

The Impact of Social Media on the Mental Health of Senior Citizens

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Abstract:

In the present study, 30 senior citizen males from Sadguru Nagar, South Nagpur, Nagpur city were selected using convenience sampling method in non-probability sampling method. Social media had a positive effect on the mental health of the seniors. The mental health of the seniors started to be enthusiastic due to social media. The use of social media increased the social contact of the seniors. Due to the use of social media, senior citizens spend their time to see good and positive things on social media. Senior citizens see many positive things like health, politics, entertainment, sports, exercise, yoga, food on social media. Senior citizens also like to learn more new things on social media at this age. The use of social media made it possible for senior citizens to meet their school friends. Communication with them became possible. Due to the use of social media, seniors can contact their son or daughter living outside the village every day. Senior citizens use social media from dawn to night. This includes listening to devotional songs in the morning after waking up and even listening to devotional songs while sleeping at night.

Keywords:

Senior citizens, social media, mental health, anxiety, stress.

Introduction:

Ageing is one of the common global phenomena. As the science gets advanced, longevity of human life span increasing. These extra years lived by the elderly should be meaningful, healthy and dignified. Impaired physical functioning in old age increasing the dependency on others. Nearly 500 million people are above the age of 65 years and they account 8% of the world's total population. Globally, around 2030 the estimation of older adults is likely to be one billion, which will approximately reach 13% of the total population. Usually, the proportion of older adult are higher in developed countries, at the same time rapid increase in older population are also seen in developing countries. For the first time in history of human being, people aged 65 and over will very soon outnumber the children under age five. India's ageing report shows that the greying population in India which was just 7.5% in 2001 has increased to 8.2% by 2011. It was predicted that the population of senior citizens in India could be around 19% of total population by the year 2050. As per (UNFPA-2017 "India ageing report"), Tamil Nadu has 11.2% of elderly population. In 2016 life expectancy for Females: 73.5 years Males: 68.9 years. This growing population brings enormous social, economic and public health implications, which include higher expenses on healthcare, need for social security reforms, and shortage of care-givers to support dependent older adults.

Social network is defined as a subjective sense of belonging, which also includes greater participation in the community, social contact, and social support. Social network has several functions including the provision of emotional, instrumental, appraisal, and financial support. It

is important to acknowledge that social network may involve both negative and positive interactions, with health. India's older populations will rely on the family and social network.

Due to the advancement of science, the increasing availability of medical care facilities and the significant and conscious awareness about personal health through literacy, the population of the world as well as India has increased significantly in the last 30-40 years, and the average life expectancy of the elderly has come to around 72 years. As a result, the number of people living beyond sixty has increased significantly.

A 2022 study showed that nearly 27% of people aged 60 + in urban areas were actively using social media up from just 10% in 2017. The same study also found that 72% of seniors used social media for staying in touch with their families especially during the pandemic.

The 21st century is considered the century of human prosperity and development. Compared to the last century, in the last fifteen years, due to international assistance and efforts around the world, underdeveloped and developing countries have become more prosperous than developed countries. Alternatively, positive changes have been seen in three areas of social life in this country: education, health, living standards, as well as women's development and the increase in the living standards of the elderly. Especially since the scene is visible everywhere to a greater or lesser extent, this century will be a century of global development. The increase in the number of elderly people everywhere is considered to be the result of global prosperity. Positive changes in the number of elderly people in the world population are basically indicators of the economic and social transformation of the world. The improvement in the living standards of senior citizens, their health, and the increase in the global productivity of the elderly are a promising and hopeful picture. People who have physical and mental health can enjoy the joy of life properly. We pay conscious attention to physical health. We quickly become aware of physical illness or deterioration of the body. When we have illnesses like headache, stomach-ache, fever, we go to the doctor and get medicine. As a person's physical health deteriorates, so does their mental health. But we are not aware of it. Even if we are aware, we often ignore mental illness. Every person's own effort to stay mentally healthy are important for the benefit of that person and society. Mental health is a broad concept. Mental health is the harmonious development of a whole personality. This harmony is with other people, with external circumstances and with a person's attitude. Adjustment plays an important role in mental health. Mental health is relative. It varies from person to person. The present study has examined the impact of social media on the mental health of senior citizens.

Objective of Study:

The following objectives were taken in the present study.

- 1) To study the impact of social media use on the mental health of senior citizens.
- 2) To know the opinion of senior citizens about the use of social media.

Area of Study:

In the present study, Sadguru Nagar area of South Nagpur in Nagpur city was selected for the study.

Sampling And Data Collection:

30 senior citizen males were selected for the present study. Convenient sampling method in non-probability sampling method was used for data collection. Data were collected using interview schedule in primary research method. Internet, magazines, newspapers and articles in secondary research method were used.

Result And Findings:

Senior citizens use social media to the maximum. Senior citizens also use social media as a form of entertainment. Senior citizens do not even realize how time passes while using social media. Senior citizens use WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp calling to the maximum in the use of social media. They make video calls with their children and grandchildren who are living outside the village and contact them daily. Senior citizens get new information about current affairs, news, politics through social media. Senior citizens watch news through social media to keep their knowledge updated. Senior citizens get completely immersed in it while using social media. Senior citizens watch videos in it, videos on different topics on YouTube. Senior citizens feel worried, worried and afraid about the future in their old age. Senior citizens feel that their confidence has decreased. Today, because we are in good health, we can do everything, but senior citizens are afraid of what will happen to us in the future. Today, children support us. But senior citizens are constantly worried about whether their children will support them in the future or not. The same thoughts constantly come to mind. These thoughts create discomfort in senior citizens. Senior citizens are restless because of the thought that their peers, their wives will leave them and they will have to spend the rest of their lives alone. Senior citizens feel anxious when their family members say something. Senior citizens think that they have become unwanted in the house and senior citizens constantly think about it. If family members do not give them respect and dignity and speak disrespectfully, they feel a kind of stress. Senior citizens form the opinion that they are of no value in the house. Different thoughts constantly come to mind. They feel lonely and realize that despite everything, they are alone. Senior citizens find their old memories rekindled while using social media. Senior citizens' friends who were in school met senior citizens through social media. When senior citizens feel bored and bored, or confused about a topic, they encourage themselves by watching a YouTube video or listening to a sermon through social media. Ever since senior citizens started using social media, their tastes have changed. The use of social media has changed the lifestyle of senior citizens. When senior citizens use social media, they forget their worries. When senior citizens use social media, family members constantly tell them that you also feel like watching social media like others. Senior citizens entertain themselves through social media. Through the use of social media, senior citizens cultivate their hobbies and spend their free time in the best way. Initially, senior citizens were not able to use the new technology of social media, they faced problems in it and it was stressful for them. Senior citizens thought that they would not be able to use social media. But today, using social media has become a part of their daily life.

Senior citizens use WhatsApp more and more. They use it a lot for sharing photos, calling WhatsApp, sending messages through WhatsApp to their relatives, their groups where they live. To maintain their mental health, senior citizens watch, learn and do yoga, pranayama, meditation online. If senior citizens in their group want to go for a picnic or go for a visit to a deity, they use

different social media apps to see where they want to go for a picnic, how far it is, where they can stop, and then they go. Senior citizens watch many programs online using social media. They also shop through online apps. They order clothes and vegetables online at home. Senior citizens say that they save their time and the trouble of going and coming by using social media. Senior citizens guide those in their group who cannot use social media to some extent on how to use social media. There should be an atmosphere of playfulness in the family. Family members should communicate harmoniously. Family members should not expect anything from seniors. Senior citizens expect the family environment to be such that it will increase their confidence and strength and will not create frustration. Senior citizens see positive things on social media, which helps them to remain happy and satisfied in their mental health. Senior citizens also get information about government schemes related to senior citizens through social media. Senior citizens say that it is a very good tool to reach out to people by making videos of their artistic skills through social media and uploading them on social media. When senior citizens use social media, they do not feel stressed, depressed, sad, worried and afraid.

Conclusion:

- Social media has a positive impact on the mental health of senior citizens.
- Senior citizens use social media more throughout the day.
- The use of social media has increased the social contacts of senior citizens.
- The use of social media helps to eliminate loneliness of senior citizens.
- Senior citizens are eager to learn more new things in social media.
- Senior citizens use the knowledge, skills and experience they have through the use of social media.
- Senior citizens expect that there should be an atmosphere of playfulness in the family, where they cooperate with each other, and communicate harmoniously with each other.

Suggestions And Recommendations:

- Younger senior citizens should teach senior citizens about the use of social media to senior citizens who cannot use social media.
- Families should also maintain the atmosphere at home in such a way that senior citizens do not experience frustration and mental stress.
- Families should communicate harmoniously with senior citizens so that their mental stress is reduced.
- Senior citizens' use of social media has led to a change in their hobbies.
- Senior citizens should be allowed by their families to pursue their interests.
- The family environment should be conducive to the mental health of senior citizens so that their confidence and optimism never diminish.
- Families should respect the personality of senior citizens. The awareness that seniors are also important in the family should be created in the minds of the family.

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