ABSTRACT

Wireless communication technologies have become widespread all over the world. In 2006, 90.9% of people in the developed countries and 32.4% of people in the developing countries owned a cellular phone (ITU, 2006). Over the last decade the mobile phone has penetrated in every sector, presenting many opportunities to many areas, including higher education (Campbell, 2002). According to Brown et al. (2002), several features contribute to the popularity of the mobile phone, but it is the ‘mobile component’ of the mobile devices which is the most important feature.

Mobile communication offers a lot of advantages but it has also negative aspects. In response to a question about mobile-phone addiction, one out of three students said that they felt addicted to their phones. This sense of addiction may be related to dependency and heavy usage (Katz, 2005).

The study was conducted on a sample of 613 students belonging to Medical and Engineering Colleges. In Medical, there were 436 students and in Engineering there were 177 students. There were 347 students below 20 years of age and 266 students above 20 years of age. And, the sample included 251 males and 362 females.

The findings of the present study show that a substantial percentage of students uses the cell phone for more than 4 hours per day; receive on an average 18 calls per day and make about 8 calls daily.
The most popular applications are music and games. They feel that cell phones are status symbols and that most of the world is addicted to cell phones.

They admit that cell phones provide security when lost or in new places but state that late night conversations do not disturb concentration in the class. About 40 percent of students admit that they would prefer talking to friends on their cell phones rather than parents when they are at home. However, they do not prefer to engage in cell phone conversations when they are in a low mood.

The study also highlighted significant gender differences in cell phone usage and effects. Male students use the phone more than the female students. They are more unlikely to switch off their phones and are prone to disturbance in concentration. Male students have also been found to yield to peer pressure to buy new models of the cell phones and rely on cell phones when they have to tell a lie. The influence of place of stay on cell phone usage and effects shows that the effect is more for students staying at home. This group of students uses the cell phone more and show more addiction. The students residing at home prefer to talk to their friends more than their parents.