

Social Media and Human Behaviour - An Empirical Study with Special Reference to Purulia District^s

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Abstract

Social media is well-defined as forms of electronic communication through which users create online communities by building of virtual networks to share information, ideas, personal messages, and as videos.

A few years ago social media wasn't that big yet, but nowadays people are using it for almost anything in their daily life and it is also observed that social media plays a vital role in transforming people's life style. So, in backdrop of that we have done an empirical study in the district of Purulia and during the course of this literature, behaviour of the social media users of different age groups belonging to both rural & urban zones on various issues are highlighted.

Keywords: Social Media, Human Behaviour.

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“In a few years, men will be able to communicate more effectively through a machine than face to face.”

- Licklider and Taylor(1968).

Now a day's social media has been the important part of one's life from shopping to electronic mails, education and business tool. Social media plays a vital role in transforming people's life style. Social media includes social networking sites and blogs where people can easily connect with each other. We are using it to keep in touch with our friends and make some new friends. Besides that we want to show the world what we are doing by means of posting pictures or videos.

A few years ago social media wasn't that big yet in India, but nowadays people are using it for almost anything in their daily life. The Indians are increasingly logging into the Social Networking sites, today there are 302 Million internet users in India. By end of 2018 this may go up to 500 million active users. Today, India is top three user of Facebook in the world. Business networking site like LinkedIn also have 33 million users in India (Jain, 2017). Therefore, like it or not, social media is a huge part of the lives of Indians now, and that doesn't seem to be change any time soon. Every day, the number of social media users increases. Every second, 11 people use social media for the first time.

So, in backdrop of that we have done an empirical study in the district of Purulia and in this paper, behaviour or engagement pattern of the social media users of different age groups belonging to both rural & urban zones are highlighted.

Scope and objective of the study:

The objective of this paper is to make an attempt at studying on the engagement of people of Purulia district, the most backward district of the state West Bengal on social network sites. This paper also examines their patterns of engagements in terms of time, privacy etc. on social media.

And to achieve the objectives of the study, a field survey was carried out. Data has been collected from 192 respondents from rural & urban Purulia by using a well-structured questionnaire.

Review of literature:

This section presents a review of the research studies related to social media and its users in order to determine which areas have already been explored and investigation in which area can add value. This helps formulate objectives and undertake this research work.

Man is a social animal, he cannot live in isolation, so his actions affect not only him but society in general, society affects a man in so many ways(Mehraj *et al.*, 2014). In their article, it is found that major chunk of youth is using social media networks more than 5 hours a day resulting in decreasing their general health in general and mental health in particular. Siddiqui & Singh(2016) have pointed out that nowadays social media has become a new set of cool tools for involving young peoples. Many young people's day to day life is woven by the social media Youngsters are in conversation and communication with their friends and groups by using different media and devices every day. Mostly youngsters waste lots of time on social sites like chatting which also affects their health. Social media marketing prepares young workers to become successful marketers. Rani(2014) also admits that while, facebook cater to about 90 per cent of the users in the social media space; maximum users come from the 'less than 2 lakhs p.a.' income category. This is because social networks are primarily driven by the youth. Utpal(2017) observes that most of the students spend 1-5 hours per week on Facebook and update their status several times in a day. Most of the students like the post of others. All of the male students never share the others' posts. Female students never accept friend request of the strangers. In view of Lenhart(2015), it can be said that for today's teens, friendships can start digitally: 57% of teens have met a new friend online. Social media and online gameplay are the most common digital venues for meeting friends. A survey by the US-based Nielsen Company found that 70% of social media users in India accessed a social networking site every day. It was also found that 89% of 15-20 year old users accessed a social networking site every day and 60% of them spend at least half an hour on it daily. It was found that 37% of heavy social media users in India (who use it multiple times a day) fall in the age group of 21-30 years.

According to Luskin (2012), social media increases IQs but on the contrary, studies of Bhati & Bansal(2019) show that the use of social media can induce many psychological disorders in

teenagers. According to them, social media causes lack of concentration. Social media can also lead to a change in the thought process as well as the change in brain anatomy. Young (2018) finds there is no significant relationship between the amount of time spent on internet, number of social media sites used and happiness among adults aged 45 years and older. According to Litsa (2016), social media can cause insecurity, anti-social behaviour, disconnection from the world, and egocentrism. According to Fontein (2015), social media can have a huge impact on an individual's memory. An individual can use social media to communicate rather than having to memorize their phone number and contact details. And in regard to this, the observations of Dutta (*et. al.*, 2017) are very crucial as he suggests that there are negative aspects also but these negative aspects of social media can be overcome by reducing the amount of time spent on social network sites.

Overview of the study area:

As the empirical study was carried out across the district of Purulia, a backward district of West Bengal, so in this chapter we will highlight, in a nutshell, on the geographical location of the district alongwith its socio-economic characteristics and facets of livelihood crisis.

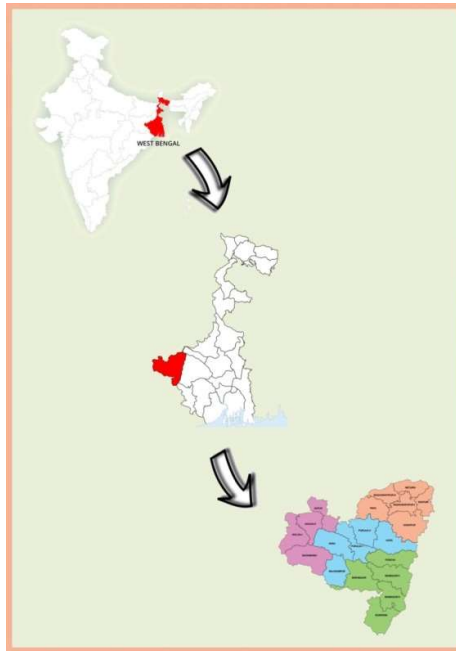


Figure 1: Map of India, West Bengal & Purulia*

**The map is schematic.*

Geographical location of the district:

Purulia is situated in a hilly area of the western part of state with all-India significance because of its tropical location. It belongs to the central Indian tribal homeland¹. It covers an area of 6259 square km. which constitutes 7 percent area of West Bengal. In the district, rural area occupies 98.73 percent of it's total geographical area.

Socio-economic features of the district:

It is imperative to have knowledge of the socio-economic profile of people of the district. The district is conspicuous by its social and economic underdevelopment. In the district, the percentage share of rural population to the total population is about 90 percent. Purulia is considerably populated by the backward castes and tribes. The district has 36.56 percent of the total population in the form of SC and STs. And 93.8 percent of total population belonged to SC and ST groups live in rural areas.

In the district, farming is the main source of livelihood. But agricultural growth scenario of the district is retarded and dismal². In this district, with its hot, wet summers and cool, dry winter, rainfall and water availability are serious constraints to agriculture. Soil degradation, drought, heat wave and declining access to forests have debilitated the livelihood base of the rural people of the district.

Following the global pattern, West Bengal Human Development report published in 2004 has captured human development attainments of the districts in the State. As disaggregated data for the bifurcated districts of Paschim Dinajpur and Medinipur were not available, those were taken as one single district. Accordingly 17 districts of the State were ranked. Purulia is at the position of sixteenth.

Research methodology:

The study was carried out in five block & three municipalities of Purulia district. Name of the blocks alongwith the reasons for their purposively selection is stated in the table given below.

Table 4.1: List of blocks & municipalities selected for this field study.

¹ The central Indian tribal homeland, located between 18 and 25 degrees north of the equator across the Indian sub continent, operationally cover nearly 100 districts in eight states of the country stretching from Banswara (Rajasthan) in the west to Purulia (West Bengal) in the east. These districts together account for about 55 million tribal people (roughly 70 percent of India's tribal population) spread over 68 million hectares of geographic area (Phansalkar, Sanjiv and Verma, Shilp: "Improved Water Control as Strategy for Enhancing Tribal Livelihoods", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XXXIX, No 31, 2004.

² Bauri, Prasanta (2010): "Diversification scenario in agriculture in the era of globalization – a case study of Purulia district", *Economic Affairs*, Vol. 55, No.3 & 4, December.

Type of area	Sl. no.	Blocks/municipalities of Purulia district selected for field study	Reasons for the purposively selection of the block
Rural	1.	Kashipur block	Lowest concentration of backward villages in the district 12.56%
	2.	Raghunathpur –II block	Highest percentage of SC population
	3.	Jhalda-I block	Highest percentage of general caste population
	4.	Bundwan block	People belonged to tribal group accounts the majority among total block population
	5.	Jhalda-II block	Highest concentration of backward villages
Urban	1.	Purulia municipality	There are only three municipalities in the district. So urban respondents were taken from all these three municipalities.
	2.	Raghunathpur municipality	
	3.	Jhalda municipality	

From each block & municipality, 24 respondents have been selected purposively.

The sampling method, used here, is convenient sampling. The reason behind choosing this method is that it is very difficult to get the people free to speak. Therefore, the work has been done as per the convenience of the people who had the opportunity to speak. The respondents have been divided into several groups or classes in both the rural and urban areas.

Table 4.2: Area and age-group wise categorization of samples.

Area	Selection criteria of the individuals	No. of individuals who were interrogated (@ 4 individuals taken from each of five blocks)
Rural	Age between 10-19	20
	Age between 20-29	20
	Age between 30-39	20
	Age between 40-49	20
	Age between 50-59	20
	Age between 60-69	20
	Total(Rural)	120
Area	Selection criteria of the individuals	No. of individuals who were interrogated (@ 4 individuals taken from each of three municipalities)
Urban	Age between 10-19	12
	Age between 20-29	12
	Age between 30-39	12
	Age between 40-49	12
	Age between 50-59	12

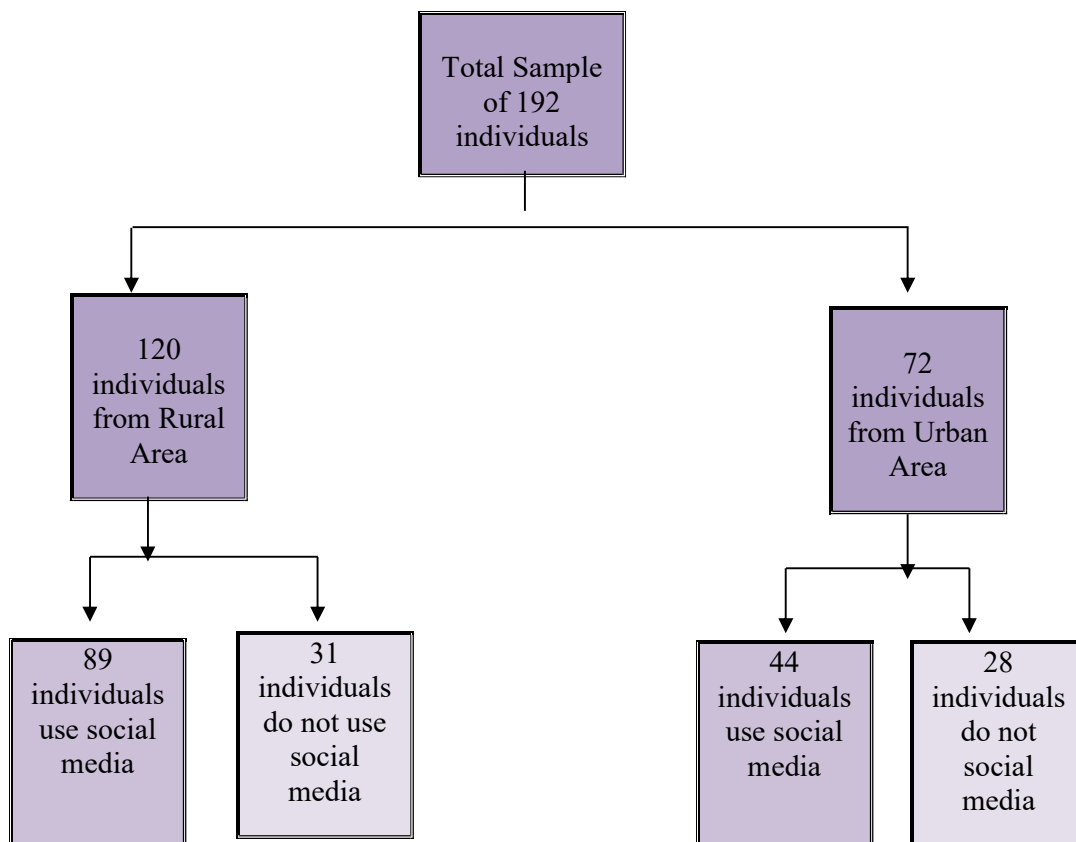
	Age between 60-69	12
	Total(Urban)	72
Total	All(Rural+Urban)	192

Source: Field Survey, October'2019-January'2020.

From each block, a total of 24 respondents have been selected purposively @ 4 respondents for each of six age groups.

There were 192 respondents ranged from 10 to 69 years old from Purulia district who participated in this study. Out of 192 respondents, 120 individuals belong to rural areas and other 72 were of urban areas.

Figure 2: Area wise break up of samples.



Out of total respondents, 154 respondents (80%) were males while 38 respondents (20%) were female. As regards to occupational particulars, out of total 192 respondents, 9% (15) respondents are students, 13% (23) respondents are government employees, 33% (63) respondents are doing job in unorganised sector, 17% (29) are self-employed persons, 5% (9) respondents are housewives, 10% (19) are pension holders, 9% (17) respondents did other work and rest 4% (8) respondents did not engaged in any work.

Research questionnaire:

Following issues were raised in our questionnaire:

- Are you active in social media?
- Approximately, how much time do you spend using social media sites per day?
- Do you think that social media is the best way to pass the leisure time?
- How many people do social media in the morning?
- Do you check notifications all the time?
- Do you only want to contact and talk to your friends via social media?
- Do you constantly monitor the “likes” and “shares” you receive?
- Do you take “selfie”?
- Do you think that social media becomes part of your life?
- Do you check social media being the first thing whenever you are free?
- What kind of electronic device is used for being active in social media?
- Do you post pictures/videos of yourself?
- Do you feel that social media affects on our body/mind/mood?

A two point scale (1=yes; 2=no) was employed to measure the usage of the social media.

SWOT Analysis:

After collecting of the primary data, a SWOT(Strength-Weakness-Opportunity-Threat) analysis has been conducted on behavioural pattern of people on using social media. The following is the result of this SWOT analysis.

Strength:

1. 69% People are using social media.
2. Social media allows people to communicate with one another more freely.
3. One positive impact of social media is in the distribution of information in today's world. Platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp and others have made it possible to access information at the click of a button.
4. Social media is important because it allows users to reach people locally, regionally, nationally and even internationally.
5. Social media can add creativity to our thinking as people can share their views and work with others.
6. Social media connectivity with families, friends and some government safety organizations, has resulted in people feeling safe while moving out.

Weakness:

1. Respondents admitted that there is the lack of privacy. “*What is most personal is most universal*”.³
2. Sharing private content can cause problems in people’s personal and professional lives.
3. Social media is slowly killing real activism and replacing it with slackness.
4. Social sharing has encouraged people to use computers and mobile phones to express their concerns on social issues without actually having to engage actively with campaigns in real life. Their support is limited to pressing the ‘Like’ button or sharing content.
5. It is also fact that 31% people in the district are not using social media.

Opportunity:

1. No doubt, social media is very effective for keeping in touch with friends and family in the present era of busy life.
2. While social media activism brings an increased awareness about societal issues, whether this awareness is translating into real change.
3. Without social media, social, ethical, environmental and political ills would have minimal visibility. Increased visibility of issues has shifted the balance of power from the hands of a few to the masses.
4. Social media may helps in avoiding boredom.
5. Social media can be used for wide circulation of all central and or state government schemes so that people can know about it.

Threat:

1. People, especially teenagers can misuse social media platforms to spread rumours.
2. Stalking, identity theft, personal attacks, and misuse of information are some of the threats faced by the users of social media.
3. Social media is encouraging people to form and cherish artificial bonds over actual friendships. The term ‘friend’ as used on social media lacks the intimacy identified with conventional friendships, where people actually know each other, want to talk to each other, have an intimate bond and frequently interact face to face.

³Carl R. Rogers(1995): On Becoming a Person: A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy, Mariner Books.

4. Face-to-face interactions which are necessary for development of personalities, learning social skills and communication skills, have been removed from the lives of people, especially younger generations. Children are having a difficult time interacting with others, which might lead to unsociable behaviour.
5. With social media it has become nearly impossible to avoid bad news and the negative influences on our lives.

Conclusion:

“Social media is about sociology and psychology more than technology”.

– Brian Solis

Studying or measuring human behaviour is a very complex task. This study has been conducted to gauge the effects of social media on human behaviour on some issues and we can conclude that humans are social animals and today with the advent of internet, Social networking sites have become a significant communication channel among people and social media plays a vital role in transforming people's life style and while the world would be a much slower place without social media, it's caused harm as well as good.

However, the positive impact of social media is astronomical and far surpasses the ills associated with sharing as we believe “Our greatest ability as humans is not to change the world; but to change ourselves”⁴.

Social media can abuse the society by invading on people's privacy, some useless blogs can influence youth that can become violent and can take some inappropriate actions. Use of social media is beneficial but should be used in a limited way without getting addicted.

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⁴Mahatma Gandhi.

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