

**MOBILE PHONE ADDICTION AMONG
UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGE STUDENTS OF
GUWAHATI METROPOLITAN AREA: A STUDY**

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ABSTRACT

One of the crucial and most important communication technologies of 21st Century is the emerging fast and vast trend of usage of mobile phones. In terms of personal communication, it has replaced and surpassed all the communication mediums in today's world. Though it has made our lives easier in various facets of our life but its long term usage has brought upon various problems associated with human behaviour and psychology. According to recent findings, mobile phone usage is one of the major non-drug addictions crippling our society. Ranging from societal problems, psychological problems to health problems, it has brought upon a profound impact on our lives. Especially the youngsters and teenagers are getting violently addicted to this communication medium. Life has become hard to live without the presence of mobile phones. Various types of facilities available in mobile phones ranging from internet to numerous applications are catering to both positive as well as negative sides of the society, which in turn is directly influencing the people specially the youth at large. Not only in India, the popularity of mobile phones can be felt all over the world and the growth of a global youth culture around mobile phones is an emerging topic that should be dealt upon very seriously. Many researches on usage of mobile phones have been conducted in developed nations but a concrete solution regarding safety in relation to usage is yet to be formulated by the law makers. This study adds to the growing arena of research by providing information on the use of mobile phones by college students under Art and Science Streams in Guwahati Metropolitan area.

Key Words: Mobile Phones, Communication Medium, Psychology, Addiction, Guwahati Metropolitan Area

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Introduction

One of the latest innovations in Science and Technology is the advent of mobile phones which has become a communication life line of the society. During the last one and a half decade, the usage of mobile phones in the society has increased tremendously in Indian scenario. The use of mobile phones has virtually affected not only society's accessibility, but also showed its power in various social activities and hence has become the centre point in communication technology of the world. The launching of various smart phones with latest applications is not only generating interest amongst the adults but also the students. The students are seen to be very eager to handle smart phones for various purposes, be it academic or non-academic. Though, according to rules and guidelines, usage of mobile phones are strictly prohibited in college campus, but it has been observed that almost all the students do take their mobile phones to the college. Due to easy access of information and knowledge, the students find mobile phones much handier than a desktop computer with internet access. But of late, many of the students not only use mobile for useful purpose but also for leisure playing online games, browsing social sites, listening to music and viewing movies etc. Due to lack of awareness, some of the students are going astray and doing various types of cyber crimes which are hindering the development of a healthy society. It has also found that constant use of mobile phones is becoming an addiction which directly or indirectly has a profound effect on their academic and social life. Various types of problems like lack of class participation, homework and studying as well as psychological and emotional turmoil are to be seen amongst the students who are quite addicted with their mobile phones. Lack of self esteem with related conditions and types of health disorders linked with high usage of mobile devices is a serious matter and should be humanely dealt upon by the government as well as the society for making each student a responsible citizen of the nation. The present study is quite relevant with the changing scenario; the Indian society is facing today. Much needed awareness and peer discussions are necessary to find a balance between the usage of mobile phones for betterment of an individual and society at large. Parents should be much careful while dealing with their children and should be always vigilant on the nature and sudden behavioural change of their wards. Though, there was minimal distraction and problem in the era of land line phones, the emergence of mobile phones ushered a complete change in the educational scenario. Hence present study is an attempt to relate various dimensions which are getting affected due to usage of mobile phones amongst the students.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the effect of Mobile Phones on academic performance of students.
2. To study the impact of Mobile Phones on social life and interpersonal relationships of the students.
3. To study the effect of Mobile Phones on self-esteem of the students.
4. To study the impact of Mobile Phones on the health of the students.

Hypothesis of the Study

1. There is a positive effect of Mobile phones on the academic performance of the students.
2. There are no significant differences observed on the usage of mobile phones and its impact on social life and interpersonal relationships of the students.
3. Mobile phones have got no effect on the self-esteem of the students.
4. Prolonged usage of mobile phones has a negative effect on the health of the students.

Review of Literature

Various researches on mobile phone usage and its impact on the society have been conducted by numerous scholars around the world. In developing world, lots of work on positive and negative side of mobile phones is yet to be done in comparison to the developed world. According to **Rich Ling (2003)**, the mobile phone has fundamentally affected our society, accessibility, safety and security, co-ordination of social and business activities. Mobile phone has not only affected the society at large, but it has also shown its impact on educational system. According to **Barker, Krull and Mallinson (2006)**, the impact of mobile phone technologies on learning are portability, collaboration and motivation enhancing students, parents and teachers' education system. Though there are positive sides on usage of mobile phones, but various researches indicates that prolong use of mobile phones cause health hazards. According to Health Evidence Network (**HEN synthesis report (2006)**), initiated and coordinated by the WHO Regional Office for Europe, a number of clinical complaints related to the use of mobile phones are reported in the scientific literature like headache, fatigue, sleep disorders, loss of memory, dizziness, feelings of heat or tingling in the auricular (or auditory) area, vertigo, deafness and blurred vision. Apart from physical disorders, many types of behavioral disorders like addiction can be observed amongst the mobile phone users. According to **Choliz (2010)**, he pointed out

that excessive use of and dependency on the cell phone may be considered an addictive disorder. Research on relation of mobile usage with academic performance has shown various types of trends. According to **Jain and Kakkar (2013)**, many mobile phone addicts are people with low self esteem and have difficulty in their social relationships and feel that they need to constantly contact with others. As per the research conducted by Bull, & McCormick (2012), cell phone technology continues its rapid development, the device appears capable of contributing to student learning and improved academic performance like a modern smart phone provides students with immediate, portable access to many of the same education- enhancing capabilities as an internet connected computer, such as online information retrieval, file sharing and interacting with professors and fellow students.

Research Methodology

This paper is primarily based on Survey Method. For this study, a Self Structured Questionnaire was prepared on the basis of the objectives determined. Primary Data has been collected from randomly selected undergraduate students of arts and science streams of deficit colleges under Guwahati Metropolitan area. 100 (Hundred) nos. of samples from 2nd, 4th and 6th Semester were collected for the study. Data are systematically analysed and interpreted with the help of statistical methods.

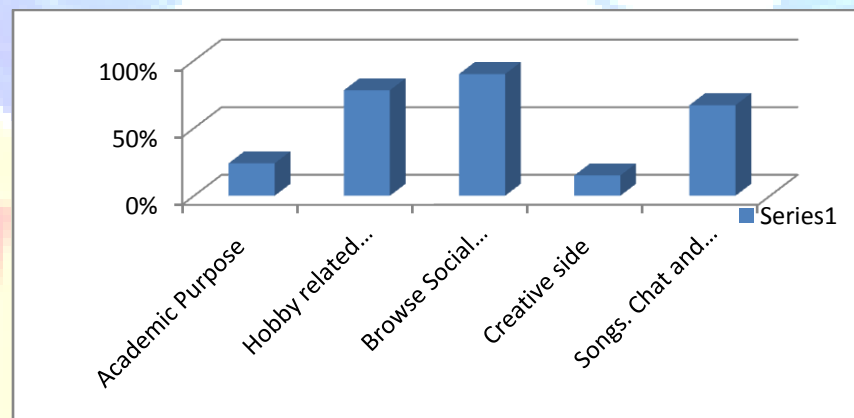
Secondary data were collected primarily from journals, books and internet sources etc.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

In this study, a self structured questionnaire was prepared on the basis of five dimensions ranging from General, Academic Performance, Social Life and Interpersonal Relationships, Self Esteem and Health of the students in relation to the usage of mobile phones. All total 100 undergraduate students from deficit colleges of Guwahati Metropolitan Area were randomly selected (50 from Arts and 50 from Science Stream) and Questionnaires were distributed for the study.

In this study, questions were prepared on the basis of five dimensions to measure the impact and effect of Mobile phones on the various dimensions mentioned above. The age of the students selected for the study fall under 19 to 21 years and majority of the students from Arts stream were girls (72%) and majority of students were boys in Science stream (61%). During the

survey, 94% of the students were found to have a mobile phone with them and in an answer to a question put forward on number of years they are using mobile phones, the average time period was 4-5 years. As per the latest trend in the market, majority (63%) of the students uses smart phones in contrast to the minority of the students who are using ordinary mobile phones. Apart from the basic usage like talking and messaging, 57% of the smart phone users have internet connection in comparison to just 18% of the internet users under ordinary mobile phone users. Out of the 63 students who use smart phones, they generally browse search engines like Google, WhatAapp and various utility apps through internet. In a question on the various activities that they perform through mobile phones, 24% of students revealed using their phones on academic purpose, 78% on hobby related activities, an outstanding level of 90% used their phones basically to browse through social sites, around 15% used it to excel their creative side and majority 67% of the 100 students surveyed used it for listening to songs, chatting and playing online games. In a question on financial aspect, 56% of the students spend around 500 to 700 rupees per month as average monthly bill for mobile phone usage, 25% pays around 700-100 rupees per month and the rest (19%) paid much higher.



Percentage of various mobile users for different purposes

The question put forward on the impact of mobile phone on their academic performance disclosed that 35% of the students agreed on the negative impact of mobile phones on their academic performance while the majority 61% uttered their disagreement and a mere 4% of the students remained undecided. Due to user friendly internet on mobile, the students can easily search various answers and solutions to particular academic problems. With the change of time, various types of addictions are crippling our society and students are the worst sufferers. In

relation to a question put forward on the addiction of mobile usage during examination time, majority (52%) of the students agreed that they are addicted to their mobile even in their examination time. Around 23% of the students were addicted to mobile usage during class hours. An important question was asked about the hours of usage of mobile phone during 24 hours where average comes out to be 5-6 hrs. It is really a matter of deep thought and introspection.

A society thrives on various social and interpersonal relationships and this relation between individuals are affected by numerous factors. The progress of the society depends on the mutual relationships among the members of the society. Mutual understanding among the members as well as their face to face interaction strengthens the bond of friendship and faith. In today's world, usage of electronic media, be it mobile phone, email or other gadgets are inflicting a tremendous impact on these social relationships. A question on the usage of mobile phone as a medium for developing social relationships, 92% of the students agreed that mobile phone aids in the development of social relationships and the rest 8% were unsure. For a healthy overall growth, a happy relationship with the family is very crucial. Majority of the 63% uttered that their mobile phones is not hampering in their maintaining a healthy relationship with their family but 32% agreed that it does have a negative impact and the rest 5% were not sure about it. Sharing and discussing any type of problems with near and dear ones help in finding a amicable solution. A question on the usage of mobile phones to share and discuss problems revealed that 78% of the students agreed that it has a positive effect in finding a solution through sharing of views and ideas regarding any type of problem with their near and dear one, while 22% asserted that no positive side of sharing to find a solution through mobile usage can be found. In a reply to a question on effect of mobile phone on maintaining a healthy relationship with friends and community, a majority (67%) of the students agreed that no harmful effects through mobile usage can be found.

To rise and excel in life, self-esteem and confidence plays a very important role in an individual. Various problems get eradicated when a person is full of self confidence and have strong self-esteem and determination. Sets of questions were put forward to the students regarding self-esteem, where 83% disagreed that constant use of mobile phones are hampering their self – esteem. Though majority of them disagree that mobile phones are not hampering their self-

esteem, but it was revealed that 65% of the students lacked self confidence to perform public speaking and 56% thought it much easier to share ideas through mobile phones rather than face to face interaction. Now a day, majority of the students are having a nuclear family and they generally have a less chance to share their views and problems as well as joys and sorrows with their peer groups. It results to various emotional as well psychological problems and it has a negative effect on the development of self-esteem. In a question on likings to stay alone and enjoy the use of mobile in that comfort zone, 43% of the students expressed their likings to stay in that zone and 52% uttered in negative and the rest 5% were undecided.

For an all round development of a student, there should be a perfect balance in his/her physical, mental, emotional, psychological and social side. Out of the 100 students surveyed, majority of 73% faced no such major health problems and the rest 27% expressed some types of problems. Out of the 27%, they are facing various problems like headache, insomnia, emotional problems, sleeping disorders, restlessness etc. In a question on development of depression trough use of mobile phones, majority (62%) declined any type of depression due to use of mobile phones whereas 8% agreed some type of depression and the others were not sure. In terms of addiction to various types of utilities through mobile phone, 58% of the students showed some types of addiction for using WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and various social sites etc. 22% of the students showed no addiction and the rest (20%) were undecided.

Hypothesis 1

It has been found from the study that usage of mobile phones generally have a positive impact on the academic performance of the students. As such, the hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 2

It has been observed that majority of the students agreed that there is no negative impact of mobile phones on the social life and interpersonal relationships of the students. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 3

From this study, it has been observed that majority of the students agree that mobile phones have got no effect on the self-esteem of the students but a considerable number of students expressed lack of self confidence in terms of public speaking. Hence the hypothesis is partly accepted.

Hypothesis 4

The results showed that a number of students suffer from various types of illness due to usage of mobile phones and are addicted to constant browsing of various social sites. As per the analysis, it has been found that no such major illness has been found in majority of the students. Hence, the hypothesis is partly accepted.

Conclusion

One of the latest tools of modern communication is the advent of mobile phones in the market. It has resulted in a tremendous impact in every aspect of the society, be it relationships, education, societal behaviours to health problems in a nutshell. Though mobile phone has lots of advantages in relation to easy access to information and communication but it has caused various types of negative impacts especially amongst the students. The lack of awareness is creating multifaceted problems ranging from physical and behavioral illness as well as poor interpersonal relationships in some cases. Though majority of the students agree that use of mobile phones has improved the quality of academic performance through easy access to information through internet but non judicious use with a trend to use mobile phones for leisure purposes is hampering the overall growth of an individual. Any type of technology may be a boon or a bane for the society and mobile phones are no exception. Though it has given easy contact of the students with their parents during college hours and can remain connected as well as easy information access but its constant use has shown various types of classroom distractions and reduced cognitive ability as well as destructive behavior in lots of cases. The study was primarily focused to know about the impact of mobile phones on academic performance, relationships, self-esteem and confidence in addition to health upon the students. To sum up, technology helps when it's a tool- not when it is an unhealthy addiction.

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