flexibility and mobility, which in turn may lead to an overall collectivising function in society (Humphreys, 2005).

## 6. Strategy of Literature Review

The researcher searched for the articles/thesis/research papers systematically in online databases like ResearchGate, Academia-research, Airtable and Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). The researcher selected the research papers/literature on the basis of different parameters like various social factors and behaviour patterns among the male and female teenagers. The researcher also considered the literature which was published in last 10 years ie. From 2012 to 2022.

## 7. Findings from Literature Review

The related literature has presented various aspects of Smartphone usage, but the researcher reviewed the literature which presents the impact on teenager's social life and behaviour. The related literature present that the smartphone usage has affected the social interactions, virtual communication, addiction, parent-children relationship and the health of the teenagers. As per the requirement of the study, the researcher presented a few selected research papers and thesis.

Vaidya, Pathak & Vaidya (2016) conducted a research among 410 college going youth between the age of 18-25 years in Pune city to understand their mobile phone behaviour. This research was published under the title Mobile Phone Usage among Youth. The results of this study were very interesting and are related to the present research in a number of ways. As per the study, 28.25% of the youngsters accepted that they feel addicted to their mobile phones. 22% of the respondents accepted that they spend six to eight hours daily on mobile phone while 11.79% accepted that they use their mobile phone more than 8 hours daily. The results are quite alarming and show that the addiction of smartphone among the youngsters exists and it is affecting their social and psychological behaviour.

Jeffery & Doran (2013), in book titled as Cell Phone Nation: How Mobile Phones have revolutionised Business, Politics and ordinary life in India, have explained about their first encounters with the telephone in India when they been to this country in early 60's and 90's respectively. Both the authors have witnessed the transformation of India from a few landline connections to millions of smartphone. As per the authors, the transformation is quite unbelievable in a country like India where landlines were considered as luxury back in 90's had 900 million mobile phone subscribers in 2012, whereas total population was 1220 million. The present book has been divided into three main parts as controlling, connection and consuming. These three parts explain the establishment and development of this device in India. 'Controlling' part explains how powerfully people struggle to control the information. This part has explained the detailed history of various tools which have been used by various emperors and people to communication information centuries back in India and how the new communication tools were emerged with time. The new tools have become a basic need of people and brought about both positive and negative changes at social, cultural, religious, physical and most important at academic level. The second part 'connecting' explains the mobile phone penetration in a developing country like India. It explains how mobile phone found its way and came to the hands of millions of people in India. Various factors which made this device popular among the people have been explained in detail. The third part 'consuming'

explains how mobile phone is used by people in India. This device is used by various organisations, be it smaller or bigger, politicians, students, housewives, working women, children, youngsters and old aged people. The book also provided the information about its impact on health, social life, social networks, language, media, politics and governance. The authors shown their concern over the misuse and negative effects of this device also. Basically this book explains how this device has revolutionised an ordinary life in India.

Twenge (2017), in book *iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy--and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood--and What That Means for the Rest of Us* provides insights to the behaviour of the hi-tech children those who are born in the era of information and technology. The most interesting part of the book is the interpretation of iGen's given by the author. The author explained that like iPhone, iGen stands for internet generation. But these days the changes which this device has brought in the behaviour of the teenagers, it would be true to say that i-stand for individualism. According to the author, the iGen's are those who born somewhere in 2009 to 2015 and have a great exposure to information and communication technology. IGen's have rejected the traditional social rules and they socialise in completely new ways. Perhaps, it is the impact of this new technology that in 2011 we faced the worst mental health crisis, teen depression and suicides. The present book has been divided into ten chapters and a different issue has been raised in each chapter. In the first chapter the author claimed that the iGen's are growing up slowly. When the scholars all over the world are saying that the teenagers /children are getting mature before their age due to their exposure to porn websites or internet, the author came up with entirely new idea. As per the book, the childhood has been extended to the adolescence. In the second chapter the author raised concern over the time spent by the teenagers on their mobile phones and other media in a day, which is affecting their activities. The third chapter has been focused on the decline social interactions. Face to face communication has been replaced by virtual communication which is giving rise to entirely new social phenomenon. Insecurity issue has been raised in the fourth chapter. It is quite surprising that a device which is used by the people for security purpose is creating insecurity among them. The rise in mental health issues made this point more serious. Internet had exposed the people to the content or happenings of the entire world. It made us get information, comment on the situation and share the content as well. Most important thing is that there is no authenticity of the information which we get from the internet. Sometimes the teenagers are exposed to wrong information which completely changes their views about religion, society or government. The wrong information changes their behaviour towards life, relationships or about the burning issues and it is very dangerous. These days the teenagers participate in debate over various issues online and they praise or criticise the issues or people, but they decline civic involvement. These kinds of issues have been explained or raised in the sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth chapter of the book. Although, this book was published recently and provides insight to various current issues but the researcher do not consider it an appropriate book, because the behaviour or issues discussed in this book are in American context and are not relevant to the Indian society. American society is quite open and developed but we have a different type of traditions and societal set up.

Rosen (2012), in his book titled as *iDisorder: Understanding Our Obsession with Technology and Overcoming Its Hold on us*, written about the various types of disorders which have been emerged from the overuse of mobile phones. The author is a psychologist who have been working to examine the reactions to new technology since 1980's when computer was emerged. As per the author, it is almost impossible to stay away from the cyberspace but overreliance on these gadgets and websites have impacted our health, behaviour and mind set in negative ways. Addiction to internet and mobile phones have not only affected our social life but killed the creativity inside us. The author with a reference to some researches and examples explained that we all are suffering from a number of mental disorders but we are not aware of it. The present book has been divided into twelve chapters and in each chapter the author tried to focus on different disorders. The first chapter explained the idea and concept of the book while in the last chapter the different strategies to reduce and eliminate the symptoms have been explained. As per the author, i-disorder is a new disorder that combines elements of many psychiatric maladies and is centered on the way we all relate to technology and media. The author written that people totally ignore their surroundings, like it has become very common for people to look at the screen of their mobile phones frequently while travelling, attending meeting, during classes, watching movies, having meal with family or attending some function. But this kind of behavior is termed as communication disorder, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, personality disorder, hypochondriasis, body dysmorphia, anti-social personality disorder, depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder or many more. In the second chapter of the book the author explained

that media starts with “me” and people are becoming “I” centric. They keep on uploading their pictures and whereabouts on social media accounts and eagerly wait for likes or comments. It makes them tense if they did not get comments. Such kind of disorder is termed as Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD). More virtual friends than the real ones is again an alarming thing.

Kalogeraki & Papadaki (2012), in research paper titled as The Impact of Mobile Phone Use on Teenager’s, have written about the impact of mobile phones on the socialization and emancipation of teenagers. This research was conducted in semi-urban area of Greece among the teenagers of age group 13-18 years. The sample was divided into different clusters as per the type of their school like high school or gymnasium. The questionnaire included the questions both for the demographic characteristics of the respondents and motivations behind the mobile phone usage. Apart from various social factors and effects, it was found that the device was becoming popular among the teenagers due to its functions including instrumental, social and expressive.

Ruddock (2013), focused on the positive and negative impacts of mobile phone usage in the book titled as Youth and Media. In the first chapter of the book the author explained how media is raising awareness among the people and it has become a platform for the public to raise their voice against any kind of violence. A number of case studies have been discussed by the author to support the comment. Among them one is the example of a documentary named as Kony 2012 which raised the voice against the human rights crimes in several African countries. When it was released on YouTube, it was viewed by 50 million people with in four days of its release. It was able to attract the attention of Obama government as well. The author mentioned that social media has a great influence on people and these days it is making people to think. Media has a great role in the development of any society and it is very important to work according to the expectations of the public. In the second chapter of the book, the author raised his concern over the studies/researches which shows that only media is responsible for any kind of negative behaviour of youth. The author mentioned a number of prior researches and methodology of the researches to support his comment. There are a number of researches which showed that the aggressive behaviour of the youth is the result of exposure to that kind of media content but the author argued that there might be a number of other social or cultural factors as well. The next chapter includes the information regarding the influence of media on youth. The author took examples all over the world where social media was used by the youngsters to unite the people or communities towards common goals. Expansion of media industry especially mobile phone industry in the developing countries, use of social media by the politicians for political campaigns, advertisement over social media and impact of social media on youngsters are a few other concepts which have been raised by the author in this book.

Mesquita & Tsai (2015) edited the book titled as Human Behaviour, Psychology and Social Interaction in the Digital Age. The book includes various research papers or studies which explained how the different technologies impact the behaviour, thinking and learning of human beings. The book is divided into four sections and each section includes the content related to different types of media effects. As per the present research topic, the second section of this book is the most relevant. It is titled as The Use of Mobile Technology in Human Daily Life. The content of this section basically explain the positive impacts of the mobile phones as the use of mobile phones for the healthcare purpose and self-broadcasting among the students.

Vorderer, Hefner, Reinecke & Klimmt (2017) edited a book titled as Permanently Online Permanently Connected, Living and Communicating in a POPC World, which includes the research papers or articles related to the various aspects of internet usage and its impact. The present book is divided into six parts and each part raised a different aspect of internet use and the changes it brought to the society. This book basically introduced the new paradigms of communication research. The first part of the book provided information on how internet has transformed an offline world to an online world. While discussing its impact on human behaviour the author written that POPC (Permanently Online Permanently Connected) has impact on the thinking, feeling and behavior of people. People remain connected to some virtual world all the time be it studying, travelling, bathing, working, eating, sleeping and attending meetings. The author further written that the content to which people are exposing themselves has a great influence on the decision making and thinking. Part three and four are the most important segments as per the present research and it explain the different social impacts of internet use. Different social networking sites of internet enabled mobile phones have challenged the nature of interpersonal communication. Chatting on different social networking sites have given rise to mediated

interpersonal communication. Now people are not only indulged in face-to-face interpersonal communication, but may be indulged in two or three or may be more mediated interpersonal communication at the same time. As per the author, people are giving more importance to virtual world communication and ignoring the one present in real space. While writing the consequences virtual space communication, the authors raised their concern over twenty four hours connectedness. People these days have their virtual social sphere and it always distract them from offline activities. Although it is happening in a virtual world but it has become a social reality of present time which is invisible to others.

In the book *From Smartphones to Social Media: How Technology Affects Our Brains and Behaviour*, the author Carrier (2018) focussed on almost every aspect of our life being affected by mobile phone use. As the book is published in 2018, so it contains the information related to contemporary problems and threats caused due to mobile phones. The book includes ten chapters and a different issue related to mobile phone usage is explained in each chapter. The thing which makes the content more important is the case study and an expert interview which comprised each issue or chapter. It helps the researcher to understand the major problems and its existing challenges. The researcher mentioned only that part of the book which is relevant to the present study. The first chapter is related to the social relationship. In this chapter the author tried to compare the present situation of social relationship to the time when internet was introduced. How the behaviour of the people with in the family and with the friends or relatives has been changed in the era of digital age is explained from their social relationship perspective. The author explained the reasons behind the popularity of texting among the teens. Cheap mobile phones and network, the privacy as message is send to one individual who keep the content private, easy to type, helps the person to give true opinion because the non-verbal expressions of the receiver are not visible and the emojis make the message stronger. The social media helps the users to connect and react on the various situations and things are happening on various places through virtual empathy. The second chapter focussed on the physical aggression caused by mobile phones. The author explained the various aspects of violent content in the form of mobile phone games and various websites which are easily accessible by the children. The controversy over the violent content was also explained.

Cyber bullying is a major concern of the researchers and the scholars all over the world. The author not only explained the seriousness of the issue but explained its other related aspects under the title *Electronic Aggression* in the third chapter of the book. Among the other related issues, the most important was the risky online behaviour. The virtual relationships harm the privacy of the user was also a concern. Apart from this, how the behaviour of the teens has been altered in an aggressive manner was also discussed in detail. Mobile phones not only help its users to maintain their romantic relationship but are helpful in having silent conversations with their partners even in the presence of their parents. The teens access the porn content and the sexual knowledge is responsible in getting them mature before their age. It is not only a distraction but sometimes it makes them get indulged in various criminal activities. The concept of various dating apps and the concept of sexting along with its impact were also discussed.

Zaremohzzabieh et. al. (2016) in the research paper titled as *Youth and Mobile: An Investigation of Socialisation* which was published in the book *Handbook of Research on Human Social Interaction in the Age of Mobile Devices*, highlighted the role of mobile phone in youth socialisation. Apart from writing about the pros and cons of mobile phone use and its various related concepts, the author emphasised on the role of this device in youth socialisation. The author mentioned a number of researches which show that the young generation use this device for social interaction and they prefer to communicate more with the people of their age groups as compared to their parents and relatives. While writing about the preference of young teenagers for phone calls and texting, the author mentioned the results of a research which was conducted among the school students. The research reveals that the young teenagers prefer texting over making phone calls to maintain their love relationships and expressing love was the second most important use of mobile phone. This device has reduced the importance of social ties during socialisation process rather it provides endless opportunities to its users to involve in some discussion and raise their voice. The author named it as a tool of newly discovered private life and source of personal socialisation.

Ling (2012) in the book *Taken for Grantedness: The Embedding of Mobile Communication into Society*, focussed on the various issues and concerns emerged after the widely acceptance of mobile phone as a tool for

socialisation. The author discussed both positive as well as negative aspects of mobile phone use. The author wrote that the mobile phone made us available all the time but sometimes it has been taken as granted. In case if someone is not able to attend a phone call or answer the text, it affects our relation negatively. It is always considered that the other person would be free to answer a call or text. The book explains in detail about the diffusion of mobile communication. Apart from writing about the rapid growth of mobile communication it also explains the growth of this device from a minor element to central element and how it is responsible for the emergence of a complex personal communication. The book was published at a time when mobile phone was not popular like these days and was not embedded with functions like these days. So, the book was not helpful in describing the issues in the present scenario.

Tapscott (2019), written about the characteristics and behavioural changes in the children those who are born in the digital age and are more prone to this technology in the book titled as *Grown-up Digital*. The book is divided into three parts named as Meet the net Gen, Transforming Institutions and Transforming Society. In the first part, the author had just introduced the new generation children those who are growing up in the digital age. He explained that they people are easily adopting and using this new and complex technology. The author shown his concern over the change in the behaviour of these net generation people by writing that their communication ways, thinking, learning, playing have been changed in a negative way. Their communication is replaced with online communication, thinking has been changed as per the content they are getting online and physical games have been replaced with the online or video games. The children are getting more freedom inside doors and they can easily access anything anytime on their mobile phones while sitting under the surveillance of their parents. The net generation children/people are screen-agers, net addicted, losing their social skills, violent, bullying their friends online and they have no time for sports or healthy activities. In the second part of this book, the author focused on the transformation of the educational institutions to cope up with the net generation. To support the same the author has given a number of examples to explain it. As per the author, the children those who are born in the digital age are more intelligent and know the content already which is being taught at the school or colleges. If the teacher is teaching the same content and that too in the traditional way, the students will get bored easily and will give rise to high drop-out rate in the colleges or schools. The net-generation is also transforming the society in a number of ways. The internet and digital technology have united the people all over the world on a common platform through various social networking sites. It has made people more adaptive towards the topics like sexuality, gay or lesbian concept, divorce or many more.

## 8. Mobile phone and teenagers

Media has been influencing every aspect of human life from the time of its emergence but now with the development in telecommunication and the emergence of cheap Mobile phones, its power has been increased tremendously. Mobile phones have affected our culture, behaviour, attitudes, language, health, education and communication patterns. This device is affecting people of every age group positively as well as negatively, but has a great impact on teenagers. There are many reasons for the acceptance of mobile phones among the teenagers. The most important reason is that it helps the teenagers to hide and maintain romantic relationships which would not be acceptable by the family. It also affected the social interactions of the teenagers with the family and relatives in a negative way. Face to face interactions have been affected more as compared to other type of communication. Now it is very common that people living under the same roof interact through text messages and calls.

No doubt mobile phones help the students in their education, but some negative effects are also there. In some cases, the mobile phone use has become an addiction and teenagers remain stuck to their mobile phones during the significant part of their working hours, reading, playing and even sleeping. So, it is not only affecting the academic performance of teenagers, but their health also. There are the different motivations behind the mobile phone use among the teenagers.

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