"A CSR APPROACH TO CONTROL - ADDICTION OF YOUTH TOWARDS GADGETS"

Mrs. Monika Sharma[#1,] Mr. Upender Sethi[#2]
[#1]Assistant Professor, The Technological Institute of Textile & Sciences, Bhiwani,
[#2]Associate Professor, Dept of Commerce, Govt(P.G.) College, Ambala Cantt

Abstract: **Today's young generation are considered to be the centre and the basis for future generations because of several reasons. Jean McDougall and David Chantrey (2004) are of the opinion that this generation between the ages of 8 and 14 years are the controlling entities of the future. From business point of view this segment of market is considered to be the most profitable segment because they have ample of money to spend on. They are growing fast; know their own minds and growing with distinctive attitude. They have obsession towards advanced gadgets and they even can't think of their life without cell-phones in their pockets, laptop bags on their shoulders and their day doesn't start without chatting on 'facebook' or 'orkut'.   Although advance technologies are quite essential in this fast moving era but addiction to such gadgets can cause health hazards as well as social imbalances.**

Keywords: **Youth culture, Addiction to gadgets, Mp3 Players, Facebook ,Social imbalances.**

I.   INTRODUCTION: YOUTH CULTURE

The present Youth culture is the result of individualization of identity, age, race, gender and class. The multicultural immigration and different ethnic backgrounds have greatly influenced the perception and interests of youths. For example in place of the 1990's clubs and raves the pubs have become the focus of many young people's social lives between the age group of 18 and 21 years replacing the tradition of discos and dance halls of previous generations. Other trends include going out of town over the weekends, engaging in fashion competitions and differentiating through outfits. However, the most important trend that changed the youth culture is the emergence of electronic media within their homes. The video games followed by the popularity of television have resulted in "potato couch" youth sedentary. Their ways of life involve staying at home, viewing television shows like reality TV, fashion shows and celebrities' news. Television has become the source for knowledge and entertainment. Further, with the popularity of the Internet the young individuals are becoming uncommunicative with their family members; engage in video or computer games or surfing the Internet. The computer games have, to some extent, replaced comics and magazines which youths read earlier. Instead readership is focused on graphic novels or comics. Among females, publication consumption previously remained dominant in the realm of fashion and looks. The female youths today are entrenched with girl power and they no longer scream at pop stars. They are well informed about growing up to be adult and more focused on what they want. They read because they want to know, be prepared and become confident about themselves. Thus the readership trend of popular publication shifts from fashion to exclusives and editorials on sexual relationships, drugs, law and teenage crisis. Youth identities are more commonly associated with pleasure and leisure, but they are crossed by other crucial factors, e.g. gender, ethnicity, region, and class.

Influential personalities like parents, academicians and peers put pressure on them to develop dynamic and symbiotic relationship with children conceptualization and the reality. They are not given the chance for theorization nor are they interacted through developmental socialization which makes them less keen on the theoretical context of their behaviour and roles within the society. They are no more interested in painstaking reading habits, contemplation or deliberation of their actions due to decreasing interactions at school. Youths are found more interested in the "action" rather than the thinking and decision making process itself. It is, therefore, expected that there would be a decline in readership of any print matter that do not have attractive headlines and photos to capture their short attention span.The National Reading Campaign, NIE 2002 analyzed that during their free time these youths were keen on watching television than any other activity. The second most ranked activity had been involvement in sports for the boys and fashion for girls. During the same era, the reading material for children had been the daily newspapers or magazines. The household subscription, therefore, satisfied the reading needs of the family members including youths. The contents of these medium however, greatly differed from the interests of the youths as the contents had been designed for mothers, fathers and older citizens. The only alternative that youths have had been the books or comics from the school library or friends. Most turned to the television for

informational needs. Younger individuals between the ages of 9 to 17 developed the habit of reading comics instead of the daily or Sunday newspapers. Evidently, the only interesting section in the newspapers had been the comics. "The changes in children's general interests are mirrored in the changes of their newspaper interests. Not surprisingly, children respond to different things in the paper than their mothers do. Comics, sports, and puzzles and games arouse roughly twice as much interest from children as from mothers. Entertainment-related features get roughly parallel interest. For all other types of material, children's interest levels are very substantially lower, though as they get older, they come closer to the adult level. At every age, children who read the newspaper more frequently are more responsive to its actual news content, though no less interested in its entertainment material, than children who read less frequently." (Press and Public 1998). It is also interesting to note that young individuals when exposed to reading environment tend to develop readership. For example Press and Public (1989) also indicate that children exposed to school newspapers tend to develop strong interests in readership, self improvement and progressive educational achievements. Survey by the Newspapers in Education in the US indicate that more children like to express themselves and let others hear of their opinion, views, deliberate in the form of newspapers while those who read newspapers like reading about others of the same age groups.[1]. The development of newspapers in education programs in the US has successfully anticipated this behavior among by developing newspapers specifically designed for the youngsters. These papers are government funded and sold at half price as the program coordinators realize young individuals do not have enough money to buy subscription. The programs involved training of young staff to become reporters and writers at school levels, and motivating them to take out newspapers of national standards to be distributed to the students in schools. The variability of the programs are carried out by grades and interests inherent in the school subjects, issues on career planning, history, government, economics and a variety of other subjects. From these programs the authority expected: "People who have had more schooling are more likely to report childhood exposure to newspapers both at home and at school. It is, therefore, not surprising to find that childhood exposure is also linked to adult newspaper reading habits. Of those who had the paper at home as children, 70% are currently frequent readers, and 67% are subscribers. Of those who did not have the paper at home, 56% are regular readers and 49%, subscribers. Today's frequent readers are also more likely to mention more sections that they looked at as children (2.1, compared with 1.8 for infrequent readers), especially adult-oriented material like sports and women's features and the Sunday magazine." (qt. Press and Public 1989).[2]. The interests and the demand for different categories of reading contents vary with the level of their maturity. The daily readership of college going students would differ from those who go to junior or high school. Readership is also influenced by the home environment, economic status and the social background.

II. ADDICTION TO GADGETS

A. Video Games & Computer Games

Video Games and Computer games can be listed as the gadgets which have influenced the youth the most. Several researches indicate that these games can have a positive effect on the youth's mind. However, sometimes it may cause terrible changes in their behavior. It was seen that playing video games or computer games actually help the young people in concentrating much better. There are games which require you to use your brains and those games may indeed prove to be helpful. It has also been observed that it has a very good impact on the motor skills and spatial skills of today's youth. However these games may also result in the child getting absolutely isolated from the society. There is a tendency to get engrossed in the games, and forget everything else. Further, they may also tend to confuse between the virtual world and real world.[3]. This is another worry as because these things are meant to be past times, and it should be never preferred over family or social commitments. It is, therefore, important to remain aware of your responsibilities while using your favorite gadget.

Aggressive behavior, long-term depression and eye problems are known to be some of the major illnesses found in children who are addicted to video games. Other effects of this sort of addiction are poor lifestyle, less social life, lower health status- mentally and physically. Children tend to get hooked on to those games which have more graphic reality and it leads to obesity, which is found to be one of the principal problems among children today.

Of course all the video game players are not victims to such problems. Causes for such an addiction vary from person to person but on similar lines. Children without siblings tend to seek companionship from video games, but even children with siblings tend to get addicted to it. This is because they either don't indulge in outdoor activities or see their friends with such video games. The reason for such addiction is endless.

A recent study on Indian children from upper middle class families suggests that when kids return from school they tend to find peace in video games. When you get too addicted to it, then all you're thinking of during school hours is which game am I

going to play once I am back home, from where do I have to continue, etc. School going children must involve themselves in a creative usage of mind.[4].

B. *MP3 Players*

MP3 players, another popular gadget among the youth, also have its pros and cons. It may soothe your soul when you are doing nothing, or even doing some work which is less intensive. Listening to music may also help to concentrate better at times. However, listening to music for long periods of time in a high volume may cause hearing problems in the near future which is extremely dangerous.

C. *Mobile Phones*

The telecom companies try to outdo each other with attractive and cheap SMS plans offering hundreds of free messages daily. It has transformed the communication patterns of youngsters in India. A survey was conducted by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) between January and April and 2,000 and youngsters from 12 to 20 years of age were interviewed in cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Chandigarh, Kolkata, Patna and others. According to the survey 60 percent of youngsters choose the mobile phones as their preferred mode of communication. "Nearly 70 percent of Delhi's youngsters prefer messaging over other forms of communication like face-to-face conversations, voice calling, social networking, instant messaging and e-mailing, whereas the national figure stands at 60 percent," said the survey.[5] Youngsters consider texting as a more secretive form of communication as it can be carried out under the nose of their parents, teachers, guardians and other figures in authority and was an economical option too, said the survey.[6].

The scrutiny found that in Chandigarh 71% teens wanted their handsets to be equipped with MP3 to play music, while 70% wanted camera phones. "The majority of kids are most interested in multi-functioning cell phones as 71% seek wireless phones that convert into MP3 players, while 85% want handsets that transform into digital cameras.[7]. They use their phones to send email to friends, read books, listen to music and surf the internet, as well as for chatting," discovers the study.

Youngsters suffer from gadget withdrawal symptom A new study has found that the youngsters seem to be so obsessed with laptops and mobiles that they suffer from gadget withdrawal symptoms when deprived of their modern devices.[8]. The 'Daily Mail' further reported that the above study concluded that in fact the withdrawal symptoms so experienced by the youngsters are comparable with those of drug addicts going "cold turkey". The study focused on people aged between 17 and 23

in ten countries, including the UK, where about 150 students at Bournemouth University spent about 24 hours banned from using phones, social networking sites, the Internet and TV.[9]. They were allowed to use landline phones or read books and were asked to keep a diary. One in five reported feelings of withdrawal similar to an addiction while 11 per cent said they were confused or felt like a failure. Nearly one in five (some 19 per cent) reported feelings of distress and 11 per cent felt isolated. Just 21 per cent said they could feel the benefits of being unplugged. [10].

III. INTERNET-ADDICTED YOUTH ENGAGE IN OTHER FORMS OF SELF-INJURY

A recently published survey of Chinese adolescents from Guangzhou has found that signs of Internet addiction strongly correlate with various forms of self-injury which is similar due to impulse control disorders. The survey involved over 1,600 high school students, aged 13-18 years and the questions covered were the information about human behavior, demographic information, additional influences on mental health as well as two sets of queries on Internet addiction and self-injurious behavior. The Internet addiction series came from a formal Internet Addiction Test. In terms of Internet addiction scores, only 10 members of the survey population wound up in the "severe" category, which would have made statistically significant results difficult to achieve.[11].

IV. USE OF FACEBOOK

There are two most popular websites for youngsters, i.e. 'Facebook' and 'YouTube'. The use of 'Facebook' repeatedly comes up in discussions about Internet safety, age-appropriate exposure, and student online behavior. Various schools of UK have different policies for using or accessing Facebook and most of their concerns are quite common. Their prime concern is that younger and younger children are using this adult social network. It has been observed that four years ago it was rare to learn of a child under 7th grade with an account. However, now for the first time, 4th graders began reporting to us that they had Facebook accounts.

A. *Using Facebook takes time. Often, a LOT of time!*

The greatest motivating factor for children to use technology in grades 7 and up is to connect to others, i.e. to socialize. The school authorities have concerns for children and teens today growing up in a world where they are wired 24/7 without a break to satisfy their irresistible need to connect with their peers. For such kids it is quite difficult to disengage from their social life and they have almost no time

for their studies and their routine activities. For some, it even raises their anxiety level to be without their cell phones for a few hours and this is not a healthy practice for them.

B. A false sense of privacy:

Use of facebook creates a false sense of privacy along with the feeling of anonymity and lack of social responsibility. Many students post embarrassing, humiliating, denigrating and hurtful content in both text, photos and videos.[12]. They should understand that *NOTHING IS PRIVATE* online, especially their social networks. Students often ask how can anyone possibly get into their private Facebook pages. Here are the most common methods and a link to a sample article about each:

1)   *Security and software flaws are exposed. Software is hacked:* Accounts are phished when users are tricked into clicking an email or IM link taking them to fake login pages. Once phished, scammers use various applications to suck out personal information from a user's entire network of friends. Scammers try using the phished information, including the login password, to access banks and credit card accounts because they know that most people have one password for all their accounts.[13].

Perhaps the most common reason that the private information of teenagers is exposed because they are easily accept the friendly requests from strangers. Some research and informal studies suggest that teens allow into their Facebook networks 44% - 87% of the strangers who contact them. This trick is best described as the "wolf in sheep's clothing."[14]. Many kids, especially girls, have a difficult time saying "no" to a friendly request.

2)   *There are 1000's of scams targeting teens in their social networks, especially Facebook and MySpace:* Although the students are able to use the advanced technology but they are immature and can be easily manipulated in spite of the fact that they would never agree to it as they think that they are smart enough. During late last fall it was found that the accounts of many teens were phished and the phishers sent out posts from those accounts to their friends. There were some photos along with a link to the website. The website showed hazy photos in the background that were hard to make out and appeared to be somewhat pornographic. In another scam that targeted MySpace in the last couple of years, more than 14,000 users were tricked by fake MySpace pages into visiting music web sites to purchase music for $2-3 per album. Instead of getting music, the site charged their credit cards $300-600.[15]. Kids are easily fooled. They want to believe what is said to them and they are made to feel that the others too believe the same.

3)   *Spyware and Adware installations are very serious concerns:* Giving kids access to social networks in the school environments is very harmful. The students should be told that nothing is "Free" and everything usually has a price when it comes to the Internet. They need to be taught how to try to determine if software, such as a Facebook Add-on, is likely a disguised piece of malware.

4)   *It must be acknowledged that screens act as a moral disconnect for many of the students:* Every day online there are thousands of kids who say mean and hurtful things because they can. They are increasingly living their social lives in a world without caring, loving adults watching out for them, without expectations for their behaviour and without boundaries. Research shows that children grow up healthiest in a world with love, communication, structure and boundaries. These qualities hardly exist online for the children/teens. Instead, harassing language is normalized, the sexualization of girls/women is common-place, and the lack of supervision creates an "anything goes" wild-wild-west. The students need to learn to be nice and kind to others online. They need to be respectful and thoughtful about what they say and how they act online, just as in real life. They should be told that disengaging from social responsibility while using telecommunications is not an acceptable behaviour.

5)   *The students have very little knowledge about how much they are being marketed to; how their purchasing decisions and attitudes are being manipulated; how their personal information is used, and even how valuable that personal information is:* Most of the students don't understand the damage that can be caused from identity theft and impersonation. They are heavily targeted on Facebook and their data is heavily "scrubbed" and used. Facebook's announcement about Beacon in November 2007, brought such a huge negative assault from users that Mark Zuckerberg had to back-step and tell users that they were automatically opted OUT, rather than IN, as planned.[16]. Most users saw Beacon as a privacy nightmare. The students are required to become more media-savvy, understand the value of personal information and how to protect it.

6)   *The research shows that children and teens are increasingly using telecommunications technologies, including Facebook, to avoid difficult face-to-face conversations.*

7)   *C*hildren are increasingly turning to making friendships and building relationships online. **Socialization skills in children are best learned in real life. Children are far too inexperienced to use telecommunications tools to make friends and build**

relationships online in a healthy and safe manner.

8)   The meaning of the word 'friend' is changing for students and this change puts them at risk in several ways: **The meaning of the word 'friend' is changing for students. The friends in their Facebook account may be in hundreds but most of them will be complete strangers.**

In addition, during the last few years the schools have been welcoming an influx of a new generation of teacher. These younger teachers are typically more comfortable with technology because they've grown up with it. This also presents some challenges as well. The schools must consider setting policies for teachers regarding the use of social networks like Facebook and should set guidelines for the possible social interaction of teachers with their students in sites such as Facebook. Many independent schools are currently debating these questions.

V. CONCLUSION

The Internet is constantly changing along with the ways the kids are using it. From recent visits to some independent schools, it has been learned that the interest for use of internet is constantly rising among children which is a great cause of concern. Some middle and high school students have begun to discover online live broadcast TV, known as "social broadcasting." BlogTV.com is one such site where a visitor is able to use a built-in video camera to broadcast him or herself live on the Internet. Anyone can stop by, enter a chat window and anonymously interact with the person broadcasting. As we can imagine, this technology can have some serious negative consequences for some children and teens as it is used without any controls, standards or boundaries. For some of the students, using this technology can be irresistible, especially younger children who see themselves as being on real TV. Sites like Facebook, Twitter and Bebo shorten attention spans, encourage instant enjoyment and make young people more self-centred.

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