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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA SITES AND APPLICATIONS ON TEENAGERS.

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#### Manuscript Info

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##### Key words:-

Social media, Teenagers,  
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 Cyber bullying, FOBO.

#### Abstract

This work presents a systematic study on the effect of social media on the teenagers. A number of 56 teenagers of different age groups were selected for the study from the district of Tinsukia, Assam, India. Based on their views and a systematic study different impacts and consequences are explained with possible solutions to the problems arisen in the respective cases. The work also emphasizes on the mental states as well as health issues of the teenagers influenced by social media such as facebook, whatsapp etc.

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#### Introduction:-

In this century people are surrounded by different kinds of electronic media. The coming generations are deeply influenced by such media and most of the times their way of thinking and social natures are being controlled by social media. Sometimes social media becomes the cause of mental illness [1-4], obesity problems as well as other health problems [1] and bad impact over career of teenagers who use social media in an extreme rate. In this work, going through systematic study and a field survey the author tries to show the present state of the teenagers and how they are affected by the well known social media such as Whatsapp, Facebook etc. In doing so the author also emphasizes over the psychological change of teenagers and points out the dangerous impacts which creates temporary and permanent variations of their psychological state. Several articles and papers published in this reference have been studied carefully and for a better practical outcome a short duration survey in the district Tinsukia is done.

#### Methodology:-

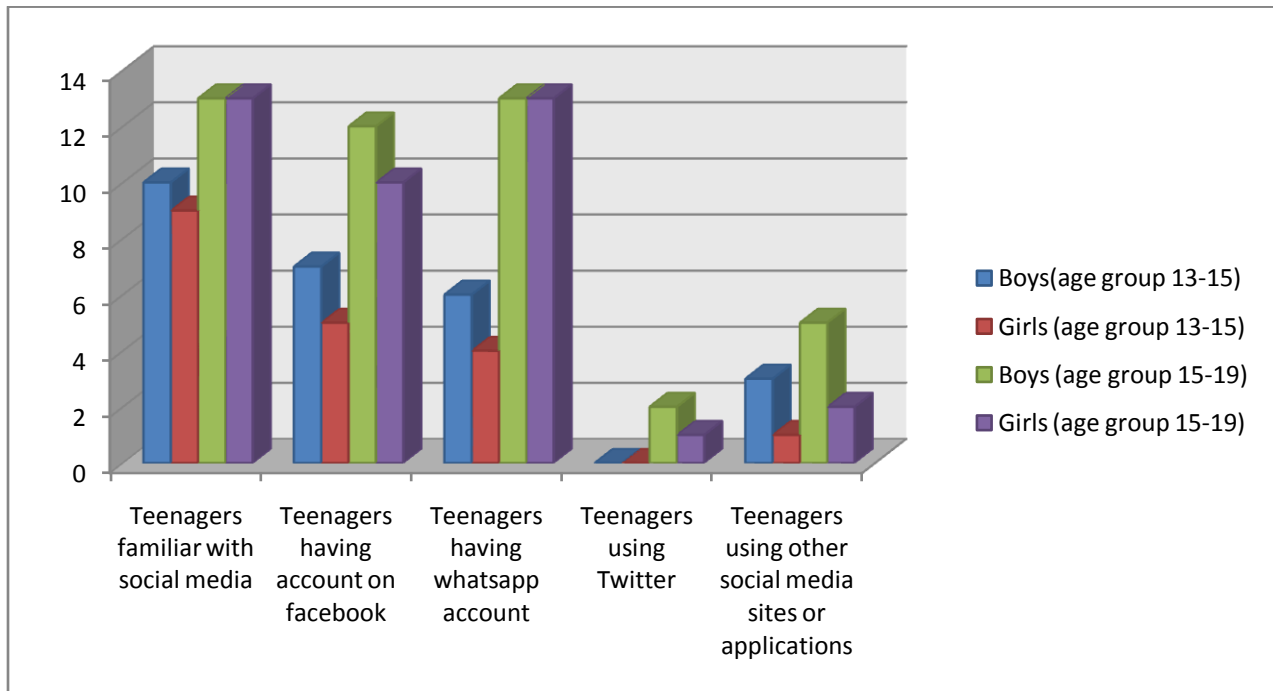
A number of 56 teenagers were selected from Tinsukia district of state Assam, country India for the survey purposes. 28 of them belong to age group 13-15years and rest 28 from age group 15-19years. Teenagers from age group 13-15years are mainly students studying in class 9 & 10 while the teenagers from the age group 15-19years are mainly students of colleges. Each group comes with equal ratio of boys and girls. The statistics of the students who are familiar with the social media sites and applications are as follows:

Total teenagers/students: 56  
 Number of teenagers/students belongs to age group 13-15 years: 28  
 Number of boys belongs to age group 13-15 years: 14  
 Number of girls belongs to age group 13-15 years: 14  
 Number of teenagers/students belongs to age group 15-19 years: 28  
 Number of boys belongs to age group 15-19 years: 14  
 Number of girls belongs to age group 15-19 years: 14

Age group <span style="font-size: 2em;">➔</span>	Boys(age group 13-15)	Girls (age group 13-15)	Boys (age group 15-19)	Girls (age group 15-19)
Teenagers familiar with social media	10	9	13	13
Teenagers having account on facebook	7	5	12	10
Teenagers having whatsapp account	6	4	13	13
Teenagers using Twitter	0	0	2	1
Teenagers using other social media sites or applications	3	1	5	2

The above statistics shows that 67.857% of teenagers from the age group 13-15years are familiar with the social media which further increases to 92.857 % in the age group of 15-19years. They know about facebook and whatsapp like sites and applications from their friends and different sources. 42.857 % students from the age group 13-15years have facebook accounts of their own and they use to spend time on it. In the age group 15-19years this percentage increases to 78.571%. Out of them 54.54% are boys. Whatsapp is not that much popular in the age group 13-15years (only 35.714% students use whatsapp) but in the age group 15-19years, 92.857%of the students regularly use whatsapp. The teenagers were asked about use of Twitter but most replies were negative. They found Twitter less interesting and so most of them avoid it. But a few of them were found interested in other alternative social networking sites. It is only 19.64% of the total number of teenagers. Among them 72.73% were boys and 27.27% were girls.

The above data is shown in a 3D column diagram below which clearly shows that teenagers give more importance to Whatsapp and Facebook than other social media sites or applications. Thus it is evident that they are highly influenced by these sites or applications.

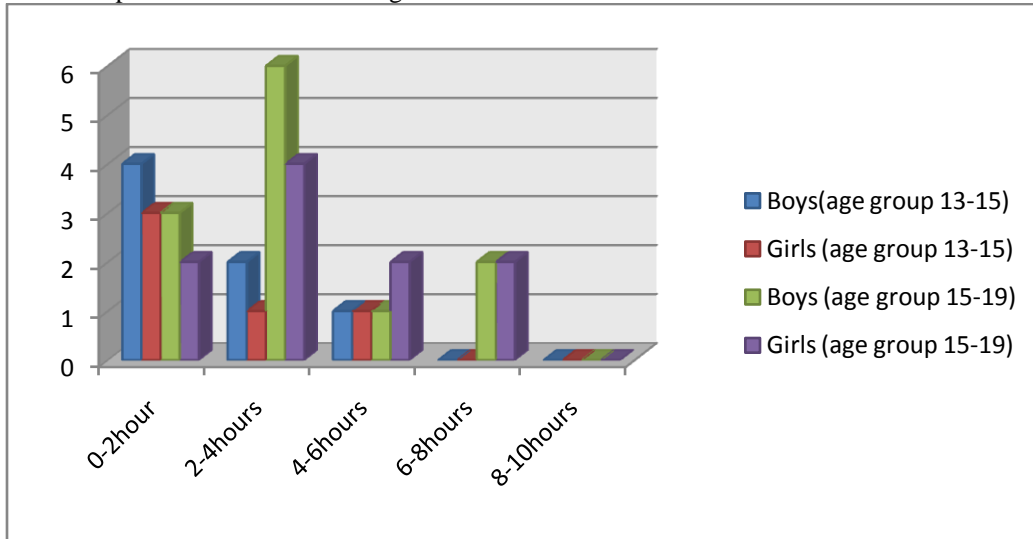


In the next step, the teenagers/students were asked about the time they spent regularly on social media sites or applications. This survey was done in three consecutive steps, for Facebook, Whatsapp and other social media.

- A) The teenagers who use Facebook were asked about the time they use to spend on it. Based on their answers the following statistics is obtained.

Time spent on FB in a day →	0-2hours	2-4hours	4-6hours	6-8hours	8-10hours
Boys(age group 13-15)	4	2	1	0	0
Girls (age group 13-15)	3	1	1	0	0
Boys (age group 15-19)	3	6	1	2	0
Girls (age group 15-19)	2	4	2	2	0

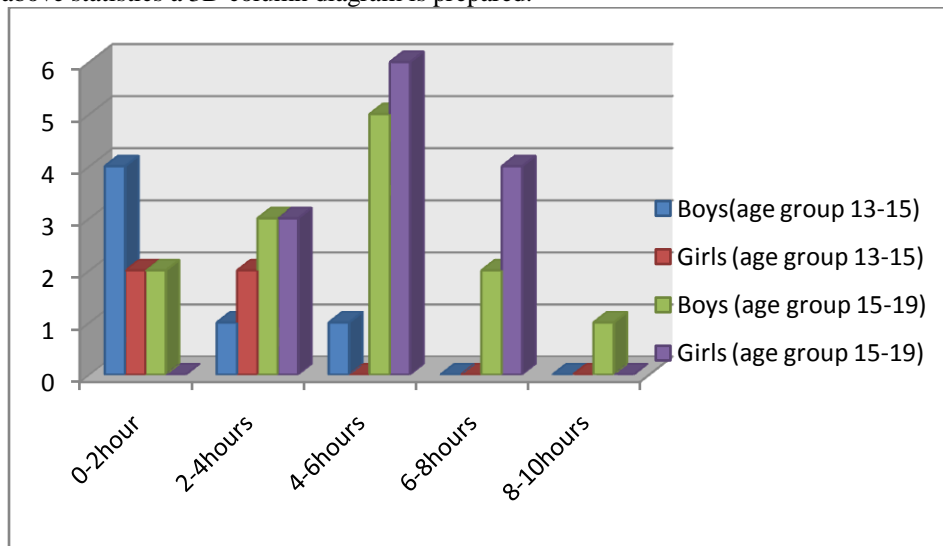
The above data is represented in a column diagram shown below.



B) One of the most common social messaging applications is Whatsapp. It is very popular among the teenagers and most of them showed positive response towards using it. The teenagers of different age groups use Whatsapp in the following rate.

Time spent on Whatsapp in a day →	0-2hours	2-4hours	4-6hours	6-8hours	8-10hours
Boys(age group 13-15)	4	1	1	0	0
Girls (age group 13-15)	2	2	0	0	0
Boys (age group 15-19)	2	3	5	2	1
Girls (age group 15-19)	0	3	6	4	0

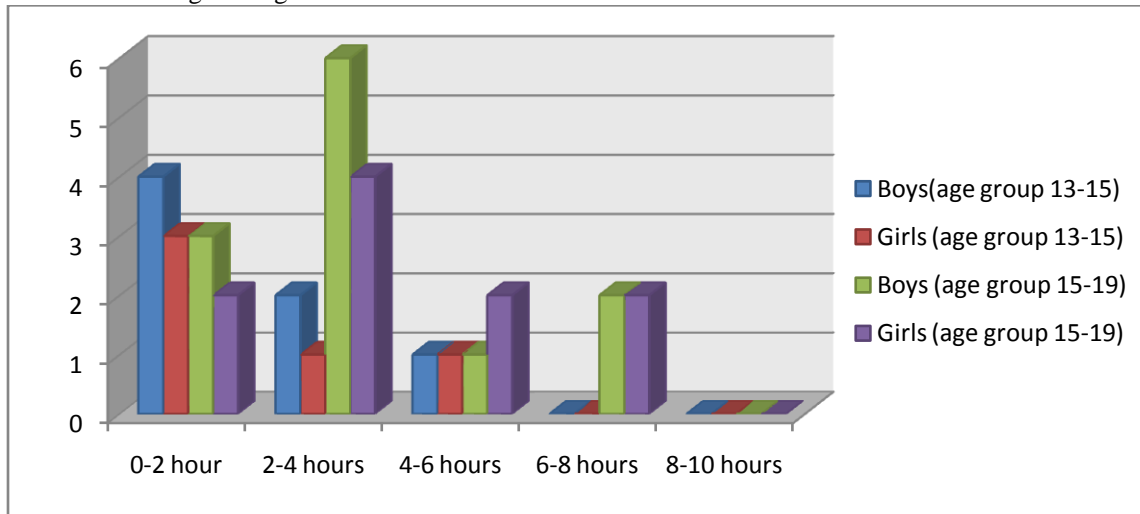
Based on the above statistics a 3D column diagram is prepared.



C) Apart from Facebook, teenagers also use other social networking sites and open account in those sites. They often search on the internet for different kinds of social sites. But most of the times they collect information about different social sites from their friends. The teenagers of different age groups were asked whether they use other social networking sites and how much time they spent in average with those sites. The following table states their responses.

Time spent on Other social media sites/applications in a day	0-2 hours	2-4 hours	4-6 hours	6-8 hours	8-10 hours
Boys(age group 13-15)	4	2	1	0	0
Girls (age group 13-15)	3	1	1	0	0
Boys (age group 15-19)	3	6	1	2	0
Girls (age group 15-19)	2	4	2	2	0

A 3D column diagram is given below.



**Result:-**

- Teenagers or students affected by social media: 80.36%
- Teenagers using Facebook more than 2hours a day: 39.28%
- Teenagers using Whatsapp more than 2hours a day: 50.00%
- Teenagers using other social media apps or sites more than 2hours a day: 39.28%
- Teenagers using Facebook more than 4hours a day: 16.07%
- Teenagers using Whatsapp more than 4hours a day: 33.92%
- Teenagers using other social media apps or sites more than 4hours a day: 16.07%

The above statistics shows that in the mentioned area, a pretty good number of students or teenagers are involved with social media and networking sites. From the study it has been noticed that basically students or teenagers from the age group 13-15 years prefer Facebook to Whatsapp and they use to spend a big time on Facebook in a regular basis. But the teenagers from age group 15-19 years showed preference towards Whatsapp. According to them, Whatsapp is a better platform to keep privacy and to chat.

**Effects:-**

The study shows that teenagers are highly influenced by the social media sites and applications. This has both good and bad effects on them. Good effects should be known and the bad effects should be eliminated using necessary precautions or permanent or temporary solutions. The effects observed from the study are listed below.

**Positive effects:-**

- a) **Supports Social Nature:** In most of the cases, social networking sites provide a big platform in which teenagers can meet people from different places. It increases or supports their social nature as well as helps to

gain knowledge. In the study the author was informed by around 20% of the teenagers that they have Facebook friends from different countries and places.

- b) **Helps in Study Purposes:** Around 40% of the teenagers belonging to the age group 15-19 years admit that Whatsapp and Facebook help directly and indirectly in their study purposes. They use to make a group with their friends on such platforms and use to keep updated with the current affairs, news, homework and assignments. This is indeed a good way to learn and share knowledge. Using such platforms teachers and students can connect to each other anytime disregarding place or time. It is expected that distance education systems combining with such platforms can achieve revolutionary success. Moreover students can easily gain information about different educational institutes via social networking sites or applications.
- c) **Helps to form Political Views:** Teenagers have distaste towards politics from a long time. They keep themselves out of it and most of the time they do not have any political views. But in the last few years a big number of teenagers formed their political views via social sites which increased the number of young voters voting in the elections in the survey area.

### Negative Effects:

- a) **Facebook depression:** When teenagers spend a huge time in Facebook, symptoms of depressions are found in them which are termed as Facebook depression by the researchers [2-4]. This depression increases with increase of internet addiction and fear of being offline i.e. FOBO.
- b) **Cyber bullying:** The teenagers are highly influenced by cyber bullying. Sometimes the term online harassment is used interchangeably but it is a complete different entity which should not be confused with cyber bullying [5]. Cyber bullying is most common among teenagers due to which several psychosocial outcomes including depression, anxiety, severe isolation and even tragically suicide take place.
- c) **Obesity problems:** Teenagers influenced by social media sites and applications use to spend a lot of time on the mobile phones or computers. This increases the chances of obesity problems. From the above survey, it has been noted that around 65% teenagers spending more than 2hours per day on internet and social media suffer from obesity problems. 15% of them have a high range of BMI value.
- d) **FOBO:** FOBO i.e. fear of being offline is a very common psychological disease. Most of the people connected to social media are suffered from FOBO in different rates. When a person has to go to a remote place without internet connection or if a person is somehow away from internet due to some reasons then he feels uneasy, uncomfortable and some psychological changes are observed, then he is said to be in FOBO. People suffering from FOBO often show abnormal behavior, sudden anger, sweating of hands etc. These symptoms are very rare in case of teenagers but effects are not ignorable. FOBO can influence the changing mental or psychological states of teenagers in a permanent manner leading to a psychological disease or poor mental condition. FOBO also has negative impacts on the studies of a teenager. It is a factor which is responsible for sudden concentration breaks.
- e) **Other health issues:** There are a lot of different health issues resulted due to negative impacts of social media sites and applications on teenagers. Bronchial asthma is a frequent disease in the industrialized world, and psychological implications play a role in increasing or in reducing its severity. Thus depression, anxiety, severe isolation or tension resulting from social media play an important role in increasing rate of bronchial asthma [1] and other certain diseases.
- f) **Sexting:** Sexting can be defined as “sending, receiving, or forwarding sexually explicit messages, photographs, or images via cell phone, computer, or other digital devices.” [5] It is a very dangerous entity ruining the life and thoughts of a huge number of teenagers. It is also responsible for child pornography charges which are increasing day by day. Sometimes it is inside a small group of teenagers without harassing anyone [5] but it has a very bad influence on the mental state of a teenager.

Thus it is seen that social media sites and applications (mobile applications) have both positive and negative impacts on the teenagers. Therefore they should have proper guide and proper knowledge before going to use them. Otherwise social media can be much harmful to the teenagers.

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