

“Social Media Networks- Operating And Influencing The Lives Of Target Audience”

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ABSTRACT

A series of drastic changes have been seen in the internet and software technology ever since its inception on Indian platform. These developments have given a new dimension to the online world and one such new trend is Social networking. Social networking has exploded as a section of online discourse where people form their own world by making friends , catching up with the old ones , sharing photos , contents , liking them and that too at a very high speed. This growth can be analyzed on its own by recording the day by day growing popularity of Facebook, Twitter, My Space and Digg among the younger generation. According to Wikipedia Social Networking is defined as “A social networking service is an online service, platform, or a site that focuses on facilitating the building of social networks or social relations among people who, for example, share interests, activities, backgrounds or real-life connections. A social network service consists of a representative of each user (often a profile), his/her social links, and a variety of additional services. Most social network services are web-based and provide a means for users to interact over the Internet, such as e-mail and instant messaging. Online community services are sometimes considered as a social network service, though in a broader sense, the social network service usually means an individual-centered service whereas online community services is group-centered. Social networking sites allow users to share ideas, activities, events, and interests within their individual networks.” In this paper I want to show the changing facets of this online networking , how technology can work as both curse and a boon for society and academics how it is affecting the lives of the people in good and bad ways and how we can use it for the betterment of the society.

Keywords: Internet, social networking, friends,web,community services,online

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1. Introduction

Researchers were conducted from long ago on how the internet can be used on a societal platform to bring people together and suggestions were given to facilitate a newly improved form of computer mediated social network. Social networking has seen its birth in the 90's with the launch of sites like Geocities.com and Classmate.com giving a platform to the people to post and publish photos and upload their profiles. These sites bought them together giving them an opportunity to think together and work in groups. Online services like Usenet, APRANET, LISTERV and BBA were used to support social networking via

computer mediated communication. Early social networking at WWW began in a much generalized online communities such as TheGlobe.com (1995), Geocities (1994) and Tripod.com (1995). Earlier basis of social networking sites was to bring people together to chat with each other. These sites also provided them with a platform to share personal information and pictures, after a brief span of time Classmate.com took a different approach by linking people to each other via linking web addresses. In late 90's profiles of the users became the center of attraction of these sites allowing users to communicate with others of the same category, new developments took place briefly and altogether new generation of these sites popped up like Sixdegree.com (1997) followed by Makeoutclub.com(1999), Hubculture(2002), Friendster(2002) and MySpace(2003). MySpace became so popular among users that in the year 2005 it was reported that MySpace has more Viewership than Google. Every Social networking site from its birth tried to customize their services according to the needs of the customers and eventually after a span of time people used to get bored of them and start trying their hand on something new .The reason behind the sudden rise and death of these social networking sites can be somewhere attributed to the human nature. people when see some new development in the technology they tend to get attracted by it and after a certain period of time by doing the same work repeatedly the attraction tend to fade away and then they search for trying hands on something new as is described in the Diffusion of innovation theory given by Everett Rogers in 1962 where it states that whenever any development takes place it tends to rise till it is spread in every nook and corner of the world and once it is disseminated it stabilizes and eventually makes way for any other new development, no doubt that the people engaged on these sites are their users for a very short span of time but as long as they are their they tend to have a hypnotic behavior towards these sites and these sites in turn operating and influencing each and every social move of them This paper will study on how these social networking sites work, what impact they have on the lives of the people and how people today are getting bind by these sites and framing their social lives around and according to them.

2. Research methodology

- The research is based on primary data, collected and collated through a survey from over a sample of 150 people from different areas. Data was collected through a questionnaire.
- Secondary data was collected from articles published in books, journals, magazines, research papers, newspapers and reports were also incorporated.

3. Review of Literature

3.1. How social media works

Here is a step-by-step process of how a generic social networking website works:

- ✓ A user registers an email address and password with the site, thus creating a unique account. Typically, the site sends a confirmation email to the user's address to validate that person's identity.
- ✓ Next, the user may create his profile. This profile may contain whatever information he/she deems worthy and decides to publish online. He/she may choose, at this point, whether to make his/her profile public or private. A user may change or manipulate

information in his profile whenever he/she so chooses. In this step, the new user can become a member of a number of networks. These networks can be based on high school, hometown, job, church, and any other type of social group.

- ✓ Anyone may search for another user by name or email address, and request to be that user's friend. That user can deny or agree to that friend request.
- ✓ When adding a user as a friend, that new friend can now see your profile, all the personal information the user entered. The new friend can also see any new information the user may post along the way, such as an online journal entry or photographs, which may be posted at any time.
- ✓ Repeat steps four and five. The user will gradually accumulate a large list of friends, effectively adding him/her to the social network.

3.2. Benefits of Social Networking sites

- Platform for group Communication: - Social networking site facilitates open communication where people can talk to each other freely search their friends make new one and exchange information in order to lead enhanced information discovery and delivery.
- Facilitates Surveys and researches: - Expands market research, implements marketing campaigns, delivers communications and directs interested people to specific web sites.
- Gives a good opportunity for marketing products: - Social media provides a good opportunity to the manufacturer to showcase their product and it's an easy vehicle of advertisement beneficial to both the parties as manufacturer gets to showcase each and every product of it in just one roof and the customer can browse through each and every product right at home without taking the pains to go outside.
- Building positive image: - Social media give a platform to people to show their best side and tell the world who you are it also improves the communication skill of people.
- Creates job opportunities: Social media have also worked as a boon to the employers because it gives them a wide range of profiles to choose from the person required for the job.
- Facilitates Discussion: - Social media acts as a pulpit where people can get involved in discussions and have their voice heard. It gives a facility to the people to say against or in favor of the Government plans and policies.
- Poke: Gone are the days where we have to meet people to keep in touch with them but in today's world where everybody is busy with his her own life one is just a poke away. Today you just poke anybody and remind him her of your presence.

3.3. Disadvantages of Social Media

- Hackers platform to experiment: Social media works as an open playground for hackers where these people unethically hack the profiles of different people and get a see through of their personal information which eventually leads to blackmailing and related crimes.

- Scams: - fraudster uses social media as a vehicle for scams where the lure the users with lottery winner or prize winning opportunity and in turn ask for their personal and financial information which in result lead to big scams.
- Wastage of Human resource: Social media engage most of the time with people which decrease their productivity resulting in less interest in work and a loss to the employers. After analyzing the employee engagement to the medium many companies have banned these sites in the office.
- Obscenity: - Social Media sometimes pave way to obscene materials some mischievous people circulate obscene material on websites leading to viruses or infected mentalities.
- Negativity for employees: - As social media give a virtual space to people to chit chat so sometimes in a fit of rage or anger they tend to say negative comments about their employers which leads to disgrace to the company.
- Advent rising to fake identifications:- Today even children less than age of fourteen get registered on these sites by giving the fake date of birth , people with n number of identities attract girls and boys and try to rape their innocence from them . This is the biggest disadvantage of social media leading to rape and depression for the people who fall prey to these fake people.

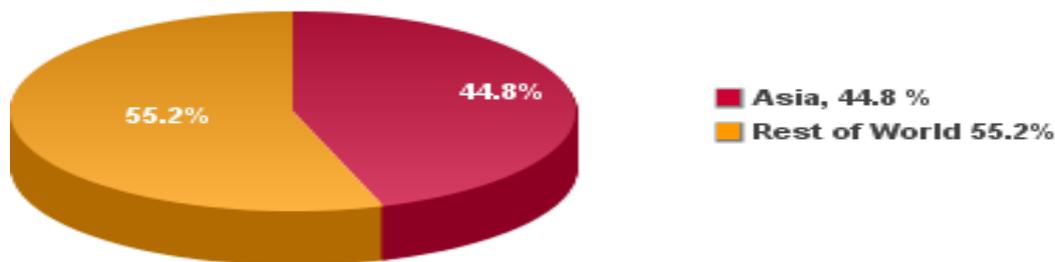
3.4. Recent Statistics

India's association with the Internet started when VSNL (Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited) launched internet services in India in 1995 and after the launch of social media sites this association is growing rapidly. According to a report by the Internet Service Provider Association Of India broadband services in India are growing at a pace of 20% every year and this can be justified by the statistics given below:-

Internet Usage and Population Statistics of India from 1998 to 2012:

YEAR	Users	Population	% Pen.	Usage Source
1998	1,400,000	1,094,870,677	0.1 %	ITU
1999	2,800,000	1,094,870,677	0.3 %	ITU
2000	5,500,000	1,094,870,677	0.5 %	ITU
2001	7,000,000	1,094,870,677	0.7 %	ITU
2002	16,500,000	1,094,870,677	1.6 %	ITU
2003	22,500,000	1,094,870,677	2.1 %	ITU
2004	39,200,000	1,094,870,677	3.6 %	C.I. Almanac
2005	50,600,000	1,112,225,812	4.5 %	C.I. Almanac
2006	40,000,000	1,112,225,812	3.6 %	IAMAI
2007	42,000,000	1,129,667,528	3.7 %	IWS
2009	81,000,000	1,156,897,766	7.0 %	ITU
2010	100,000,000	1,173,108,018	8.5 %	IWS
2011	121,000,000	1,200,193,422	10.5%	IMRB
2012	137,000,000	1,205,073,612	11.4 %	ITU

Internet Users in Asia 2012 Q2



Source: www.internetworldstats.com/stats3.htm
 1,076,681,059 Internet users in Asia estimated for June 30, 2012
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Number of Social Media users in India

Platform	No of Users(In Millions)
Face book	45 Millions
Twitter	15 Millions
LinkedIn	15 Millions
YouTube	20 Millions
Google Plus	13 Millions

Number of times pages viewed by Indians of Social Media

Platform	India page views per month (in millions)
Face book	3809 Millions
Twitter	12.4 Millions
LinkedIn	93.5 Millions
YouTube	1010 Millions
Google Plus	32.3 Millions

Now if we go on the data given above we will find that with every day passing by the IT friendly population of India is growing and the scenario will be totally different after next ten years .As the technology is getting cheaper it is making its way into everybody’s life and India in turn is becoming a hot destination for all the existing and upcoming social networking sites. Social

networking sites if on one side are creating a buzz for good thing other side antisocial elements are using them to commit real world crimes every day we hear some bad and some good stories related to the social networking. If on one side we hear the cases of how people use social networking sites to do something good for the society like Anna Hazare campaign or the Tahrir Square protest by the Egyptians for their democracy on the other side there are some people who use it to befriend girls and rape them eventually or some use it for forgery or scams. It is a well said truth that “Excess of everything is bad” same is happening today with these social platform people have become so engrossed in these sites that their lives

become to revolve around it and eventually they fall prey to fraudsters and anti social elements .Every technology invented by man is for betterment of society but some people use it for their own benefit and make it a curse to society. Everyday whenever we open newspaper every second page is covering and bad incident revolving around social networking site. These social accounts have captured the psychology of human beings and they have become addicted to it .To find out the truth we conducted a research and the findings are as below.

3.5. FINDINGS

Figure 1

Figure 1 indicates that 86% computer literate people engage in social networking whereas 14% don't have an account.

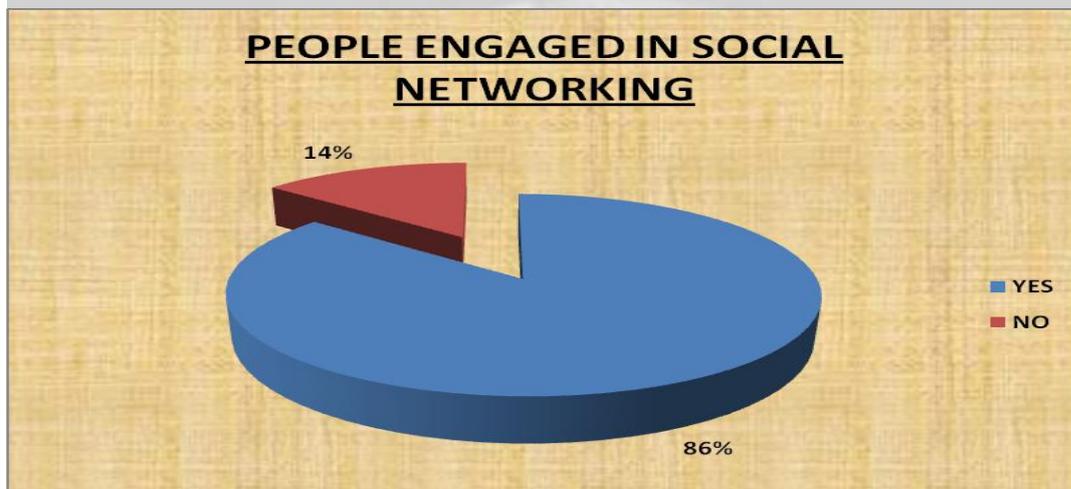


Figure 2

Figure 2 indicates that Facebook is the most popular social networking site followed by LinkedIn, Twitter and Orkut.

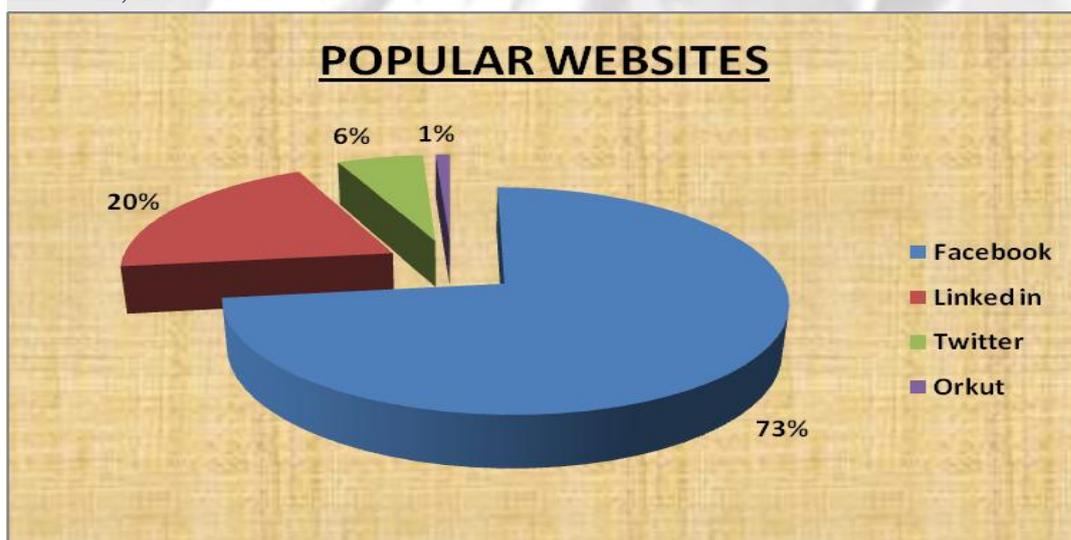


Figure 3

Figure 3 indicates that as many as 69% people open their social networking account many times a day to keep a tab on it.

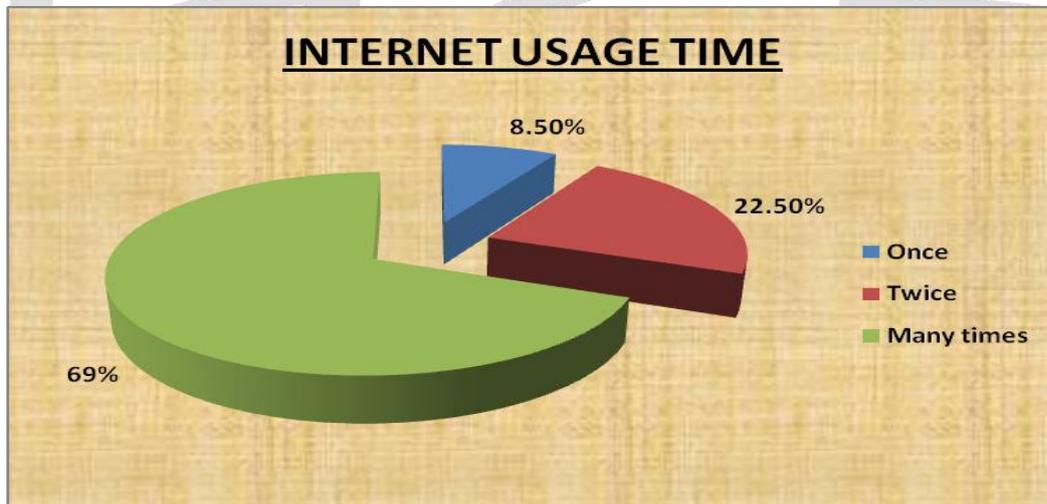


Figure 4

Figure 4 indicates that more than one hour of 68% socially active people is spent on operating their account.

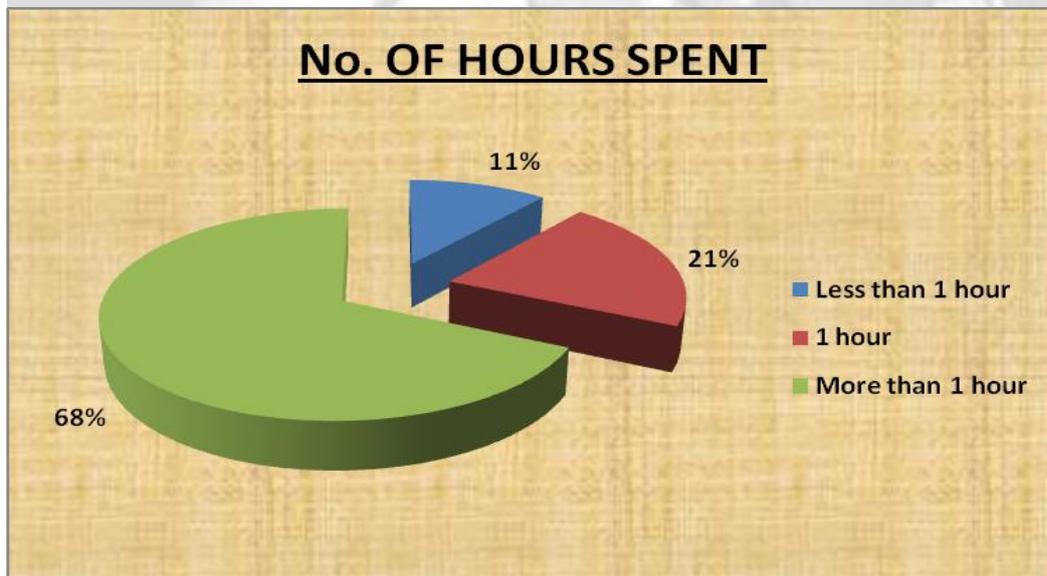


Figure 5

Figure 5 indicates that each and every chat done by 85% socially active people make an impact on their life and thinking in a good or bad way.

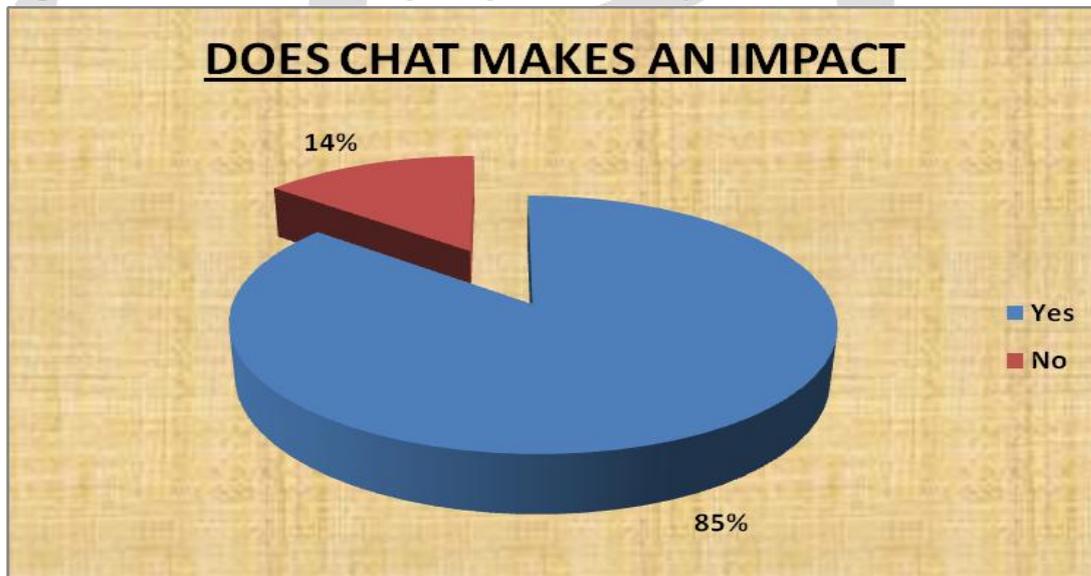


Figure 6

Figure 6 indicate that these social networking sites are influencing the psychology of 70% socially active people.

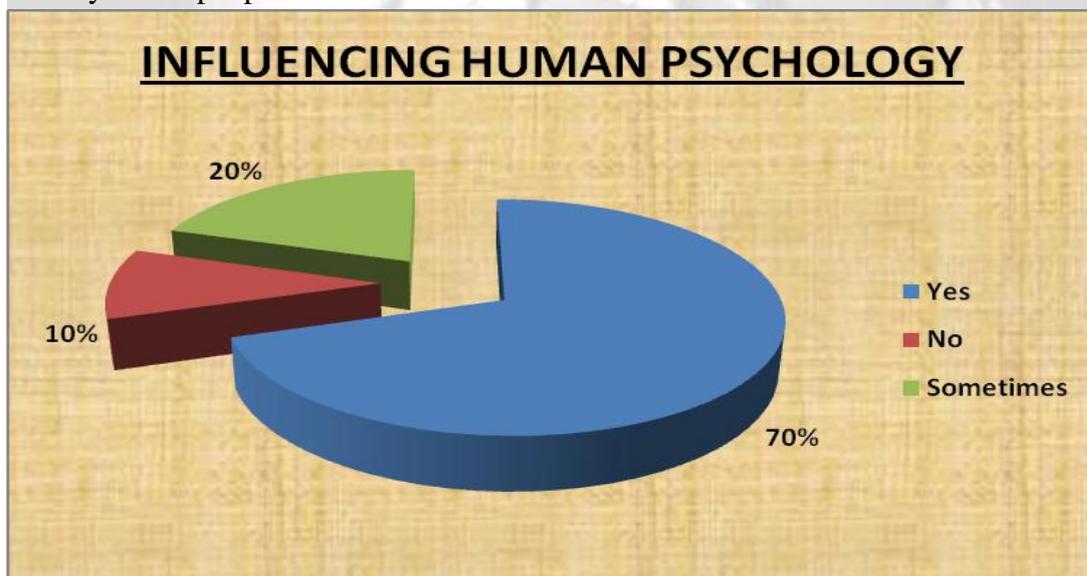


Figure 7

Figure 7 indicate that social activities of 69% socially active people get influenced by their account while only 15% doesnot care about their account in their social life.

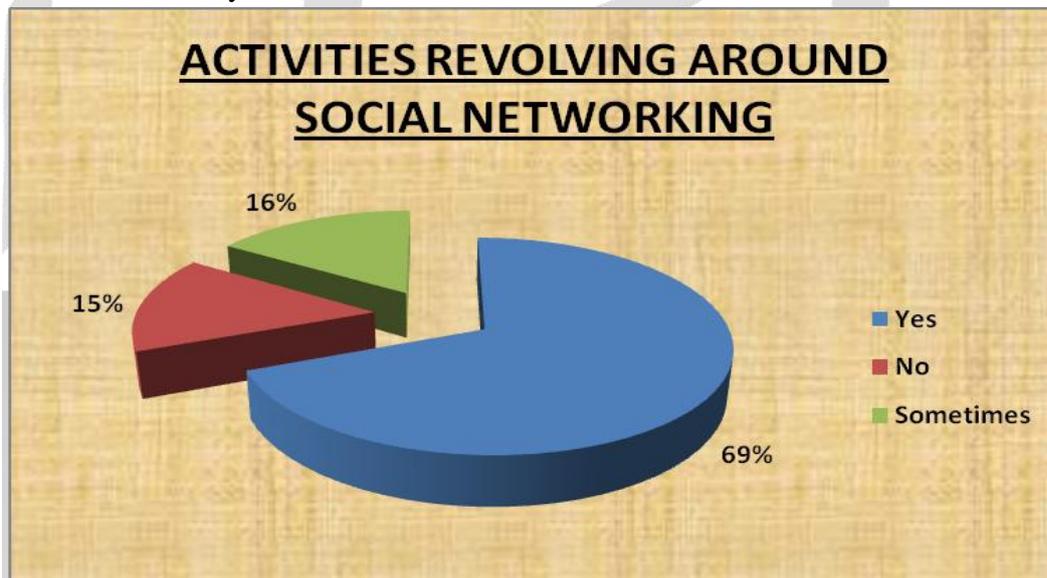
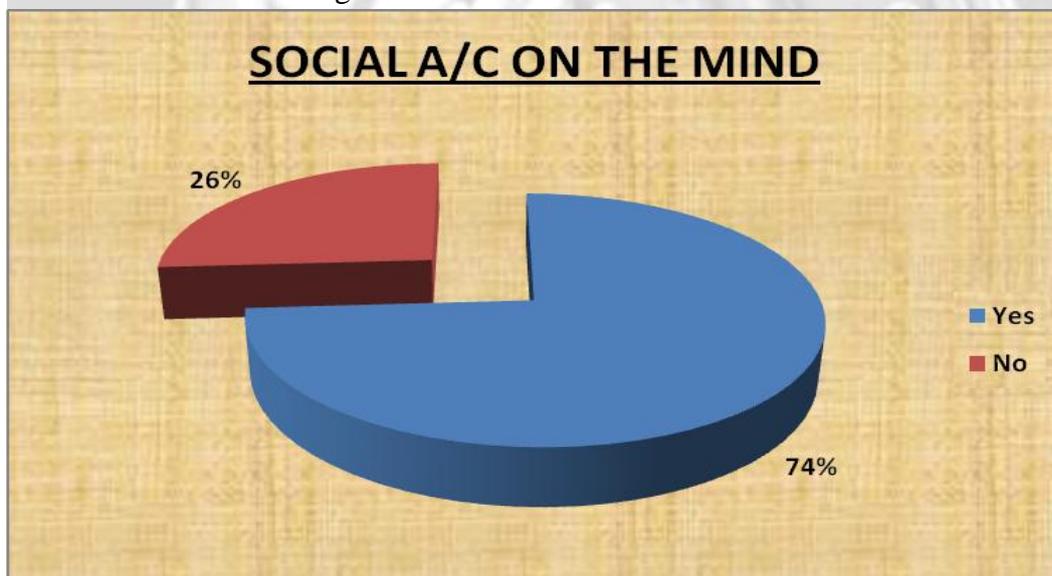


Figure 8

Figure 8 depicts that 74% of the socially active population always have thoughts of their social account surrounding their mind.



All the findings above are a clear indication that today's computer literate generation is somewhere operated by the social networking sites and if not operated they are somehow getting influenced by these sites. Basically these sites provide a platform to human beings to stay connected to their near and dear ones and show them his/her success and prosperity and gaining popularity it is somewhere also working as their agony aunty where one can share their happy and sad moments and gain smile and sympathy from its near and dear ones , in other words it satisfies the human ego . There are many organizations which are also researching on the mechanism of social networking sites as how they work , influence human

psychology and are they beneficial enough. Sites like Searchenginewatch.com , Socialmediaexamine.com and society for Human Resource management keep a close watch on these sites and conduct regular surveys .

4. Suggestions:

Now as we all know that Social networking has become a part and participle of the many lives we would like to suggest everybody to just be a little careful open up but not to that level which can turn your life upside down . We would also like to request the government to make stricter cyber laws so that nobody can peep into anybody's privacy and use it for their own good .

5. Conclusion:

As from the above findings it is totally clear that social networking sites are operating and influencing the lives of its target audience and this influence can be used for the betterment of society . We don't say that getting social is bad but everything is having a limit but involving so much in something that it gets capable of controlling your life is dangerous at a very serious level. Today's generation is growing intellectually at a very fast rate and in every technology and amenities are provided to them at a very tender age where they are not capable of thinking what is good and what is bad, so we advise each and every guardian to educate their children about pros and cons of these technologies from the starting. It is not that Social networking can be bad only for youngsters it can sometime prove havoc to the adults also one has to define a boundary as up to what limit one has to give up its privacy and get involved. In the end we can say "Get social but not at the cost of own being".

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