CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Internet addiction is a type of e-addiction which is currently on the rise. Launching of internet brought about a revolution in the field of communication and information technology. The world has become a global village with email/internet facilities, giving rise to increased efficiency in networking. The problem started when internet usage slowly gave way to internet addiction. Net users became more and more alienated and started living in a virtual world. Social contacts/interaction took a knocking and compulsive usage to sit on computer and use it for hours together oblivious of other responsibilities spelled doom. This trend is even more damaging for youngsters who have yet to blossom and choose appropriate careers. Psychologists, educationists and other social scientists realized the dire need to probe this internet addiction and explore the factors playing a role in Internet Addiction. It was with this background that present study was envisaged. It was decided to study the role of various psychosocial factors in internet addiction among male and female adolescents.

The primary aim of the present investigation was to study the effects of the different types of internet addiction viz. cyber-sexual addiction, cyber-relational addiction and information overload, and gender on internet addiction and its correlates among adolescents. The effect of the employment status of the mothers on internet addiction and its correlates was also studied. For this purpose, 3x2x2 analysis of variance was employed with 30 replications in each condition.

The secondary aim was to study the relationship of internet addiction with Eysenckian dimensions of Personality viz., Psychoticism, Neuroticism, Extraversion and Social Desirability (Lie Scale), State – Trait Anxiety, Locus of Control, Sensation Seeking (Thrill and Adventure Seeking, Experience
Seeking, Disinhibition, Boredom Susceptibility and Total Sensation Seeking), Shyness, Loneliness, Stress Symptoms, Daily Hassles and Uplifts, Coping (Task Focused Coping, Emotion Focused Coping and Avoidance Focused Coping), Mental Health and its dimensions (Being Comfortable With Self, Being Comfortable With Others, Perceived Ability to Meet Life’s Demands and Total Mental Health), Perceived Parental Bonding (Perceived Maternal Care, Perceived Maternal Overprotection, Perceived Paternal Care, Perceived Paternal Overprotection), Satisfaction With Life and Perceived Social Support.

Predictors of internet addiction in terms of above mentioned variables were also identified for all the groups.

The main objectives of the investigation were:

1. To study the impact of types of internet usage viz., Cyber-sexual addiction, Cyber-relational addiction and Information Overload, on Internet Addiction and its correlates.

2. To study Gender differences in Internet Addiction and its correlates.

3. To study the impact of working status of mothers on adolescents’ Internet Addiction and its correlates.

4. Relationship of Internet Addiction with Personality, Stress, Coping, Satisfaction With Life, Mental Health, Parental Bonding and Perceived Social Support was also explored.

The results of the study were expected to help in planning interventions both at preventive and curative levels based on empirical findings.

Results revealed male adolescent users to score higher on Internet Addiction, Shyness, Loneliness, Stress and Psychoticism than female users. Similarly Children of Working Mothers scored higher on Internet Addiction,
Stress, Shyness, Loneliness and Avoidance Coping than Children of Non-Working Mothers. Children of Non-Working Mothers in the same category and scored higher on Satisfaction with Life, Mental Health and Perceived Social Support. The group using internet for pornographic purposes had the worst profile scoring higher on Internet Addiction, Psychoticism, Neuroticism, Stress and Anxiety, and lower on Extraversion compared to other groups. Comparison between Dependent users of Internet and control group (non-dependent users of internet) revealed internet addicted group to score higher on risk factors viz. Internet Addiction, Psychoticism, Neuroticism, Stress, Hassles, Emotion Focused Coping, Avoidance Coping, State-Trait Anxiety, Loneliness, Perceived Parental Overprotection, Sensation Seeking and lower on protective factors like Perceived Parental Care, Mental Health, Satisfaction with Life, and Task Focused Coping.

Clear implications of this study are that adolescents addicted to net usage need help in stress management, social skills, anxiety management, dealing/coping with stress. They also need to be told about the importance of socializing. Some training in appropriate coping in dealing with stress can be initiated. Another major finding was the role of Parental Bonding: Perceived Parental care and Social support were higher in adolescents using net for limited hours and for communication purposes. Such adolescents were higher on WHO Mental Health and Satisfaction with Life. Thus parents play a great role in monitoring net usage.

In the same vein, results also revealed children of working mothers to score higher on risk factors of Stress, Shyness, Loneliness and Anxiety. Same was true for male adolescents in comparison to female adolescents addicted to the net. It implies that male adolescents and children of working mothers addicted to the net are more vulnerable in terms of risk factors and need more help.
The study is limited to adolescents in the urban area only. One may plan future investigations to explore dynamics of Internet Addiction in rural areas and for other age groups also.

In the end, one may conclude that heightened awareness about protective and risk factors in Internet Addiction in terms of empirical findings in the present investigation gives credence to interventions to be planned to modify this type of addiction among adolescents.