Proliferation of Social Media among Students of Rural University in India

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Abstract— Recently the social media has emerged as powerful tool for young adult to socialise and interact among peers. They form virtual communities over the plateform provided by various Social Networking Sites. However, this pattern of proliferation of social media among students is not uniform. A disparity of social media usage can be seen with varied gendre, demography, habitat, level of education and country they live in. We have conducted a study to analyse the usability pattern of social media among students of university located in rural area of Northern India. This study reveals various correlations about usability pattern and level of use of social media as well as smashes various myths about usability pattern.

Keywords— social media, social networking sites, social media use pattern, SNS proliferation.

I. INTRODUCTION

The present age is driven by technology. The every wake of human life is ruled over by it. However, the younger generation has innate acqaintance for technology mingled in their blood but still the older are toiling hard to have a say in this regime for at least their routine activities. This pervasiveness of technology has great impact on our lifestyle and socialisation behaviour. Internet and world wide web are such examples which have revolutionrise every shere of human development and grow at such a fast rate as no technology have done in past. Neither Ray Tom Linson while sending first e-mail in 1971 nor Tim Berner Lee while instituting WWW in 1990 imagine that it will have such momentous effect.

Almost after two decades of launch of first ever social network 'Geocities' in 1994, it has become most vendible technolgy and grown to a gigantic size to an extent that idea of online sharing through Social Networking Sites (SNS) have prolifrated upto social and personnel level. In new developments, various SNS like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Myspace, and Instagram etc. becomes innovative way to communicate and maintain sustainable relationship among them. They adept such online communities in varities of means like chatting, posting picturs, updatings status and micro blogging etc. Recently the use of such SNS by students has opens up new avenues of learning and assigns a challenging issue for educational researchers. The students in tertiary education form a major portion of SNS users.

Lenhart et al. (2010) envisaged through their study that that about 72% of students at this level have a social media profile and 45% of such students use SNSs everyday with 93% of such young adults are in the age group of 18-29 years. Quan-Haase and Young (2010) found that the rationale behind participating in social networking communities is to remain in touch with parents, relatives, and friends as well as search old and new friends from strangers. The past research studies and ancdotal records of students reveals that many of these young adults use social media for for the purpose of learning and gathering academic information.

Undoutly the SNSs have prolifrated to every segment of society but some disparity owing to opportunity, availablity and digital devide etc. still prevails. So simply what has been researched about these communities may not be significant for such stakeholders. I have conducted this research keeping all these aspect in mind along with other issues. The study of student's social media usage is also important from the point of view that such virtual communities are related to socialisation, one of the important aspects of human civilisation. This survey was carried out on the students of university located in rural area and found that scenrio is substaintially different from what has been uttered in litrature.

II. LITRATURE REVIEW

The social media is not too old but still it is a very significant concept. Yet researches have not investigated it throughly many studies are available in litrature which gives an insight to its charectristics. The study of Salaway and Caruso (2008) proved that such networking communities are of great interest for students and learning communities at tertiary level and attracted a huge following from teenagers and young adults since their introduction and have great potential for learning and information sharing. Baker & Oswald (2010) through their studies reach at the conclusion that use of social media improve communication skill of students and remove their shyness. Boyd and Ellison (2007) concluded that social media help the students in forming the communities and make the friends.

In regards to role of SNSs in education and learning various researches have been done so far. Schwartz (2009) Boyd and Ellison (2007) Selwyn et al. (2008) have expore the its applicablity with educators. Kvavik and Caruso (2005) Selwyn et al. (2008) Salaway and Caruso (2008) are few to report increasing entry of SNS in our lives and new experiences faced by students. Various social researchers like Roblyeret al.(2010) have highlighted the findings of SNSs

in class room environment. Apart from it few studies have reflected negative impacts of social media. Mason and Rennie (2008) and Kumar (2010) Kennedy et al. noted that use of such technology for classroom is inadequate and insuffiecient to fulfil expectations.

In the light of above discussion we can say that social media and its parlance among students community is still a new concept. The topic still lack far concluding researches in the field and hence we have to conducted this research study through survey. In subsequent sections of this paper, I will presents research methodology adopted for this research and findings. At last the paper will be concluded with further research projection on the topic.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research study solely includes a research survey. The survey instrument consisted of 26 objective type items questionaire, which was devided in to three sections. First section contains questions of demography, second part on general use of social media by students and last part contains questions on advance use of SNS by students.

The respondent sample was a randomly selected stratified sample based upon age, gendre, discipline and locality of residance (N=270) from Post Graduate students of Indira Gandhi University Meerpur, Rewari (India) located in rural area at a distance of about 15 Kms from district headquarter. In order to avoid bias factor arising out of discipline and educational background of Post Graduate students equal number of students are selected from each department. The demographic situation of sample is represented graphically in Fig. 1 below.

Fig.1: Sample Charectristics (N=270)
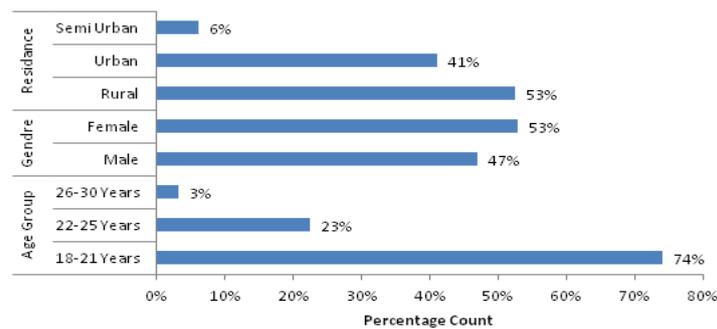
The survey instrument is designed by me and piloted well before final implementation, with 30 students, which were not, the part of sample but belong to same institute. In addition, it had been discussed with experts. Based upon piloting report and expert advice some items have been modified, added and omited in the final questionaire.

Yet all care have been taken to kept error free environment but still it face a limitation that due to wide spread sample size survey takes 5 days to fill all the questionires.

IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research findings of the study carries answer to questions like to what students use social media, lagging factor of rural area on such usage, how much the institute is competable to support social media and addiction level of students to social media. THe research findings are presented below. Fig. 2, presents internet users students. It has been found that all the students who use internet have account of any of the SNS. Out of the sample size of 270 only 208 (about 77%) have this such access. If it is analysed department-wise it has been found the departments from science faculty have more accounts than that of Arts and Humanities. This may be due to natural boost of their subject and curricular requirements. Only these 208 students who have access to internet and have franchisee to SNS through accounts have been used for further invistigation so that false drop in research could be removed.
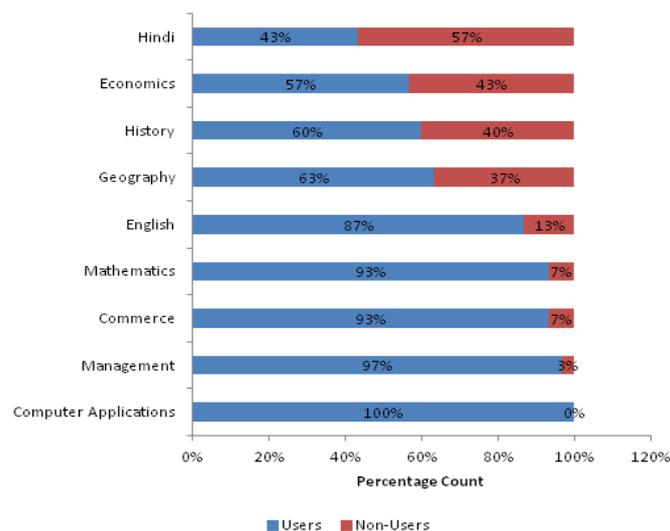
Fig. 2:Internet Users / SNS Account Holders (N=270)

Fig. 3 presents the nubmer of SNS enabling tools available department wise. It has been found that all of the students use mobile phone but availablity of other smart devices, PC or laptop is very negligible and hence students are still far from SNS revolution.
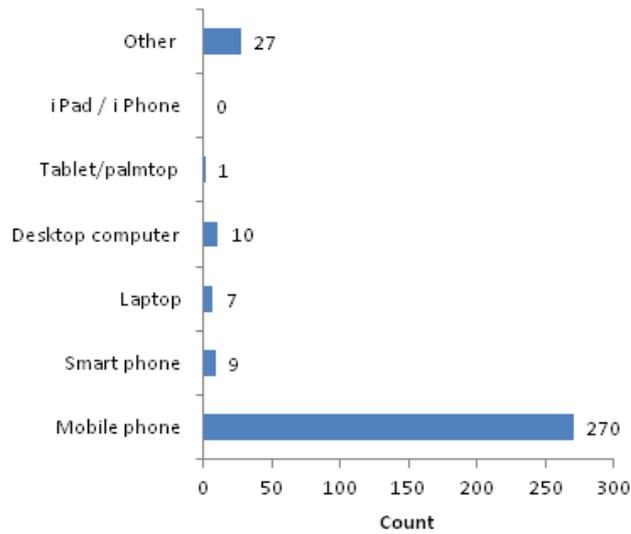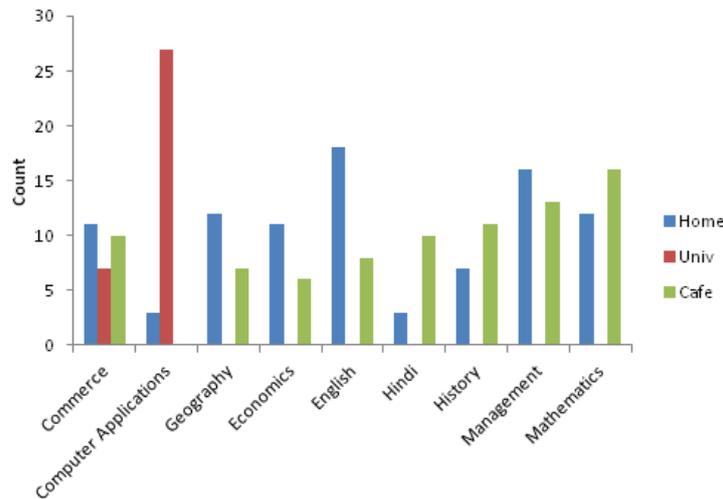
Fig. 3: SNS Enabling Gadgets (N=270)

Fig. 4 below depicts the prefered place of using the internet. It can be observed that the students from department where computer lab is conducted as a part of curriculam use internet in university and rest either do at home of cafe. It show poor SNS compitability of institute they study.

Fig. 4: Place of Using Internet (N=208)

From Fig. 5 it is clear that Facebook is top priority among students to form their social network.

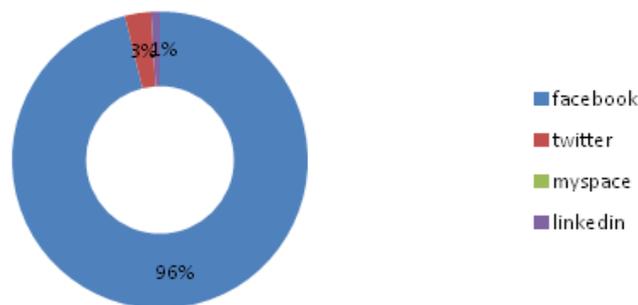**Fig. 5: First Preference among Common SNS (N=208)**

Fig. 6, represents that there is disparity among students of different departments in their time spends on social networking sites. The Fig. 7 represents the purpose of using SNS by students. Most of the students do so in order to connect their friends and only a marginal section do it to connect to their parents.
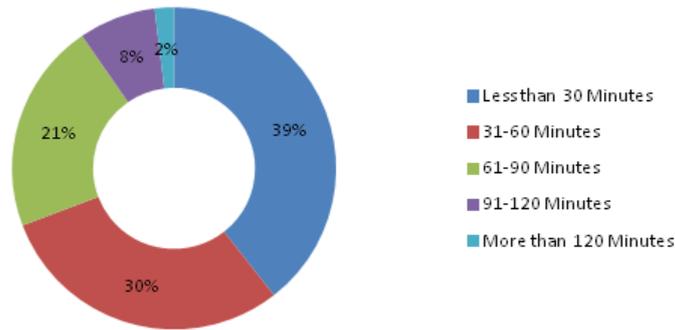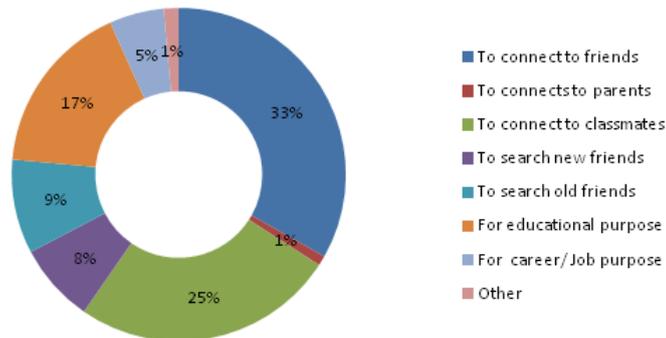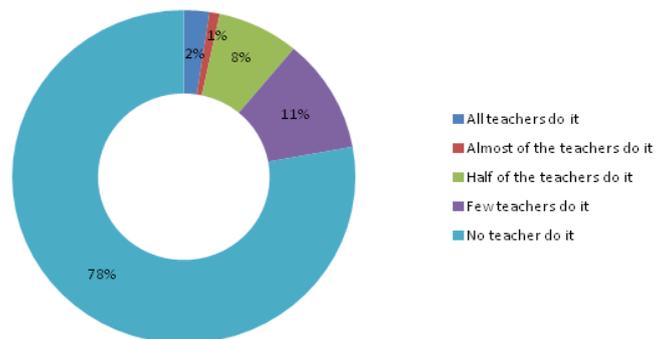
Fig. 6: Time Spent over SNS (N=208)

Legend:
- Less than 30 Minutes
- 31-60 Minutes
- 61-90 Minutes
- 91-120 Minutes
- More than 120 Minutes

Fig. 7: Purpose of Using SNS (N=208)

Legend:
- To connect to friends
- To connects to parents
- To connect to classmates
- To search new friends
- To search old friends
- For educational purpose
- For career/Job purpose
- Other

During the above discussion it is found that not all the students are user of SNS and internet penetration is only about 77%. Fig. 8, envisage how much of the teacher and pupil interaction held through SNS. It is observed that most of teachers do not mediate SNS in their communication with students. It may be one of the reason behind slaggish response of students towards SNS.

Fig. 8: Use of SNS for Teacher - Student Interaction (N=208)

Legend:
- All teachers do it
- Almost of the teachers do it
- Half of the teachers do it
- Few teachers do it
- No teacher do it

From analysis of analysis of Fig. 9 it has been found that majority of students is neither advanced user nor they are addict to SNS. A veru ignorable segment of students shows advance behavious.

Fig. 9: Advance Use of SNS (N=208)

Legend:
- Never
- Very Rarely
- Rarely
- Some times
- Often
- Very Often
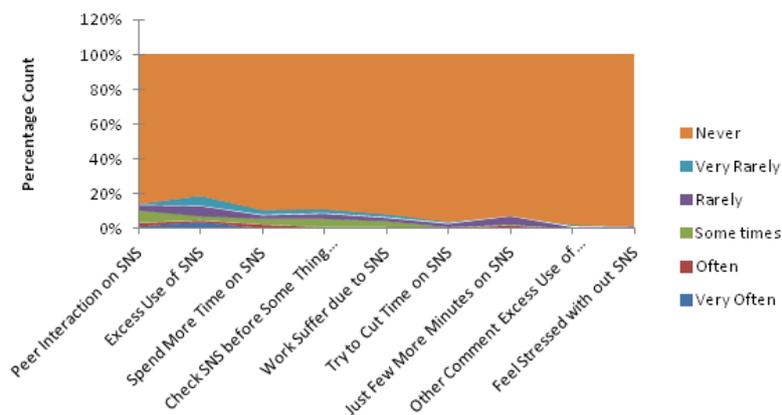
V. CONCLUSION

The interpretation of Research Findings mentioned in above section reveals that being a rural university the students' SNS usage is slaggish. Most of students do not use smart gadgets capable of connecting with SNS. Even the SNS penetration measured through internet accessiblity and accounts is about 77%. Most of the students hav SNS accounts in order to communicate with their parents. Most of teachers do not involve such potential media in their communication with students. Most of them are only initial user of SNS and only negligible segment of Post Graduate students in rural university is advanced user of SNSs.

In order to further explore the topic we planning to research on issues of increasing the SNS penetration among students. Also development and deployment of comminity SNS services is big challenge to further explore.

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