INTRODUCTION

The realm of Social Networking Sites is increasingly emerging as the subject of research in the field of social sciences. Scholars in many fields have begun to investigate the various aspects of Social Networking Sites. Many studies have been conducted around the world to investigate how these sites may influence issues of identity, privacy, social capital, youth culture, education and interpersonal relationships. Therefore, an attempt has been made in this chapter to review studies and articles related to the theme of the research. The review of literature allows us to study the main perspectives similar studies conducted in the same field. This will give a proper guideline to the research work and enable integration of the past studies leading to the expansion of knowledge.

Further review of literature has not only widened the horizon for understanding the themes related to the study, but also has sharpened the method of arranging the components in the framework of the study. This chapter is sub-divided into various sections to facilitate the emergence of a clear picture regarding the different dimensions of Social Networking Sites.

This second chapter contains a review of select studies that have been carried out on different aspects of Social Networking Sites. As
mentioned earlier, the review has been presented under different sub-headings.

**Studies on the Usage of Social Networking Sites among College Students**

Since the last decade the usage of Social Networking Sites among college students is increasing rapidly throughout the world. Evidently Social Networking Sites have become a significant part of the lives of these youth (Gemmill and Peterson: 2006). Compared with any other group of people the usage of Social Networking Sites among college students is more, mainly because they are attracted extensively to the new technology and particularly to the opportunity it offers for creating social networks.

*Keol Lim and Ellen B Meier* (2012) in their study clearly highlighted how and why Korean students use Social Networking Sites and what are the advantages they find by using Social Networking Sites. The study as such begins with the explanation of how the number of international students getting admission in U S universities has increased. It also refers to psychological experiences of international students such as disorientation, nostalgic depressive reactions, and feelings of isolation, alienation and powerlessness. However, international students may have limited ways to cope with stress, which could lead to stress-related illnesses such as anxiety or
depression. Hence these limitations make it hard for international students to acclimatize themselves new circumstances.

Further, Keol and Meier (2012) mainly constrained themselves for only two research questions: How do these international students use Social Networking Sites? And how do these international students perceive the impact of Social Networking Sites on their affective and academic adaptation? This research was conducted in the United States with Asian international students, all from Korea, who were not raised in a western culture. Respondents in the study used Social Networking Sites in various ways and the tools played an important role in their adaptation to a new life in the United States. Findings of the study clearly showed that the respondents benefitted from their use of social networking sites and that the interactions helped to decrease their anxiety in the new culture by providing them with a means of connecting to their parents and friends in Korea. At the end it also stressed on the need of more research to identify the potential of Social Networking Sites in contributing to the affective and cognitive adaptation for international students including the connection between Internet use and academic achievement.

In a study entitled “Social capital as Facebook; differentiating uses and users” Moira Burke and Cameron Marlow (2011) discuss extensively about the perspective to look at the uses of Social Networking Sites. It says though usage of Social Networking Sites is often treated as a monolithic activity, in which all time is equally social
and its impact the same for all users. The study primarily examines how Facebook affects social capital depending upon: types of site activities, contrasting one-on-one communication, broadcasts to wider audiences, and passive consumption of social news, and individual differences among users, including social communication skill and self-esteem. In this study (2011) a survey was conducted using 415 Facebook users, which revealed that receiving messages from friends is associated with increase in bridging social capital. The major goal of the study was to observe how different uses of a large Social Networking Site influence different types of user’s social capital. Social capital is the actual or potential resources which are linked to a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition. The study states that college students are motivated by social information-seeking, using Social Networking Sites to learn about people they have met offline, and expressive information sharing, feeling greater to bridge social capital.

Kuan-Yu Lin and His-Peng Lu (2011) applied network externalities and motivation theory to understand the usage of Social Networking Sites among college students. After conducting an empirical research involving 402 samples, using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) Approach, Lin and Lu (2011) found that “Enjoyment” was the most influential factor for the increasing usage of Social Networking Sites among the college students.
Bicen and Cavus (2010) evaluated the usage of Social Networking Sites among students in the department of computer education instructional technology and found which social networking sites are the most preferred by students. The study revealed that use and sharing of knowledge on Internet is made an integral part of college students’ lives. Results show that Live Spaces and Facebook are the commonly used sites by the students.

Folorunso (2010) conducted a survey among students of the University of Agriculture, Abeokuta in Nigeria and tested the attributes of Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) theory towards usage pattern of Social Networking Sites. Demographic data of the study revealed that majority of users were college students. The five constructs i.e. Relative Advantage, Complexity, Compatibility, Observability and Reliability were used to test the impact on the attitude and trust regarding Social Networking Sites and to determine how attitude would impact on the intention to use it. The study revealed the constructs: relative advantage, complexity, and observability of Social Networking Sites do not positively affect the attitude towards using the technology while the compatibility and trial ability of Social Networking Sites does positively affect the attitude towards using the technology. The study (2010) concluded that the attitude of university students towards Social Networking Sites does positively affect the intention to use the technology.
**Miller, Parsons and Lifer** (2010) conducted a survey among students, about the use of social networking sites and the appropriateness of the content that they post. The responses indicate that students routinely post content that is not appropriate for all audiences, especially potential employers. Considering how extensively the press has covered the negative impacts of inappropriate posting, the fact that students know of continuing the practice is surprising.

**Park** (2010) explores the usage of Social Networking Sites by different university users. He studied three groups of users’ (undergraduate, graduate and faculty) at Yonsei University in Seoul, South Korea. The analysis indicated that the three groups of users demonstrated distinct patterns of use of social networking sites. The study stipulated that undergraduates used the profile service more than the community service while graduates used the community service more than the profile service. Yet most of the faculty members were not active users.

**Lack, Beck and Hoover** (2009) investigated the usage of Social Networking Sites by undergraduate psychology major. They found that majority of students using Facebook and their account information have publicly accessibility and some user profiles have content of a questionable nature on their publicly viewable accounts. They suggest that formal education must be presided to students regarding the usage of these sites.
Petter Bae Brandtzaeg and Jan Heim (2009) in their study state that there are many motivational reasons for using Social Networking Sites among people and college students particularly. Brandtzaeg and Heim draw their findings, after the investigation on peoples' subjective motivational reasons for using Social Networking Sites, by performing a quantitative content analysis for 1,200 qualitative responses from Social Networking Sites users. Further, the study (2009) made several attempts to understand the choice, use, diffusion, adoption and acceptance of Social Networking Sites among college students.

As Won Kim and Sang-Won Lee (2009) rightly pointed out that today the college students use numerous Social Networking Sites, to stay connected with their friends, discover new “friends” and to share users – created contents, such as photos, videos, blogs and etc. In order to explore factors affecting college students’ motive for using Social Networking Sites.

In addition, Mikolaj Jan Piskorski (2009) in his study, “Understanding the Uses of Social Networks”, cites that people love to look at pictures, which is the killer application of all online Social Networking Sites. Piskorski hypothesizes that people who post pictures of themselves can show they are having fun and are popular without having to boast. Another attraction of photos is that they enable a form of voyeurism. Social networks enable a very delicate way to pry into someone's life without really prying. The study also postulated deep gender difference in the use of sites. The biggest usage category is men
looking at women they do not know, followed by men looking at women they know and women look at other women they know.

Nicole Ellison’s study (2008) on Social Networking Sites provides very thought provoking insights. According to this study, 85% of the respondents use one or more social networking sites. The extent of the usage of Social Networking Sites has increased dramatically in the past two years and the usage of Social Networking Sites as well differs considerably by age. Most of the respondents aging 18 and 19 years old use Social Networking Sites (95%), yet only 37% aging 30 years and above utilizes these networking sites. The majority involving 18 and 19 years old, have more than 200 friends while those aged 30 and above have more or less 25 or lesser friends on these sites. Consequently Facebook is the most commonly used Social Networking Site, with MySpace as the second choice. It was also found that about half of these users utilize just one Social Networking Site, having only one profile, and participate in one to five groups within Social Networking Sites. Profiles of Social Networking Sites are fairly stable, with most respondents changing them monthly or less often. The majority of the users of Social Networking Sites spend 5 hours or less per week. Younger respondents report spending more time than older respondents. It also emphasized that most students (87%) put access restrictions on their profiles. Younger respondents and females are most likely to do so.
According to **Vitak** (2008) there are various reasons as to why individuals use a social networking site. The first reason is for them to meet strangers and become friends. The majority of respondents of her research paper (57%) said that they were initially introduced to those “friends” through mutual friends, which increased the likelihood of such relationships developing into strong ties. While a significant portion of respondents stated that they have at least a few online friends, 85% said that they do not communicate with most of their online friends, and the majority of respondents said that they considered those friendships as strong ties. Through social networking sites users tend to maintain their interpersonal relationship with their online friends because of easy communication. Therefore they can use private messaging, chat rooms, and other methods of communication provided by the website.

On the other hand, a strong interpersonal relationship with offline friends needs time and effort to be maintained. Distance between two users that can change an offline relationship into online relationship is also a reason for an individual to use Social Networking Sites. Nearly two-thirds (65%) of the respondents put forward that the majority of their friends have a social networking site account, which suggests that many students use the site to stay in touch with their offline friends. Keeping in touch with friends remains the primary reason for the usage of the site across both years in school and gender. Furthermore, approximately one-third (31%) of the respondents with
friends who do not have Social Networking Site account said that they would be closer to friends if they were on the site, and 87% of respondents said they had never experienced negative consequences in their offline relationships due to the contents in their social networking site profiles suggesting that most respondents benefit from using the site. With the use of private messaging and chat room of this site, students can communicate and maintain a healthy relationship with their friends from far places with ease that takes only a few seconds.

Coyle and Vaughn (2008) in their study examined the literature on Social Networking Sites and conducted a survey on how college students are engaged in social networking. They found that the main purpose of using Social Networking Sites is to keep in touch with friends. They also indicate that these are used for merely trivial communication with friends. These sites are simply new form of communication that is evolving over time with the aid of technology.

Peluchefte and Karl (2008) explore the survey of Midwestern University undergraduate students regarding use of social networking sites and their perceptions regarding the appropriateness of information they post, as well as how such information is accessed and used by other parties. The study (2008) found that 80% respondents have used at least one site in which majority of respondents use Facebook. They describe that respondents were generally in strong agreement that they were comfortable with their friends, classmates, and family having
access to their profiles but were neutral regarding access by employers and strangers.

Goodman (2007) examines how college students engage with technology principally that involved in Social Networking Sites. He explores how students use Social Networking Sites, which Social Networking Sites and programmes they find more appealing than others and also tries to understand the major reasons for the increasing usage of Social Networking Sites among college students. Further he rightly pointed out “Social Networking Sites are not part of students’ lives these days, actually they are their lives”. Youths are not only the early adopters of most of the new technologies but they are also among the most sophisticated users as well.

Further, in the research studies of Chernigo Barnett – Ellis (2007), Subrahmanyam and Lin (2007), Valkenburg and Peter (2006) and Huong (2008) it has been found that the college students are using Social Networking Sites more than older people.

In addition, college students use Social Networking Sites for various purposes. A study conducted by Lampe, Ellison, and Steinfeld (2007) among college students in Midwestern university found that students most often used Social Networking Sites for social purposes — to stay in touch with their friends from high school as well as to form interconnections with people they had met offline such as in their dormitories or in class. Similarly Ellison (2007) found that college students used Social Networking Sites to maintain or bolster existing
offline connections rather than to form new relationships. Such ties appear to have some positive benefits and the use of Social Networking Sites was associated with more perceived social capital. The main objective of their work was to examine the relationship between the usage of Social Networking Sites and the formation and maintenance of social interaction and social capital.

Subrahmanyam (2007) conducted a study to assess the use of online and offline Social Networking Sites among the college students of a large urban university in Los Angeles. The study revealed that the students often utilized Social Networking Sites to connect and reconnect with their friends and family members.

Studies on the Influence of Social Networking Sites on Interpersonal Relationships

Social Networking Sites are influencing every realm of society, including interpersonal relationships of the members. An interpersonal relationship is a relatively long-term association between two or more people. This association may be based on emotions, regular business interactions, or some other type of social commitments. Interpersonal relationships take place in a great variety of contexts, such as family, friends, marriage, acquaintances, work, clubs, neighbours, etc. They may be regulated by law, custom, or mutual agreement, and are the basis of social groups and society as a whole. Social networking sites influence the interpersonal relationship of students in many ways.
Through social networking sites, users have the opportunity to be acquainted with people worldwide. These people consequently can affect the user’s interpersonal relationships with other people close to them.

A study conducted on “West Virginia University Students” (2011) illustrates that the impact of Social Networking Sites on interpersonal relationships between students and their members of their families are quite significant. The study used 221 college students along with members of their families to analyze interpersonal relationships. Researchers of the study (2011) pointed out that the interpersonal relationships of college students improved significantly due to the increasing percentage of students using Social Networking Sites to communicate with their family members.

Keenan and Shirile (2009) conducted an exploratory study of four Social Networking Sites and their features that encourage sociability and social interaction. The study (2009) finds that Facebook and MySpace, as the largest social websites, receive the most coverage. These websites offer an extensive amount of social features and require a thorough analysis. LinkedIn and Twitter represent a niche application of social websites, focusing on professional networks and micro-blogging respectively.

It is evident from an empirical study on “Rogationist College Students” (2006) that Social Networking Sites influence interpersonal relationships of college students. The study (2006) focuses on analyzing the level of interpersonal relationships among college students and their
interpersonal relationships with other people. It states that through these Social Networking Sites College students develop virtual interpersonal relationships.

Donna Reid and Fraser Reid (2004) examined how technology can positively impact interpersonal communication. They focused on Social Networking Sites used by college students. The study states that compared to other means of communication, users of Social Networking Sites were found to be more likely to discuss their “real-self” through Social Networking Sites. It appears that there is something special about Social Networking Sites that allow people to develop their interpersonal relationship with others. This is a clear example of how technology can help interpersonal communication. On the other hand, some advancement is decreasing the personal nature of communication especially with virtual contact at times replacing face to face contact. While opinions may differ on whether it is good or bad, at the very least it is confirmed that it changes the landscape of interpersonal communication.

Social networking sites have added entirely new meanings to interpersonal interaction and community. It is the interplay between internet and real life communication and its subsequent effect on interpersonal relationships. Social Networking websites have bundled many of the internet communication standards such as e-mail forums, and instant messaging into one resource. However, its usage has become a staple activity in a young adult’s life. While it varies slightly
among gender and race groups, overall, college students who have internet access use SNS regularly for some type of social contact. With this mass assimilation into daily life, it has already begun to change the way in which interpersonal relationships are defined. It is one of the, if not the top medium for young adults to “scope out” and “research” potential partners. With SNS playing a large role in many relationships, it’s important to see how this will continue to shape interpersonal communication in the future.

According to WebCredible social networks provide encouragement and support; establish identity with others and fulfill the need to feel included; provide the outlet for some people to establish their need for recognition, social status, control or leadership and provide the necessary control over aspects of lives for those who don’t want to be leaders; help establish friends, relationships and the opportunity to interact with others.

*Sonia Livingstone* (1998) stated that college students use Social Networking Sites, which are part of their interpersonal relationships to interact with their family members, which radically alters their interpersonal relationships. In general, college students are playing, experimenting and re-creating their identities within Social Networking Sites while interacting with others.

*Matsuba’s* research has shown that real life relationships are looked at as more “real” in the negative and positive dimensions of personal qualities, while through internet relationships were less
extreme. If real life relationships are seen as more “real” and SNS is an online medium of communication for those real life relationships, then research needs to look at how far Social Networking Sites define the relationships. Research has found that those who use the internet to create and maintain a secondary relationship in addition to a real life one showed higher levels of relational certainty and high expectations of future interaction with their online partners. It has also been established that time spent online and positive views of the internet lead to a more favourable view of online relationships.

Hence students do this through both direct communication using the wall post and private message features as well as indirectly by viewing others profiles. While Social Networking Site is used to cultivate old and new relationships, it is also utilized by students in relationships to display and check the status and commitment of their relationship mostly when people write and develop their profile, choose their profile picture and publicly write on other user’s Social Networking Sites “walls”. This aims to discover how far SNS is used to define, cultivate, and maintain real life interpersonal relationships.

By reviewing previous researches on Social Networking Sites, online relationships and disclosure through internet communication, it is proposed to see in which direction this research needs to go to find valid conclusions regarding the interplay of real life factors and Social Networking Sites in the development of interpersonal relationships.
development of interpersonal relationships. Likewise, as popular social networking sites MySpace and Facebook have cropped up over the years, affecting the way in which people communicate yet there are limited researches on the social mediums.

In the area of relationships, no Social Networking Sites research has virtually looked upon how much real life interaction is required before a potential partner is not seen as a “stalker” or in any kind of negative light. Since internet usage is directly related to psychological well-being, relationships, and the identity of self, it is of interest to note that there is a positive relationship between measures of internet usage and loneliness. Research has also generally overlooked the question of how lonely or desperate a Social Networking Sites user is when trying to find a potential partner. While there have been numerous studies on internet based communication concerning relationships, self disclosure, and social networking, this research takes it a step further to look at the social utility of social networking sites and the subsequent interplay of real life and online life in defining interpersonal relationships.

**Studies on the Impact of Social Networking Sites on Academic Performance of College Students**

The following studies clearly depict the impact of the usage of Social Networking Sites among college students on their academic performance. The Social Networking Sites significantly influence educational performance of college students (Davis, Mark & Barbara;
2008, Anne, Lewis & Peter; 2008, Salter, Michael, Bryden & Chris; 2007, Kevin P. Brady & Smith; 2010), such impacts are either positive or negative.

Englander (2010) proclaimed that internet usage is negatively associated with academic performance of student users and destructive impact of internet usage is far more momentous than its advantages. Internet addiction has come forth as a result of striking boost in internet usage over the past few decades. Nalwa and Anand (2003) proposed that addicted users prefer using internet setting back their personal and professional responsibilities and this ultimately leads to poor academic performance.

While using SNSs, issues of privacy, identity protection, and e-professionalism must be paid attention as proposed by Mattingly (2010) but a contrasting finding was given by Sengupta and Chaudhuri (2010) that SNSs memberships are not correlated with online abuse of teenagers.

An academic research was conducted by Wilson (2009) through which he proposed that university results are harmfully affected by Facebook usage. Likewise, Khan (2009) found that Facebook users had poor performance in exams. Pasek and Hargittai (2009) examined Facebook usage by undergraduates and Facebook use in relation to grades. The study revealed that there is no negative relationship between the use of Facebook and grade point average. The study did
caution against using any medium of communication or online SNT too much, as over usage of technology can detract from college studies.

**Kirschner and Karpinski** (2009) state that users of Social Networking Sites devote lesser time to their studies than the non users and subsequently had lower grades in their academic courses. Further Karpinski (2009) says that among various unique distractions of every generation, Social Networking Sites have been proved as the major distraction of current generation.

**American Educational Research Association** conducted a research and it was declared on its annual conference in San Diego, California (2009) that users of Social Networking Sites study less and generated lower grades eventually (21stcenturyscholar.org). Similarly, **Banquil and Burce** (2009) found a continuing drop of grades among student who were users of social networking sites.

In addition, **Boogart and Robert** (2006) declared that use of SNSs and Facebook have detrimental impacts on academic performance of student users. Subsequently, **Grabmeier** (2009) observed that students having lower GPAs were mostly those who log in any SNS. Internet abuses are increasing at an alarming rate and stressing a serious need to promote usage regulations among student users.

**Kubey, Lavin and Barrows** (2001) proposed that impairment of academic performance and internet dependency are correlated with the
use of synchronous communication applications including Social Networking Sites and chat rooms.

However, many researchers have also found a positive association between use of Social Networking Sites and academic performance of college students. Students, using internet more, scored higher on reading skills test and had higher grades as well (Linda; 2006). Moreover it has been found that the usage of the Social Networking Sites is helpful for cure in case of some psychological problems including low life-satisfaction and low self-esteem (Ellison; 2007).

Social Networking Sites also provide a rich means of interaction between teachers and students as stated by Roblyer (2010). Shah (2001) proposed that informational use of internet is positively correlated with civic indicators of social capital such as civic engagement, interpersonal trust, and life contentment. Pasek (2006) maintained that a site-specific culture can both positively and negatively affect the building of social capital. It is also projected that Facebook usage is not positively associated with lower grades of the students on the contrary it was found that Social Networking Sites users scored higher grades. Therefore no association was found between GPAs of students and Social Networking Sites usage in a study conducted by Kolek and Saunders (2008). Besides, Social Networking Sites promote interactivity among students and teachers.

L. Alvin Malesky and Jr. Chris Peters in their study entitled “Defining appropriate professional behaviour for faculty and university
students on social networking websites” (2011) examined the role this rapidly evolving method of communication plays in an academic setting. The study projected that the vast majority of university students have profiles on social networking sites including university groups and academic departments. As a result this increased utilization enabling students and faculty to be in contact in ways that have not occurred in the past. These novel interactions can create awkward and potentially exploitative situations. For the purpose of this study data were collected from 459 university students and 159 university faculty members. Participants’ opinions regarding faculty/student interaction on social networking sites were analysed. One of the most surprising findings of this study was the fact that nearly 40% of the students and 30% of the faculty believe that it is inappropriate for professors to have accounts on SNS. It was found that there were significant differences in opinion between student and faculty participants regarding the appropriateness of the professor’s actions. These findings indicate that considerable disagreement exists between students and faculty regarding what constitutes appropriate faculty behaviour on SNS. At the end this study suggests that institutions of higher education need to develop policies and procedures. And it even recommends that universities should develop guidelines to define what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate usage of Social Networking Sites in their academic setting.
Dickson and Holley (2010) examined the use of the Social Networking Sites in academics in the USA in order to examine the concerns about their use both from students and teachers. The study finds that Social Networking Sites can be an effective method of student outreach in academic performance.

The study of Kevin P. Brady, Lori B. Holcomb and Bethany V. Smith (2010), titled as “The Use of Alternative Use of Social Networking Sites in Higher Education Settings: A Case Study of E-learning Benefits of Ning in Education”, was based on the educational benefits associated with the use of Social Networking Sites. The study focused the graduate students enrolled in distance education courses using Ning in Education, a non-commercial, educational-based SNS. The study emphasized on the students’ attitudes towards the sites as productive online tools for teaching and learning. The researchers found out that education based upon social networking sites can be used effectively in distance education courses. They are an excellent technological tool for improved online communications among students in higher distance education courses.

However, a study conducted by Bowers-Campbell (2008) stated that Social Networking Sites were used as a tool for improving academic motivation among university students enrolled in a developmental reading course. Specifically, Bowers-Campbell put forth the argument that using Social Networking Sites may help students to better connect “with college reading expectations since it offers potential for battling
low self-efficacy and poor self-regulation behaviours plaguing many developmental learning students”. In order to address self-efficacy among students, “superlatives” or “virtual gifts” were suggested as a type of reward system to recognize the achievements of students in the course. It was also recommended that Social Networking Sites can be used as a means to foster a sense of “connectedness” between the instructor and students in order to further increase self-efficacy even before the course started by having the students review the instructor’s profile in an effort to familiarize themselves with the instructor.

Consequently Social Networking Sites not only help to facilitate a connection between the instructor and students, but it also offers means for building peer support among students. This provides the student with an increased level of control and has the potential to create a “classroom of students who accept and support each other”. Creating groups, “poking” class members, and providing photos and profiles are all under the control of the students, providing a sense of ownership and control over their learning environment. As suggested by Bowers-Campbell, “virtual class rosters and group meetings via Social Networking Sites might soothe anxieties by providing an online support group of learners who care about the students’ success”. In terms of self-regulation, it was argued that SNS technology provides a large measure of autonomy and may “reinforce self-regulated learning strategies”. Specifically mentioned was the group feature of Social
Networking Sites, which lends a great deal of control to the students in terms of defining their own learning goals.

**S. Shyam Sundar** (2008), a professor and founder of the Media Effects Research Laboratory at Penn State, has led students in several Facebook studies exploring identity. One involved the creation of mock Facebook profiles. Researchers learned that while people perceive someone who has a high number of friends as popular, attractive and self-confident, people who accumulate “too many” friends (about 800 or more) are seen as rather insecure.

In a research **Lovitts and Nelson** (2000) observed that strong integration of students into their professional and social life is sturdily correlated to the successful completion of their degree. In lieu of the contrasting findings mentioned above, the Current Study specifically aims at exploring the relationship between usage of Social Networking Sites and educational performance of the student users.

Many universities around the world are expanding their investment in information technology (IT), and specifically the Internet, and are actively promoting Internet use in university education (Al-Nuaimy, Zhang & Noble, 2001; Bargeron, Grudin, Gupta & Sanocki, 2002; Chandler, 2002; Chen & Paul, 2003; Dringus, 1999; Huang et al, 2004; Kinshuk, 2002; Owston, 2000; Pahl, 2003; Richardson, 2003; Rovai, 2001). Instructors are being requested to make their teaching materials and other supporting resources accessible through the Internet (Alavi, 1994; Barker, 2002; Coppola, Hilt & Rotter, 2002; Lee,
Students are also encouraged to communicate with instructors, or with one another, via email. As universities promote Internet use, they need to understand their students’ attitudes towards using it (Frank, Reich & Humphreys, 2003; Milliken & Barnes, 2002).

The other studies by Natriello (2001), Warschauer (2003a, 2003b, 2003c) and Wenglinksy (1998) claimed that high resource students are more likely to use technology for more experimental and creative uses than students from low resource schools. This finding does not contradict the anticipated finding of study that access to technology has no influence on the uptake of Social Networking Sites since the respondents of this study are anticipated to have equally free access to the internet.

**Studies on the Influence of Social Networking Sites on Consumption Patterns and Life Style of College Students**

Social Networking Sites not only influence interpersonal relationships and educational performance of college students, but also the consumption patterns and lifestyles in general. Many studies have supported the idea that a positive correlation exists between online product reviews on Social Networking Sites and the increasing consumption among college students (Hu, Liu and Zhang; 2008).

In today’s fast moving world there are many social issues which require serious attention. Madhur, Palak and Nitika (2012) in a joint
research work examined how college students employ Social Networking Sites to discuss and express their views on such social issues. Their research (2012) was conducted on college students between the age group of 18-30 years with the motive to know the level of awareness on the social issues and how far Social Networking Sites awakened today’s youth in expressing their views on current and burning issues like corruption, human rights and etc. in India.

In addition, companies have begun to use Social Networking Sites as a medium of communication with the users. According to the studies of Hyllegard, Ogle, Yan and Raitz (2011), majority of the consumer goods companies have adopted Social Networking Sites to sell their goods and it invariably influences the consumption patterns of college students. One major feature of these sites is the ability of users to “fan” particular products or brands so that they receive information about these products. Further, this feature also allows the users to express their satisfaction and dissatisfaction towards a particular product or a company, which can be shared with other friends. Facebook, a leading Social Networking Site, reports that a user can express interest in over 900 million objects, and the average user follows 80 such pages (2011). Pempek in his study (2009) points out that the average college student belonged to 24.58 groups.

A joint collaborative work by Mauri, Cipresso, Balgera, Villamira and Riva (2011) which has analysed implications of Social Networking Sites on the lifestyles of individual. They have used psychophysiological
measures to point out positive and negative usages of social networking sites. According to the study (2011) the use of Social Networking Sites can have both positive and negative influence on the lifestyles of individual. However, the increasing use of Social Networking Sites might reveal that people look for Social Networking Sites because they have a positive experience when they use these sites. Few studies have tried to identify which particular aspects of the social networking experience make SNSs so successful. In this study the focus was on the affective experience evoked by Social Networking Sites. And more particularly the study explored whether the use of Social Networking Sites elicits a specific psycho physiological pattern. Findings of the study unfold in this way: successful spread of SNSs might be associated with a specific positive affective state on their lifestyle experienced by users when they use their Social Networking Sites.

According to LaDuque (2010), companies can also utilize Social Networking Sites to create personalized experiences, to increase brand loyalty, to generate sales leads, and to increase exposure. For example, companies which provide entertaining videos or valuable incentives may have their offerings shared between Social Networking Sites users through electronic word-of-mouth communication. In addition, social networking sites may also allow companies to communicate directly with customers to improve products or address issues. Facebook allows individuals to “like” pages, meaning they will receive updates regarding the product or brand they have “liked.” Even mutual fund firms have
begun using this medium to communicate with customers, create interactive scavenger hunts, and organize contests among fans (Glazer, 2011). These wall posts potentially include comments about the brand or photographs involving the brand.

Constantinides, Maria and Romero (2010) explore the profile of Social Networking Sites based on national survey of Dutch users. It evaluates the demographic, social and behavioural characteristics of the users. The classification of Dutch users of Social Networking Sites resulted in four distinct segments: The Beginners, Average Users, Outstanding Users and Expert Users. The results revealed that behaviour and motivation is the best criteria of users for the markets when using such applications. The study (2010) reveals in this sense the specific behavioural characteristics of these segments and provides marketers with important information as to designing marketing programs making use of Social Networking Sites. The findings present new insights to marketing strategists eager to use the communication potential of such communities; the findings are also interesting for businesses willing to explore the potential of online networking as a low cost yet very efficient alternative to physical, traditional networking.

Shaheen (2010) in a study analyzed the usage of Social Networking Sites and political activities of the students of three universities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi during the political crises and the emergency imposed by the Govt. of Pakistan on November 2007.
Kluemper and Rosen (2009) evaluated the use of Social Networking Sites in employment selection through accessing the personal profile of candidates on the sites. This study was conducted at a large public university in southern USA.

Branes in his study (2008) explored how frequently college students use Social Networking Sites to learn about products and their companies. He stated that Social Networking Sites allow users to collect information about companies and brands. Further, 70% of the respondents of his study used Social Networking Sites to investigate companies or products while considering a purchase, suggested by any friends or companies. The positive reviews of a particular product on Social Networking Sites influence the choice of purchase of the college students (Branes; 2008).

The usage of Social Networking Sites has multiple influences on college students. Currently, college students use Social Networking Sites to express their political views. Diani in his study (2001) stated that online Social Networking Sites have helped political and social movements and strengthened solidarity. Moreover, Social Networking Sites create new outlets for religion, support groups and minority opinions (Dutta-Bergman; 2006).

In general, the usage of Social Networking Sites by college students promoted democracy, freedom of expression and greater awareness about their rights.
Indian Studies on Social Networking Sites

Jothi, Neelamalar and Prasad (2011) reviewed and analysed the contents of three Social Networking Sites to study the effectiveness of brand communication strategy followed in these sites which are mainly accessed by Indian users. The study attempts to find out the effectiveness of brand communication strategy in promoting and advertising their brand in social networking sites. They suggested some method to make advertisement—more interactive among the target audience.

Mishra (2011) discussed the legal implications of social networking sites in USA and India, impact of Social Networking Sites on social life, legal issues raised in Social Networking Sites in Indian region, laws pertaining to social networking sites in India and USA and legal obligations for social networking users and sites. The facts revealed that Indian are less aware regarding the legal implications of these sites than USA.

Mohamed Haneefa K and Sumitha E (2011) attempted to explore the perception and use of Social Networking Sites by the students of Calicut University, Kerala. The study finds that majority of the students are aware about these sites and used for communication purpose with friends. Orkut is the most used site among the respondents. The students’ activities on these sites are sending messages and meeting new friends. Lack of security and privacy is the main hindrance in using these sites.
Kumar (2011) investigates the response of young Indian adults to advertising on online social networking sites. The study finds that majority of users avoid advertisements which are not useful to them, but they pay attention to those which are relevant.

Singh and Gill (2011) investigated the usage of Social Networking Sites among the researchers of GNDU, Amritsar through describing- the basic concept of web 2.0, overview of social networking, definition, etc. The study finds that Facebook is the most popular SNS used for communicating and find useful information. Time consumption is the main hurdle in accessing Social Networking Sites. The study suggests that Social Networking Sites can be applied on library websites for providing information their client about recent happenings and keeping up-to-date them.

A study by Krishna (2011) analysed the importance and benefits of social networking to library and information professionals. The study analysed the US communities which have been developed on the Orkut site for sharing professional information and problems. It also identified some problems which hinder in the way of communication among LIS professionals.

Parveen (2011) explores the usage of Facebook in creating awareness among library and information science professionals. The study investigates purpose and main hurdles in using Facebook. It found that Facebook is the most used site, it uses for keep abreast with
current news and information. Lack of time is main hurdle in using the way of Facebook.

**Biswajit Das and Jyoti Shankar Sahoo** in their study (2010) entitled “Social Networking Sites – A critical analysis of its impact on personal and public life” clearly stated the danger of the impacts Social Networking Sites pose. The Social Networking Sites allow people to have virtual communication. A person defines himself through what kind of friends he/she has. Consequently this peculiar behaviour of people raises many questions that impact on the personal and public life. It also traces back the history of Social Networking Sites. People use SNS for many purposes primarily because SNS give an opportunity to express their views and provide independence and connects a person to million others in the world.

**Krishnamurthy and Ashwath** (2010) explore the emerging technology ie. web 2.0 and its application in libraries particular focuses on the social networking aspect. They analysed the social networking concept, structure, types of social networking sites, its application; in libraries and the issues and challenges which are being faced by the libraries while implementing these technology. They argued that Social networking sites are new—platform for information sharing and communication. They also find that libraries and librarians used these sites by personal and professionally use.

**Kuppuswamy and Narayan** (2010) studied the impact of social networking sites on the education of youth. The study finds that social
networking websites have both positive as well as negative impact on the education of youth, depending on one's interest to use it in a positive manner for his or her education and vice versa.

**Sardar** (2010) while conducting a survey having parameters such as age groups, common used SNSs, purposes of using SNSs and the factors influence the respondents to access social networking websites. The study finds that 25-30 age group most active on Social Networking Sites. Facebook is the most commonly used network and finding new friends is the factor most responsible for using Social Networking Sites.

**Faisal** (2010) discussed the numerous benefits of Ning social networks and its applications in various fields. The study evaluates the general features and activities on Ning platform.

In a recent study on Social Networking Sites **Preeti Mahajan** (2009) tried to look at the impacts of SNS in the Indian society, through linguistic and cultural perspectives. The article entitled “Use of social networking in a linguistically and culturally rich India” describes some of the top Indian SNS and pinpointed some instances where people have used such sites to raise their voice against the bad elements harming people’s culture. The study helps us to enhance the current situation about social networking in India. According to the study Indians are utilizing the power of social networking like Facebook to combat a rising vigilantism against activities that certain groups feel are not keeping with the spirit of Indian culture. The study (2009) says that a Social Networking Site enables us to stay connected despite the
hindrances of distance and time. That is why their popularity and utilization has increased manifold and will continue to increase in future. However, its impact on the country’s social and cultural values is debatable as some Indians consider it as a threat while others feel it is not. Its misuse by a few people needs to be addressed by the site executives, legislators, and people in any regular community and be resolved before they become endemic.

**Neelamalar and Chitra** (2009) investigated the usage and the impact of social networking sites on the younger generation of India. The results of the study indicate that majority of the youth are members of these sites. Most of the respondents registered on it to maintain existing contacts. The study further finds that majority of youth state that Social Networking Sites act as a platform for reconnecting with lost friends, maintaining existing networks/relationships and sharing knowledge, ideas and opinions.

**Studies on General Implications of Social Networking Sites**

In this background **John H. Heinrichs, Jeen-su Lim and Kee-Sook Lim** (2011) have conducted a web-based study which consisted of 226 participants from professional discussion group, provided information regarding their perceptions of social networking sites and access tool usage. The differences in these perceptions based upon the various access methods and various social networking tools are analyzed and
reported. Subsequently the findings of the study show that differences exist in both access methods and social networking tool usage.

In addition the usage patterns based upon the access methods can have an impact on the usage behaviour of social network sites. It clearly says that the high-usage groups have the highest mean values for the perception dimension of ease-of-use for both access method and social networking sites. This suggests that organizations should accommodate and energize mobile users and design changes to their social networking sites to facilitate interaction and information sharing. This study investigated the difference in perception of attitude among the three access method usage groups and the three social networking type groups. The results of the study show that there exist significant differences in perception for all five dimensions of social networking sites for the mobile device and notebook usage groups. This study also examined how individuals create, use, and share information and knowledge from various sources and in various forms using three identified access methods. If I talk about the limitations of this study I must acknowledge the fact that the respondents to this study do not represent a diverse enough audience.

The study entitled “**Online social networking: An Australian perspective**” (2009) is the outcome of a survey conducted in Australia in 2007/08 that investigated the experiences of online social network users aged between 15-65 years. The survey aimed to uncover the experiences and attitudes of active online social network users. In this
study of online social network users, principles of two socio-cultural theories of learning (namely Situated Cognition and Activity Theory) are applied. Indeed it is true that the popularity of online social networking users has increased significantly in a relatively short period of time. In Australia Myspace and Facebook are consistently listed among the top 10 most popular websites in the country. The popularity of these sites makes them a valuable context for exploring the nature of 21st century socialization and, in turn, the phenomenon of online identity creation. While understanding this phenomenon it is useful to consider two socio-cultural perspectives of learning: Situated Cognition and Activity Theory. In this study both quantitative and qualitative data are reported on issues of privacy, relationship between online and offline friends, time engaged in online social networking activities, use of photographs and status features and positive and negative experiences associated with online social networking. These findings are basically interpreted from a socio-cultural perspective of learning. The study results provide understanding of frequency and type of online engagement through social networking sites and some insight into the experiences and feelings of individuals who choose to use such sites. More importantly, the results of this study are considered in the light of socio-cultural theories of learning. Thus this facilitates consideration of the impact of social networking sites as culturally value cognitive tools which, once mastered, enable the user to participate in an online community. Social networking sites reflect the emerging socialization practices of the online communities who participate. From the theoretical perspective
discussed in this study, holistic investigation of the phenomenon acknowledge that the interaction is not merely between individual and tool but rather a form of socialization that is underpinned by one’s conscious decision to create an online identity that is accessible by others.

Internet has expanded rapidly and shifted from being solely an information access tool to being an interaction tool used by individuals to discover and share content, opinions, and information. To develop information connections, individuals are using a variety of technologies to access content and join virtual communities on various social networking sites. What interest the researchers and organizations is the individuals’ perception of social networking sites using the identified dimensions of ease-of-use, usefulness, information quality, feeling, and intention of usage.

**Quan-Haase** (2008) develops **Dennis’s** (2007) arguments and reviews the body of research on the use and role of instant messaging (IM) in student life, and how IM is a key part of university student’s communication. Quan-Haase (2008) developed a map of the literature available on IM, and produced a flow sheet demonstrating the effects it can have on its users, as well as where it can be adapted for use.

**Sandars** (2007) and **Boulos and Wheelert** (2007) argued that the potential of personal networks used in the healthcare fields has been limited by the ability to manage the large variety of networks in place. Sandars (2007) argued that new technologies such as Social
Networking Sites can facilitate the flow of information between networks by hosting online chat rooms and private online collaboration areas.

The Valadez and Duran (2007) study indicates that schools in California in the US have greater access to technology which tend to find more creative uses for it, communication by email more often with students, and engaging more frequently in professional activities such as on-line communication with other teachers.

Althaf Marsoof in his article entitled “Online social networking and the right to privacy: the conflicting rights of privacy and expression” gives a detailed description about how the advancement of Information Technology has hastened the ability to disseminate information across the globe. In particular, the recent trends in ‘Social Networking’ have led to a spark in personally sensitive information being published on the World Wide Web. While such socially active websites are creative tools for expressing one’s personality it also entails serious privacy concerns. Thus, Social Networking websites could be termed a double edged sword. It is important for the law to keep abreast of these developments in technology. The major theme of the study was to demonstrate the limits of extending existing laws to battle privacy intrusions in the Internet especially in the context of social networking. It is suggested that privacy specific legislation is the most appropriate means of protecting online privacy. In doing so it is mandatory to maintain a balance in the competing right of expression, failure of which may hinder the benefits offered by Internet technology.
Studies on Gender Differences in Usage of Social Networking Sites

Peluchette and Karl (2008) examined students’ use and attitudes toward Social Networking Sites. Significant gender differences were found regarding the type of information posted and whether students were comfortable with employers seeing this information. Although both males and females were not comfortable with employers having access to such information, males indicated less concern about this than females. This may influence females’ use of Social Networking Sites. It is evident from this study that there is a gender disparity in the use of Social Networking Sites. But this study (2008) does not say much about how gender differences were found and no deep investigation has been undertaken in this regard.

Waldstrom and Madsen (2007) investigated whether there are gender differences in the importance placed upon the two types of network support among managers in organizations in Europe. Their expectation was that it could be likely that female managers would not have their social contact needs satisfied to the same extent as their male colleagues and that, female managers would not regard their nearest colleagues as friends to the same degree as male managers. Their findings were, however, inconclusive as they found that gender differences are strongly influenced by age, marital status and children at home.
A study conducted by Headlam-Wells, Craig and Gosland (2006) aimed at analysing the barriers that women face in industry, and to evaluate the effects of an e-mentoring scheme designed to overcome obstacles and promote career development. E-mentoring can include the use of web-based media such as chat rooms and discussion areas. In many e-mentoring schemes, however, e-mail is the sole means of electronic communication used. Developing online communication involves a blend of technical planning and social development. As such this development must combine usability, with sociability, which focuses on social interaction. Subsequently this level of interaction may be gained from groups in Social Networking. The study (2006) shows positive impact of Social Networking Sites such as the valuable service it provides to the needy women.

Gender discrimination in the use of Social Networking Sites is also indicated by the study conducted by Knouse and Webb (2001). They state that women’s social networks are historically not as strong as those of men. This is a reason for not advancing in the business arena. They suggest that due to the low cost of internet development and usage, an online social network should be used for creating support networks and for finding mentors and mentoring each other. This study states that over a period of time, the online social networks may grow to be as strong as the traditional male social networks, and that this will lead to an equalisation of roles within the workplace and greater gender equality.
Marcella (2001) investigated the use of internet by women, with specific interest in the availability of women’s websites on the internet. She states that these types of sites are relatively common, but fears regarding their security which may actually restrain women from using these sites. She also raises the concern that the Social Networking Sites do not offer sufficient interactivity to allow users to get the full benefit for using them. Marcella also referenced a study (Mitchell, 1998, in Marcella, 2000) demonstrating that women use internet less than men and that even though internet is being used more and more by women, men still make more use of it than women do. The study (2001) also makes a critical appraisal of women-oriented sites and concludes that women-oriented sites provide valuable spaces on the web for women to interact with each other and to have discussions. These sites also provide freedom to women to develop their own space and presence on the web and to begin to use the web to the same degree as men, but through different, gender specific channels.

The studies referred to above are helpful in identifying the different facets of the gender dimension of SNS. The previous studies acknowledge that there is gender discrimination not only in the usage pattern but also in the total percentage of use between male and female population.
Studies on General Aspects of Social Networking Sites

Haibo Hua, Xiaofan Wang in a study entitled “How people make friends in Social Networking Sites—A microscopic Perspective” (2011) examines how people use Social Networking Sites and what are the purposes for doing so. Furthermore, they study the detailed growth of Social Networking Sites with full temporal information by examining the creation process of each friendship relation that can collectively lead to the macroscopic properties of the network. We first learn from the study, the reciprocal behaviour of users, and find that link requests are quickly responded to and that the distribution of reciprocation intervals decays in an exponential form. The degrees of inviter/accepters are slightly negatively correlate with reciprocation time. In addition, the temporal feature of the online community shows that the distributions of intervals of user behaviors, such as sending or accepting link requests, follow a power law with a universal exponent, and peaks emerge for intervals of an integral day. We finally study the preferential selection and linking phenomena of the social networking site and discover that, for the former, a linear preference holds for preferential sending and reception, and for the latter, a linear preference also holds for preferential acceptance, creation, and attachment. Based on the linearly preferential linking, they put forward an analyzable network model which can reproduce the degree of distribution of the network. The research framework presented in the paper could provide a
potential insight into how the micro-motives of users lead to the global structure of online social networks.

In a study entitled “On Social Websites” Won Kim, Sang-WonLee (2009) gave detailed information on the recent trends in the realm of Social Networking Sites. According to them today millions of Internet users are using thousands of Social Networking Sites to stay connected with their friends, discover new “friends,” and to share user-created contents, such as photos, videos, social bookmarks, and blogs. Yet there is lots of controversy about the benefits of these sites, and many social issues have been raised pertaining to that these sites. There are lots of press articles, Wikipedia articles, and blogs—in varying degree projecting authoritativeness, clarity and accuracy—about some of the social Websites, uses of the sites, and some social problems, and business challenges faced by the sites. In this study (2009), they attempted to organize the status, uses, and issues of Social Networking Sites into a comprehensive framework for discussing, understanding, using, building, and forecasting the future of Social Networking Sites.

The study conducted by Anne West, Jane Lewis and Peter Curries (2009) on “Student Facebook ‘friends’: Public and Private Spheres”, suggested that Social Networking Sites, such as Facebook are associated with new ways of constructing some of the notions surrounding the traditional public/private dichotomy. Notions of what are private and what are public is fuzzy, with no clear-cut
public/private dichotomy. Computer mediated communication appears to make this fuzziness more apparent than has hitherto been the case.

**Mark R Davis and Barbara A Lee** (2008) carried out a study on “The Legal Implications of Students’ Use of Social Networking Sites in the UK and US: Current Concerns and Lessons for the Future”. It provides a comparative snapshot of the current state of the law in the US and UK with respect to the potential liability of University and college students for use (and misuse) of Social Networking Sites. It reviews the limited case law on this topic, highlights the differences in the two nations’ law of determination and the various possible legal claims available to individuals allegedly harmed by posting on these Social Networking Sites, and concludes that country currently do not offers a satisfactory legal or quasi-legal model for resolving these disputes. There is a scope for such a study in the Indian context too.

**Catherine Dwyer, Starr Roxanne Hiltz and Katia Passerini** (2007) studied how trust in a particular Social Networking Site and other members can affect user’s willingness to share information and develop new relationships. The relation between internet privacy concerns and willingness to share information and develop new relationships was analyzed. The study conducted with a comparison of Facebook and MySpace and the results showed that online friendships can develop in Social Networking Sites where perceived trust is low and protection of privacy is minimal.
Eszter Hargittai (2007) conducted a study titled “Who space? Difference between Users and Non-users of Social Networking Sites”, which aimed to explore or look at predictors of Social Networking Sites usage with particular focus on Facebook, MySpace, Xango and Friendster. A survey was also carried out among the college students of Illinois and Chicago. Findings of the study (2007) suggest that the use of Social Networking Sites was not randomly distributed across a group of highly wired users, but a person’s gender, race, ethnicity and parental and educational background were all associated with the use. It threw light on the reasons for the use and non-usage of the Social Networking Sites and how a person’s demographic characteristics and social surroundings of his/her use might relate to the use of particular Social Networking Sites he/she embraces.

Topper (2007) discussed about Social Networking Sites in library. The purpose of the study was to understand the impact that social networking had on public and academic libraries. Literature review was the important method adopted for the work and the study found that libraries have to reach users in their preferred method of communication and they show the value of planning ahead for the future and the ways patrons were accessing information. The younger generation’s perspective on the internet and on Social Networking Sites in particular was identified from the study (2007).
Alessandro Acquisti and Ralph Gross (2006) through their study “Imagined communities Awareness, information Sharing and Privacy on Facebook” convey the underlying demographic or behavioral differences between the communities of the network’s members and non-members and impact of privacy concerns on member’s behavior. In this study (2006), the researchers observed that age and student status are the most important factors in determining the Facebook membership, though the privacy concerns also play a role, but only for non-undergraduate students. Majority of the members are aware of the visibility of their profiles and they rely on their own ability to control the information they disseminate. However, they document significant dichotomies between specific privacy concerns and actual information revelation behaviour.

Lars Backstrom, Dan Huttenlocher, Jon Kleinberg and Xiangyang Lan (2006) discussed some interesting factors about the evolution of online groups in web communities and Social Networking Sites. The study (2006) was performed to bring out (a) the structural features that influence an individual to join a community, and (b) which communities will grow rapidly and how does the overlapping among pairs of communities changes over a period of time? The result of the study (2006) tells us about the tendency of individuals to join communities, and that communities to grow rapidly, depend in subtle ways on the underlying network structure. The liking of an individual to join a community is influenced not just by the number of friends
he/she has in that community, but also crucially on how those friends are connected to one another.

**Studies on Various Types of Social Networking Sites**

Currently, there are large numbers of Social Networking Sites throughout the world. A review of studies on different types of Social Networking Sites is provided in the next section.

*Akyildiz and Argan* (2011) examined the usage of Facebook, a significant component of SNSs among Turkish undergraduate students. The study explores the social, daily and educational purposes of using Facebook and also the time spent on it. Further the study found that almost all students have a Facebook account and this network is used for social and daily activities rather than educational and school related purposes. Majority of the students associated with this new media since last 2 years.

*Tiryakiogiu and Erzurum* (2011) investigate the opinions and arrogances of instructors regarding use of Facebook in the Faculty of Communication Sciences at Anadolu University in Turkey. The study finds that 74% instructors have a Facebook account and they spend less than half an hour per day on Facebook. The main purpose of using Facebook is to communicate with friends. They also observe that Facebook can provide important contributions to social interactions among students as well as to communications between instructors and students.
**Lisboa and Coutinho** (2011) discussed the characteristics of virtual communities of the Orkut social network, focusing in particular on education, training and technology, in order to understand whether this and other social websites allow the development of informal learning and the role of e-moderator. The study revealed that there are substantial differences between moderated and public communities regarding themes, the types of language used and the forms of communication and collaboration employed. The e-moderator emerges as the key element in fostering ‘virtual communities; however, it is noticeable that e-moderators are not fully aware of the importance of their role, often assuming a more administrative than pedagogical function. They suggest that these environments can be used in the process of the professional development of teachers and students, which relies on collaboration and sharing knowledge about subjects.

**Lim** (2010) describes the use of Facebook as a platform for academic discussions among distance learners. It offers a glimpse into how mobile learning via SMS together with Facebook was used to support and enhance the blended learning approach at Open University Malaysia for three courses: Learning Skills for Open and Distance Learners, Company Law and Renal Nursing. The study found that Facebook does have the potential to draw distance learners to engage in meaningful academic Conversations but the quantity and quality of posts very much depends on the timing as well as the topics of discussion.
Roblyer (2010) conducted a comparative study among college faculty and students regarding use and perception of Facebook social network. The study found that students are more likely to use Facebook for communication with friends and favour to support classroom work rather than faculty. As compared to students, faculty favour in using e-mail technology.

A study by Brady, Holcomb and Smith (2010) puts attention on educational benefits of Social Networking Sites in general and Ning in particular. It studied the graduate distance learners regarding their use of Ning in distance educational courses. The study finds that SNSs provide significant learning benefits in their courses. Ning provides collaborative and communicative platform with peers and colleagues at work place. The results of that study suggest guidance and direction on how best to utilize SNSs to meet the needs of students in distance education courses.

Fields (2010) attempted to provide a comprehensive view of using twitter by the library staff for marketing and promotion of reference work in libraries. The study provides a comprehensive model of Koerner library at University of British Columbia (UBC) - which is using their institutional Twitter account to "tweet" reference questions asked during public service shifts.

Forsyth and Perry (2010) explored the use, planning, evaluation and impact of flick in public libraries by putting the following questions such as what the libraries have observed about their presence on
Flickr?, how Flickr relates to other social networking tools and using, tagging, and overall satisfaction of the use of their images on Flickr. The study finds that Flickr has been used by people for recording events and promoting their collections. Majority of respondents used Flickr that they use one or more other web 2.0 technologies, in blog which is the most commonly used tool.

**Fox and Naidu** (2009) evaluated the usability of three of the most popular Social Networking Sites; Myspace, Facebook and Orkut with first-time users. Facebook is the leading network among these sites. The study revealed issues related to confusing terminology, inadequate feedback and error messages, improper link location- impacted user performance and satisfaction.

**Pempek, Yermolayeva and Calvert** (2009) in their study found information about the use of social networking sites by college students. It also evaluated how much, why, and how they use these sites. Results showed that Facebook is the most popular website among young adults.

**Xia** (2009) surveyed the Facebook Groups at two major research universities in the USA to discover whether these groups are good practices for library marketing by examining group discussion transcripts and history. The study found that the success of Facebook Groups can be controlled by the active organization of librarians and by using more general topics to keep discussions alive. It also finds that
Facebook Groups should target not only students but also faculty and staff in support of their research and teaching.

Ferdig (2008) determined if and how medical students and residents are using Facebook at a university in the South-eastern United States. They studied whether respondents had a Facebook account and their account private or public. The study finds that majority of the respondents have an account and they maintain a public profile. The study indicates that majority of the medical students seem unaware and unconcerned about sharing personal information at a public domain which could affect their professional lives. This study provides preliminary evidence that online tools such as social networking communities should become a part of the dialogue related to preparing future physicians to meet the ACGME professionalism competency.

**Concluding Note**

The studies cited in this chapter give a clear picture of the diversity in studies on Social Networking Sites. The Social Networking Sites are a highly important medium of communication and entertainment, especially for youth. As a matter of fact youngsters are far more attracted than any group of people to Social Networking Sites. This may be due to the vast advantages that these sites provide including better access to people around the world, instant messaging, video
calling, access to various products and services of many companies and brands and much more.

In this era the development of technology and its accessibility has enabled rapid expansion and popularity of Social networking Sites. Consequently this global phenomenon is affecting interpersonal relationships of many. This aspect only stresses upon a detailed research work to be carried out involving interpersonal relationships and Social Networking Sites. As such, the present study primarily focuses upon college students in the Indian context. College Students are the mass users of these sites and hence it becomes important to analyse them in relation to their Social Networking Sites usage and the impacts it causes has on their interpersonal relationships.

Therefore to have a clear view, it is highly essential to have the knowledge of existing studies and articles with regard to Social Networking Sites. As a result this aids in better formulation of the present study and a proper understanding of the diversified opinions existent. All the studies mentioned in the review give a plethora of views about Social Networking Sites and correctly position the importance of the present study. It is noteworthy that not many researchers have been undertaken regarding interpersonal relationships of college students and Social Networking Sites in the Indian context. Hence it is far more vital to analyse it in the Indian context.
Besides, a review of relevant literature provides with an overview about the subject matter and the different kinds of methods, sample and findings that were used and the key findings. This again helps in the correct selection of proper methods and requirements for the present study.

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