

## GLOBAL YOUTH AND COMMUNICATION: AN OVERVIEW OF THE EMERGING COMMUNICATIVE PATTERNS AMONG THE YOUTHS OF LUCKNOW

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The twenty-first century is evolving into a time of technological advancements. These advancements in turn are developing new means of communication in this global phase which spreads worldwide. The worldwide spread of technology creates vast connections that generate new opportunities on a larger scale. The current focus of the globalization of communication and technology is the connections created by networks of social media.

Information technology leads to awareness, prosperity, and freedom from fanaticism oriented, a good opportunity to understand, good opportunity of living along with its own challenges. The development of technological tools, provide field for production of new subcultures Seyyedi (2012) mentions that the understanding of society is not possible without its technological tools. The expanding information technology deeply affects the lifestyle, thinking about oneself and the environment around. (Seyyedi: 2012)

Technological enhancement is one of the main reasons that globalization has escalated in the past decade. In information and communication technology, innovations have become smaller in size, more efficient and often more affordable. Their usage is varied and is being used for both personal and professional work. This has made the world seem a smaller place and has nurtured the growth of globalization. The global age of communication has led to the compression of time and space. Chen (2012) refers to these innovations as the 'new media' which bring forth a new digital aesthetic view in the society.

This 'new media' is the main force accelerating the trend of globalization and this new trend creates new social networks and activities, redefine the political, cultural, economic, geographical and other boundaries of the society. It expands and stretches the social relations, intensifies and accelerates social exchanges. In his article '*The Impact of New Media on Intercultural Communication in Global Context*', Chen (2012) identifies five important characteristics of this new means of communication that has perpetuated the growth of the globalization: -

- i. Digitality
- ii. Convergency
- iii. Interactivity
- iv. Hypertextuality
- v. Virtuality

Owing to these features the new means of communication allows people to interact with multiple people simultaneously with the ability to individualize messages in the process of interaction. In totality it is leading to

- ❖ a shrinking world
- ❖ the compression of time and space
- ❖ close interactions in different aspects in the society
- ❖ global connectivity
- ❖ accelerated global and local interconnections

This is, in fact, the real globalization where the intensification of the world-wide social relations link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring miles away and vice-versa. (Giddens: 1990). In this way the globalization of communication is expanding the horizon of the process of globalization.

Globalization of communication implies to the various sources of globalization of technology like printing media, cyber media, visual media etc. It is that aspect of globalization which is growing at the fastest rate. All kind of knowledge, idea and information is available at the click of a button which can be transmitted and received to and from any part of the world. Globalization of communication finishes the instantiation of time and space. This instantiation of space minimised via usage of internet.

The Internet – newest in a series of major breakthroughs is one of the interests for Sociologists in various ways. It has broken down communication barriers between cultures and has brought world-wide social relations which linked distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring miles away and vice-versa (Giddens: 1990). Now, almost any news service across the globe can be accessed on the Internet and, with the various translation services available (like Babel fish and Google Translate), be relatively understandable. It has been a key factor in driving globalization in recent years.

In an attempt to trace connection between internet and Globalization, Castells (2010) writes that the internet has become a universal medium connecting people and distributing content around the world. New forms of expressions such as emails, blogs, Wikis and social networks are now a part of everyone's everyday social life. For Castells, "internet is an open source for free posting, decentralized broadcasting, serendipitous interaction, purpose-oriented communication and shared creation that find their expression on the internet." (Turner, 2010: 63).

There has been a rapid spread of the internet infrastructure during the last decade and it continues to extend every continent, accessible in even the remotest of places. The deployment of this infrastructure is extremely was extremely uneven, with more than 55 percent of users coming from high income countries, however there has occurred a strong and continuous trend towards shrinking this global digital divide. (Turner: 2010).

Castells explains globalization as a process by which networks of interaction spread around the world – especially across national borders connecting diverse people, institutions, ideas and representations in increasingly complex patterns of interdependence.

Being heavily informed by Harold Innis and Marshall McLuhan (1962), Castells considers internet as the core of technological communication revolution which brings about the global age. Internet tends to intensify the existing social and cultural trends. (Turner: 2010). The internet constructs a new symbolic environment, global in its reach which makes 'virtuality a reality.'

Friedman (2007) argues support that the internet has changed peoples' lives. He cites that people prefer the efficient digitized mail of the internet known as e-mail as opposed to the traditional post office that was commonly referred to as the 'snail mail'. He asserts that the

Internet puts an enormous amount of information at people's fingertips and that all the information on the Internet is available to anyone, anywhere, at anytime.

### **Information Communication Technology and the Youth**

Youth are at the forefront of the technological revolution, which is the driving force behind the global emergence and evolution of the technology-based society. In context to the youth's exposure to the Information Technology revolution the World Youth Report 2005 on the basis of a national survey conducted in the U.S. affirms that 91% of youth use internet to email friends and relatives and 83% of the youth use it for instant messaging. It also reveals that 94% of the youth have cell phones; moreover, they are responsible for roughly ten million text messages sent in 2003.

Information Communication Technology has become a significant factor in development and this development provides both opportunities and challenges with regard to the social development and youth inclusion. Youth, today often use the internet to access entertainment, news sites and virtual meeting spaces. These advancements accelerated the level of awareness and activeness among the youth. Youth in general and the middle class youth in particular are marked by symbolism, networking using either mobiles or computers and this has emerged as the part of youth culture globally. This is the internet culture.

The present study attempts to explore the various types of internet media used by the youth. The following data represents the youth's connectivity and accessibility to internet and its uses.

#### **GADGETS OWNED AND USED**

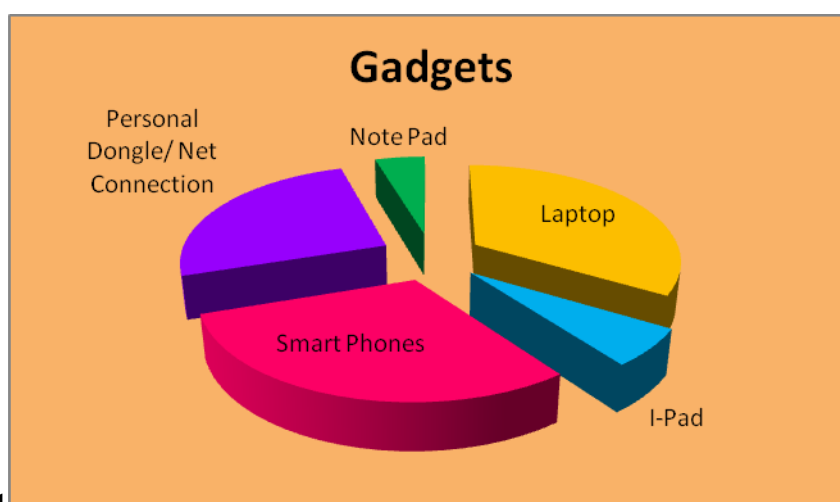


CHART 4.1

On enquiring about the youth’s access to the global gadgets it was noticed that the global gadgets are accessed by majority of the youth in today’s time. The smart phones have reached to more than one-third of the respondents. Moreover, laptop and personal dongle are also owned by the one- fourth respondents. This may be taken as a trend towards the youth’s personal ownership of gadgets that make them globally reachable and connected.

The above data indicates a significant possession of smartphones among the respondents. It may perhaps be because of its utility and convenience. Smartphones are handier in comparison to other gadgets. Moreover, they have also become a status symbol among the youth. Laptop along with the dongle have become a professional necessity whereas notepad and i pad till remain a status symbol only.

**TIME SINCE USING INTERNET**

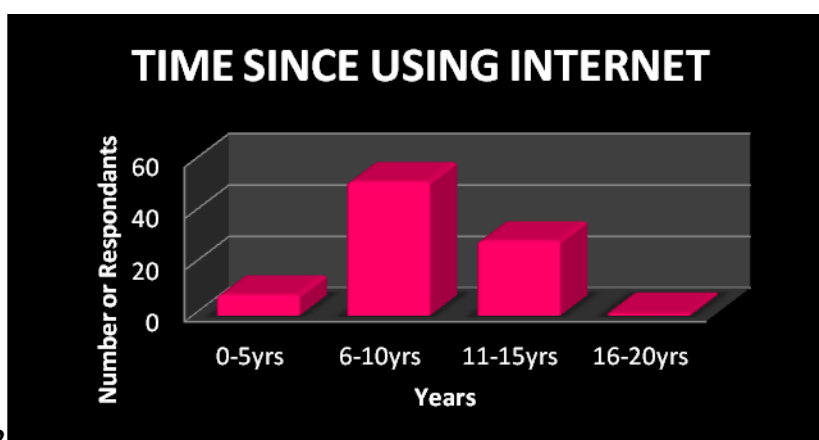


CHART 4.2

On enquiring about the youth’s acquaintance with the usage of internet it was observed that the youth reflects a twenty year history with internet usage. Though the proportion is less yet

it reflects a trend – a trend of internet and its usage. However, from the twenty first century onwards there has been a significant rise in the usage of internet and as the data reflects a considerable portion of the youth getting acquainted with internet since last ten years.

**PURPOSE OF USING INTERNET**

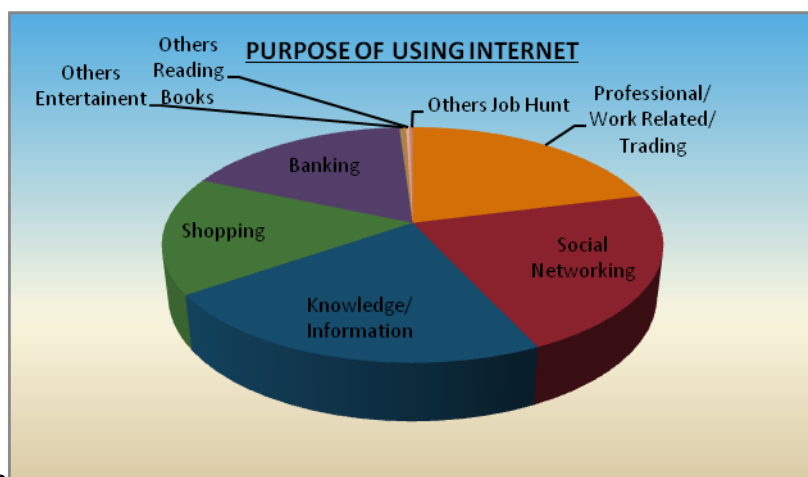


CHART 4.3

On enquiring about the youth’s purpose of using internet it was observed that there is a trend of using internet for various purposes like knowledge and information, banking, profession, social networking, entertainment etc. The trend depicts that the ethos of internet is still alive and reaching universally. It is, in fact, interesting to note that people are using internet for reasons other than their profession and work. This also shows the youth’s accessibility and appreciation of internet and its uses.

**TIME SPENT ON INTERNET**

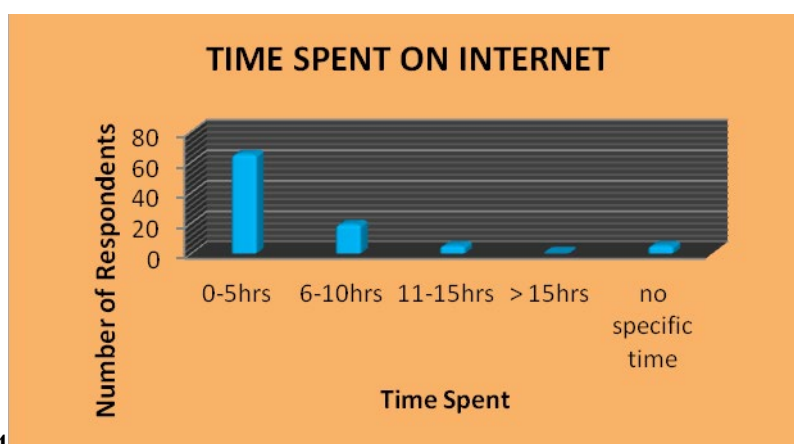
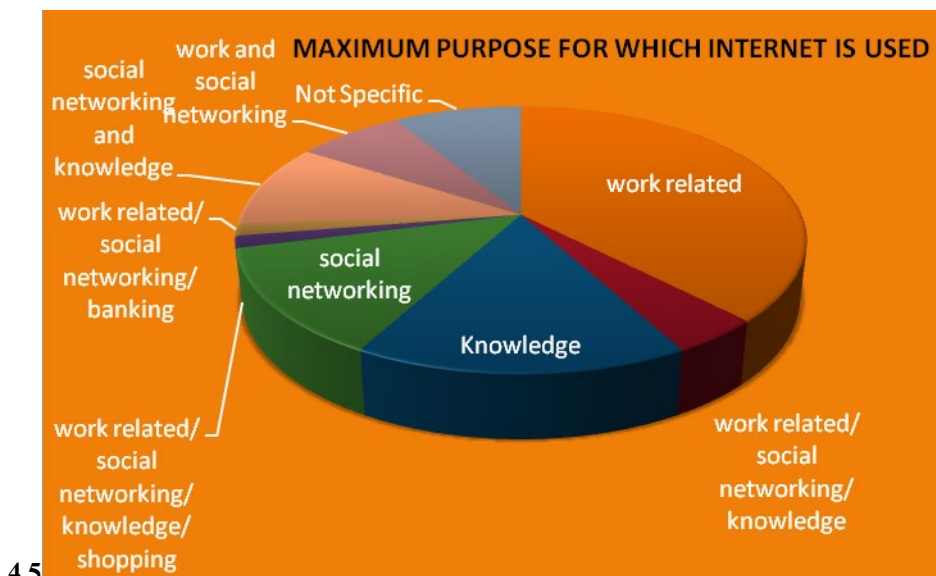


CHART 4.4

On visualizing the data shown in Chart 4.4 it can be argued that the youth today are spending considerable time on internet access. Some of the respondents spend more than ten hours on internet. This reflects a significant trend in the usage of internet and the time spent on it. The usage of internet has encountered a global expansion since last five year and has entered into everyone’s life-world. The youth section of our society is also coping with the boom that has occurred since last few years not only in India but internationally.

**MAXIMUM PURPOSE FOR WHICH INTERNET IS USED CHART**



In order to comprehend the major trend of the internet usage among the youths there was an attempt to know the purpose for which internet is used by them. As per the data represented in Chart 4.5 it can be said that as much as the youth are using internet or other social media for both reasons for professional work and for personal work thereby equally focussing on their life world and system. In this way media dominates both life- world and system.

**SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES USED**

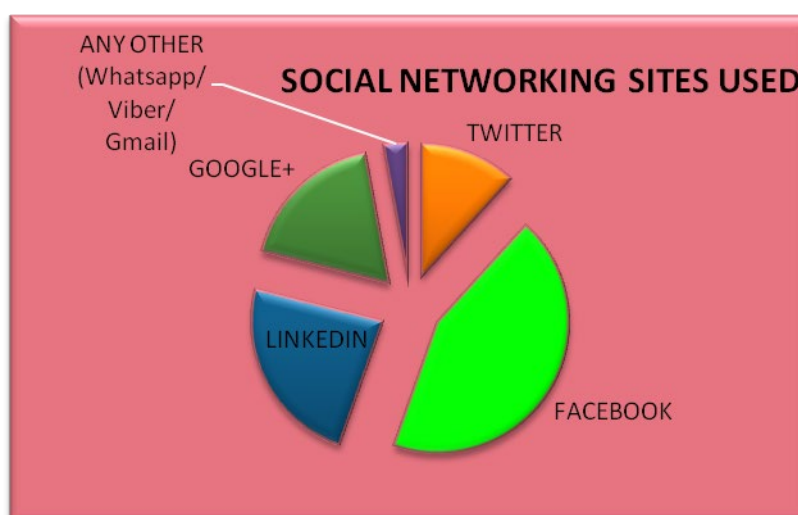


CHART 4.6

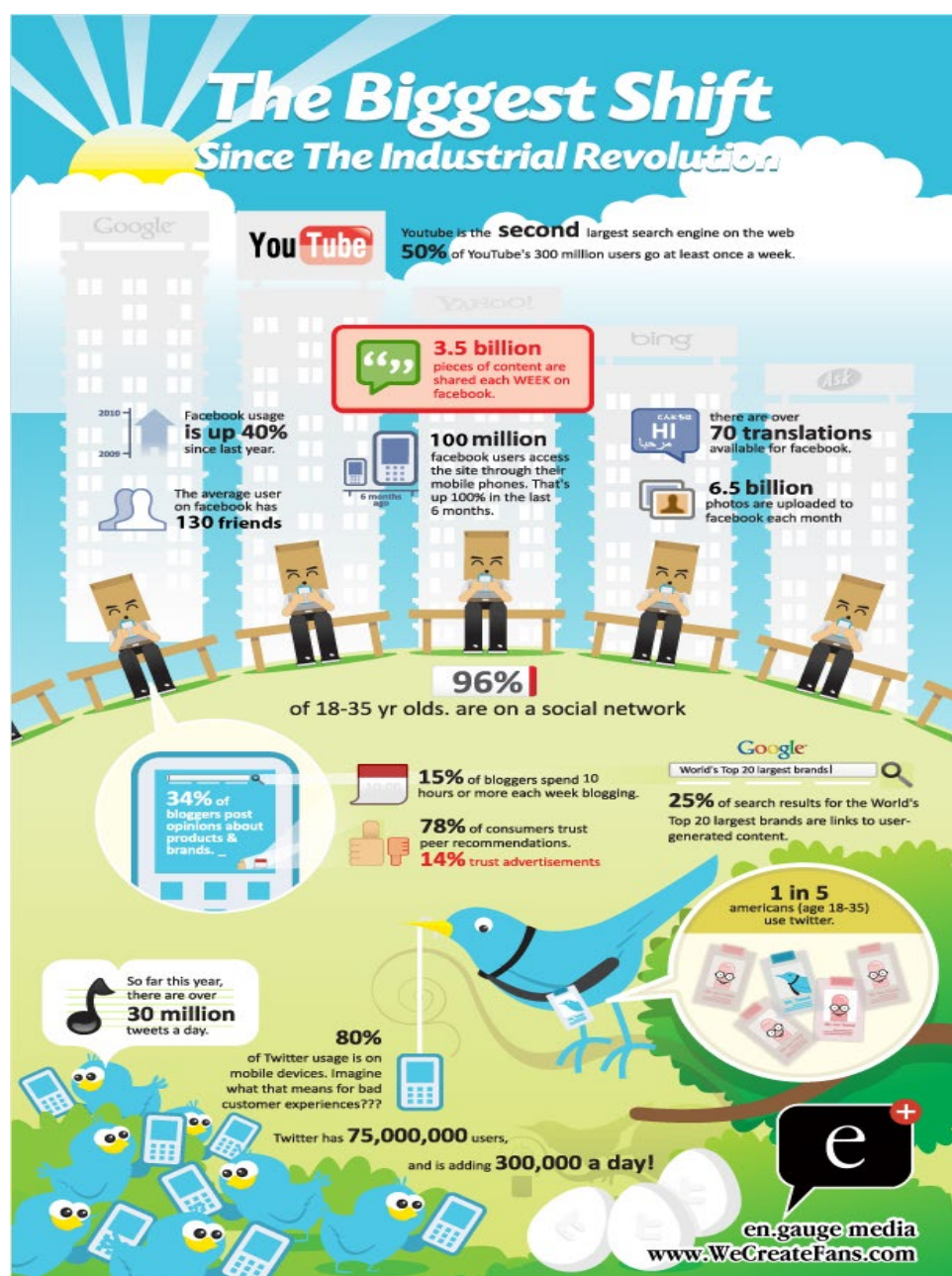
Social networking sites facilitate and connect individuals sharing either the same interests or existing interpersonal relationships, such as: colleagues, friends, or family members. They are said to have been connecting having previous interpersonal relationships, the user growth has been nothing short of sensational. Lebedka (2012) argues that the social networking sites as a social phenomenon has significantly affected the networked societies all over the world. As globalization of communication mainly rests on the internet and communication via social networking sites, it is very obvious to take into account the usage of these social networking sites by the youth to nurture their communication pattern. Lebedka (2012) opines that these social networking sites have created the 'new generation' – the 'D' generation which is the digital generation and born in the 'computer epoch'. He further writes that the paradigm of communication is presently changing and face to face communication is achieving new dimension. These social networking sites have expanded globally as a need to connect beyond the boundary of space and time. In other words this pattern of communication is accounting for what Castells (2005) denote as the 'network society.' It is a microelectronics-based, networking technology that provides new capabilities to an old form of social organization: networks. (Castells: 2005). He corroborates the process globalization as another way to refer to the network society.

In an interview on the Oxford University Press (OUP) blog, Steger (2014) argues that social networking has intensified cultural globalization by increasing cultural flows across the world. On the one hand it is said to have increased cultural tendencies of homogenization (or 'Americanization'), whereas on the other hand it has led to the creation and proliferation of



new (sub-cultures). He claims that social networking contributes to cultural ‘hybridization’– the mixing up of different cultural values, styles, and preferences resulting in new cultural expressions that blur the line between ‘Western’ and ‘non-Western’ cultural formations.

In analysing the role of social networking in the globalization process, Kim (2013), inscribes that the social media is the emerging and prominent driving force of globalization and time when globalization was done ‘one-way’ by television, radio, films and newspapers has passed. Social media allows for two-way communication, sharing and exchange of information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. Through social media, such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, etc., one can share, agree, or ‘like’ the news and ideas shared around all over the world and shape their own beliefs through their own exercises. With the help of the following picture 4A, Kim’s attempts to showcase *how social media are being used, and how everything is changed and influenced by its usage:*



*Photo: 4A*

*Source: "Globalization through Social Media, Any Dangers?", Kim (2013)*

Taking this as the point of departure the present study endeavours to analyse the youth's exposure to the social networking sites and their patterns of communication. The data represented in Chart 4.6 reflects that the youth today is well informed about the social networking sites and is also depicting its exposure towards these sites. It is an interesting data that shows the youth's access to the internet other than professional work.

## SOCIAL NETWORKING SITS MOST ACTIVE ON

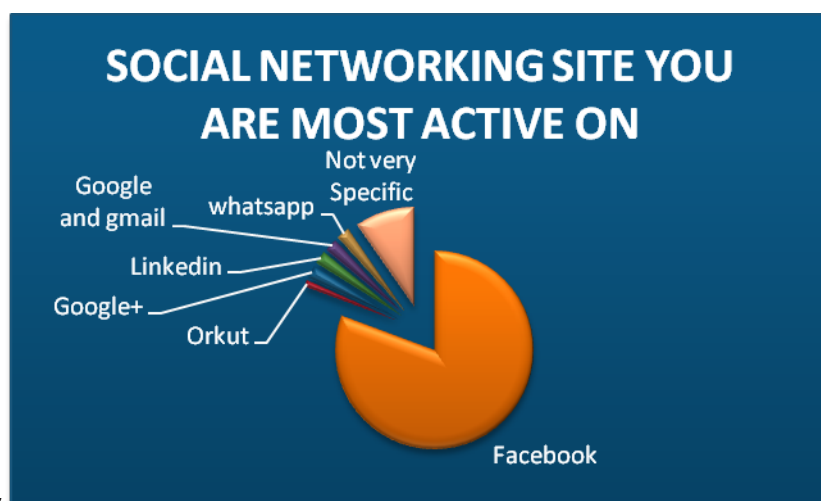


CHART 4.7

In his article entitled, '*Social Networks and Globalization: Facebook, You Tube and the Impact of Online Communities on France's Protectionist Policies.*' Warlaumont (2010) mentions that the continuous evolution of internet is paving way for the new and varied uses of digital communication tools like Facebook, Twitter etc towards the enhancement of large global communities. In this context Chen (2012) argues that the social media have enabled people from every corner of the world to represent themselves in a particular way and stay connected.

There has been a rapid expansion of technology in today's world which enables us to share our fashion trends, culture, political views, and foods. People all over the world are able to research other cultures and contribute information about their own culture. One of the biggest contributions to the growth of technology is Facebook. In his *Globalization and American Popular Culture*, Crothers discusses the role of Facebook in globalization and asserts that Facebook has brought American popular culture to a global audience (Crothers, 2012). This social networking site allows for people all over the world to create profiles and post about their culture. Knowledge of different cultures has been spread all over the world because of social networking. (Crothers: 2012).

Facebook, today reflects 1.23 billion monthly active users, 945 million mobile users, and 757 million daily users. With the global reach and significant user base, social networking websites provide a tremendous scope for the expansion of the global system of communication.

As mentioned above, Facebook is becoming one of the most dominant social networking sites; the data also reflects the same. This may be due to the increased need of interactions and communication. Facebook has a diverse nature and owing to this diversity it offers multiple uses for communication to the followers. The data in Chart 4.7 corroborates that even the youth in Lucknow are more active on Facebook.

In this regard it was significant to enquire the nature of communication that takes place on these sites by the youth. In this endeavour the study asked the respondents about the issues that they were concerned with while communicating on the social networking sites.

### CONCERNS WHILE COMMUNICATING ON SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

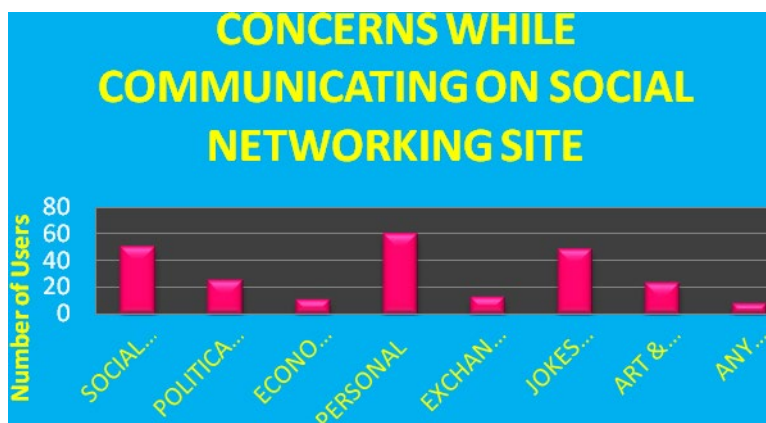


CHART 4.8

The data in Chart 4.8 represents that the youth today discusses and communicates on varied range of issues and themes. This in fact reflect the diversity of the social networking sites like Facebook where in the people involved are able to diversify their uses and develop new patterns of communication. The issues pertaining to the polity, economy, entertainment, socio- culture have entered the life world of these youth and they are sensitizing on the concerns of the society in totality.

**INTERNET ACTIVATION ON PHONE**



**CHART 4.9**

As mentioned above that internet is the most significant technological innovation that plays a substantial role in the growth of globalization. Chart 4.1 data confirms that are considerably a large number of youth who own Smartphone as a personal gadget. In this reference the youth were asked if they have activated interned on their phone or not and what are the major applications that they use on their phone.

As shown in Chart 4.9 there are majority of the youth who have got internet activated on their phone. This shows the need of interaction and connectivity among the youth. This is adding a new dimension to the process of globalization.

As seen in the below Chart 4.10, the respondents are portraying an exposure and availability to almost all the prevailing social networking applications in the society. This accounts for the global reach of the youth and their connectivity to the network society. (Castells: 2005).

**APPLICATIONS USED ON PHONE**



**CHART 4.10**

The activation and usage of these applications is contributing to the increasing connectivity and all-time availability of the global youth. This is making the youth omnipresent who can be contacted and communicated anywhere, anytime- beyond time and space.

In the light of the above interpretation and analysis it can be avowed that the youth in Lucknow portrays a growing inclination towards internet and its usage. The data reveals that this middle-class youth is not only aware but also well equipped with the global means of communication. As discussed earlier that the youth are the agents of globalization and such an exposure to these global forces illustrates their connectivity and global presence. The youth have an access to almost every aspect of internet and in fact internet has been ingrained in their everyday life. As analysed through the above charts informal sector of the youth is under heavy influence of this new media and their everyday social life is being shaped and guided by various facets of the internet and the social networking sites. The continuous evolution of the internet is enhancing their use of digital communication tools like Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp etc. Internet for them is not only a means of communication but an inevitable part of their lives. Shopping, banking, knowledge and information sharing, online trading, reservations and bookings, payment of bills etc. are just a click away for them. These uses show that the internet is being routinized in their everyday socio-personal world.

The emerging nature of the youth is entrenched into the new media. The youth not only uses the new media but it has become a part and parcel of their culture – it becomes a cultural system also. In this sense the youth can be considered as a social counterpart or one of the social counterparts of the global communications. This youth has educationally acquired professional competence and inspecting such kind of youth would not only help in knowing and describing the impact of the new media but would also help in exploring the emerging trends of the growth and expansion of the global media. Thus, the new media and the youth are getting intricately interwoven.

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