Chapter 6
SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES & DEVIANCE: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS
6.1 Introduction

We are in the period of ‘Information Explosion’. The electronic and digital media have completely changed the Indian social scenario. All types of information reaches home easily. This has not only changed the psychology of people but also changed their behaviour and lifestyle. Even though information explosion has affected all sections of society, but it is the youth and adolescents who are most influenced by the technological spurt\(^1\). Information Revolution has given impetus to the process of Globalisation. Due to information explosion all types of control on the flow of information are impossible. Newspapers are read online and mobile use is expanding. Internet is the heart of the Information revolution. Youth and adolescents are more diligent social media consumers. Internet occupies a central position in present day mass media society and social media seems to be a natural element in leisure. Social Media today not only serves as a mirror of society but also as an instrument of social change. The use of media is now more and more individualized. Furthermore, in the contemporary era the geographical distances play a vague role. Social relations are lifted from the physical context. This is all because of technological development. In network society, we organise our lives around mass and social media. It seems natural for us to see the media as anchored in the private
spheres. A radical change is evident in the norms and lifestyle of adolescents in modern India. The impact of westernization and globalization has made young generation techno savvy and leisure oriented. One of the most noticeable change is the adolescents’ preoccupation with electronic gadgets such as mobiles, I pads, laptops or in other words their heightened “technical consciousness”. The past ten years have witnessed the emergence of a new phenomenon i.e. Social Networking sites. Social Networking is as old as Human Society. Human beings have always sought to live in social environment. However, now social networking has shifted towards Internet to a significant extent. This is an activity in which millions of Internet Users are involved both in their leisure time and at work. However, there has been very little research on impact of these sites on adolescents in the Indian context. The world of Internet continues to expand as does the research about its use by adolescents. Thus, with this background an attempt is made in this study to analyze the impact of social media on adolescents and their life style. An attempt has been made to find out their activities on social networking sites and whether they provide a new venue to adolescents to behave in a deviant manner. The study also attempts to identify why adolescents are more likely to involve in deviant behaviour through social networking sites. For this individual attributes such as age, sex, education and parent’s income are used to
construct a predictive model. Further, this study also analyzes various types of cybercrimes on social networking sites in which adolescents are either victims or perpetrators. As mentioned earlier, the study sample includes 315 adolescents of major schools of Jaipur city. The users of Social Networking Sites were given a questionnaire to fill, followed by an informal interview to supplement the information.

6.2 Profile of the Respondents

For an understanding of the ideas, values, attitudes and aspirations of the adolescents, certain sociological variables are taken into consideration to know how they influence the behaviour of the adolescents. The variables such as age, sex composition, family income, and school background provide the profile of adolescents.

6.2(i) Age-Group

Adolescents form an important group in the use of Social media. The study covers the adolescents ranging from 13 years to 17 years.
The above diagram shows the percentage of various users and non-users in the age groups classified. The data reveals that maximum numbers of users (44.25%) of social networking sites fall in the category of 16 to 17 years of age. Adolescents in the age group of 13-14 years are less inclined to use social networking sites (only 8.75%) as compared to adolescents of other age groups. The adolescents of upper age groups (16-17 years) have easy and fast access to technology in contemporary society. Nowadays schools as well homes are equipped with Internet. Adolescent students use it for various developmental tasks. They are well conversant with new and varied online games and are quite comfortable with the use of Social media. As per the Law no one below 18 years of age can open an account on Social Networking Site. However, there are websites that allow users who are 13 and above to
create an account, even though Indian law does not permit it. The fact is that it is easy to change age while signing up for any social networking site. Lack of verification has led to many accounts with false data, especially age, which is the most important parameter. No efforts appear to have been initiated to put a check on this.

6.2(ii) Schools Attended

The school background have varied effects on the lifestyle of an individual. The adolescents who study in convents and private schools differ in values, attitudes, thinking etc from those who study in government schools.

Schools attended(%)
The data shows that majority of users (82.5%) of Social networking sites belong to private and missionary schools. Even though government schools have users of social networking sites but these are much less in comparison to public and convent schools. The prime reason is that the students of missionary and private schools enjoy more independence for use of technology and they belong to affluent families. In addition, private and missionary schools have such curriculums in which use of Internet has become inevitable.

6.2(iii) Sex Composition

The adolescent users of social networking sites were further classified into males and females. It is important to understand the impact of social networking sites on both males and females.

Sex Composition (%)
Diagram 6.2(iii)

The data in the above table reveals that both males and females are active users of social networking sites. This is because of the rapid social change in our society. Parents give equal opportunities to both boys and girls. Girls are also equipped with latest technological gadgets and use Internet and Social networking sites as effectively as boys.

6.3 Socio-Economic Profile of Respondents

6.3 (i) Monthly Family Income

In order to find out the number of respondents belonging to a particular income group, three income groups were categorized; viz. low, middle and high. In low income categories, those respondents are included whose family income is below 20,000 per month. In the middle income the respondents between 20,000 and 50,000 per month and in the high income category respondents family income is more than 50,000 per month.
The data shows that 12.5% of the users belong to low-income category, 30% belong to middle income category and 67.5% respondents belong to upper income category. This shows that large numbers of respondents who are active users of social networking sites come from upper section of society followed by middle class and few come from lower section of society. The reason for this is that the respondents belonging to upper strata of society have more and easy access to technology in comparison to those who belong to lower or middle strata. It is observed that there are persistent differences in technology adoption, often referred to as the digital divide.\(^2\)
6.3(ii) Religion

Indian Society comprises of many religions. It is important to find out whether technology affects all religions or only few are influenced.

**Religious Groups (%)**

![Diagram 6.3(ii)](image)

**Diagram 6.3(ii)**

Adolescent users belong to various religions. However, Hindus formed the majority (72%) followed by Muslims (15%), Sikhs (8%) and Christians (5%). Respondents of all religions are active on social networking sites. Here, the number is less of Muslims, Sikhs and Christians pertaining the fact that their overall population is less in comparison to Hindus.

6.3(iii) Caste

Among Hindus we find many castes and sub-castes. The study also tries to find out the influence of Social networking sites on various castes.

**Caste (%)**
Adolescents belong to different castes as seen from the above diagram. Maximum of them are Jain (22%) followed by Brahmin (20%), Baniya (20%), Sindhi (12%), Punjabi (11%), SC, OBC (7%) and ST (6%). The fact is that use of technology is increasing very fast and it has little relation with caste.

6.3(iv) Working Parents

It is important to find out the impact of social networking sites on such adolescents whose both parents are working.
45% of the respondents have both parents working while 55% have only one parent working. If both Parents are working, it influence the socialization of the adolescents because they do not get adequate attention and time. This may also lead to excessive use of social networking sites where they find many friends with whom they can interact and share.

### 6.4 Social Networking Sites and Related trends

Social networking sites play an important role in daily lives. With the advent of new technology, changing trend and behaviour is observed among adolescents. With an increase in technological dependency, it is imperative to find out its effect on the behaviour of adolescents, and whether it is leading to any deviance on their part. The study also aims
to find out whether adolescents are only the victims or even perpetrators of cyber crimes. The following findings and discussions provide a framework for effective conclusion of the study:

6.4(i) Entertainment Sources

It is worthwhile to note that adolescents make use of various sources for entertainment, learning and studies. The following table shows the presence of various sources in their homes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entertainment Sources (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DVD Player</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Game Console</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Figures overlap because respondents have given more than one answer)

Diagram 6.4(i)

As can be seen from the above diagram, 90% of the adolescents have computers as well as Internet connection in their homes. As compared to other sources like DVD (30%) and Game console (50%), presence of
computer and internet is relatively more. However, it is seen that 100% of adolescents have TV in their homes. Computer and Internet may take some more time to compete with Television. The prominent functions of the Internet such as instant messaging, blogs, chat, bulletin boards and social networking sites, made it popular among adolescents. Moreover, they are called as ‘digital netizens’\(^3\) and use social networking sites to connect online.

6.4(ii) Frequency of Accessing Account
Respondents with a profile on a social networking site use the sites quite frequently. The following diagram highlights frequency of using Social Networking Sites.

**Diagram 6.4(ii)**
Adolescent Internet use has intensified over the years. In the sample, 60% of them agree that they access their social networking site account daily; Out of this 35% have both parents working while 25% have only one parent working. 30% say that they go on social networking site once in a week; in this 20% have one parent working while 10% have both parents working. 10% respondents check once in fortnight; 7% have only one parent working while 3% have both parents working. The present generation is an avid user of social media. Besides, the study reveals that majority of adolescent users who access their account daily have both parents working. This shows that these parents give less time and attention to their children. They constantly feel the need of social association through social networking. Thus, a large part of their socialization is on social networking sites.

6.4(iii) Time Devoted

Adolescent is a transitional period where students have so much to learn and experiment. It is time when they try to fit into various identities online as well as offline. However, it is essential to find the amount of time devoted by them on social networking sites because this period of development is crucial for their career and life.
In the study, majority of the sample i.e. 70% said that they are on social networking sites for more than 2 hours every day; 55% have both parents working while 15% have only one parent working. 20% of respondents are online for 1-2 hours; 8% have both parents working while 12% have only one parent working. 10% adolescents are online for less than 1 hour; 3% have both parents working while 7% have only one parent working. Social networking sites provide opportunity to adolescents to zone in and out on a regular basis for a considerable amount of time. The study also shows that adolescents of both working parents spend a considerable amount of time on Social networking sites. It has benefits as well as risks. Some of the benefits are; Staying
connected, developing new social contacts, sharing content of self-expression, and developing and expressing individual identity. However, social networking involves associated risks such as; Bullying online i.e. "cyber bullying", vulnerability to predators online, identity theft, cyber defamation and reduction in physical activities.

6.4(iv) Reasons for Membership

Social Networking Sites are used for many purposes. The following diagram reveals various reasons for which adolescents use these sites.

![Reasons for Membership (%)](image)

(Figures overlap because respondents have given more than one answer)

Diagram 6.4(iv)

The respondents report a variety of reasons for the use of social networking sites. Majority of them i.e. 70% report that they are on social networking sites to enhance their status, 65% of them use for entertainment, 56% are involved in viewing or posting photographs,
38% use them for finding out new friends, 30% want to maintain their existing friends or contacts through these sites while 20% use social networking sites for planning events. Previously importance was on values, norms and good thinking but nowadays emphasis is on external qualities of an individual, that is why use of social networking sites is a symbol of status enhancement among adolescents.

6.4 (v) Number of Friends

The most important purpose of social networking sites seems to be making friends or maintaining existing contacts with friends online. The following diagram presents number of online friends on various social networking sites.

**Number of Friends (%)**

![Diagram 6.4(v)](image-url)
Online friends facilitate creating and maintaining a large number of ties. This is evident in the study as majority of adolescents i.e. 67% have more than 50 friends online. Only 13% have friends ranging from 30 to 50, and 7% have friends ranging from 10 to 29 while about 13% have less than 10 friends on social networking sites. It is believed by digital generation that more number of friends enhances their status among peers and makes them more popular, technically sound and confident.

6.4(vi) Multiple Activities

Building one’s social network is an ongoing process. However, after setting up a profile on social networking site one starts communicating and involving in many activities. These activities are shown in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities on Social Networking Sites (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Profile Setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo Sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scraps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy access of other Profile</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As reflected from the above diagram, users engage in variety of activities on social networking sites. Majority of them i.e. 80% involve in maintaining friends network. About 75% adolescents are involved in Photo sharing and the same number is involved in Scrapping, 50% also do profile setting while 40% have framed online communities and 40% also access others profile on these sites. Identity formation on these sites is very important aspect and adolescents frame and reframe their identities through various networks on these sites.

**6.4(vii) Major Social Networking Sites Used**

Even though many social networking sites are available on Internet, but very few of them are able to make their mark on youth and adolescents. The following diagram depicts the main social networking sites used by adolescents.
Majority i.e. 80% of the respondents have account on Facebook which is followed by Twitter (50%), MySpace (40%), Tagged (30%), LinkedIn (30%) and Hi5 (25%). Facebook is the most popular social networking site among adolescents. The features of Facebook allow users to connect with friends and family with minimal effort. Facebook is a useful and enjoyable way of interacting with others online. Facebook allows people to share information with others more efficiently and with better "net etiquette" than other forms of online communication.
6.5 Effects of Social Networking Sites

The effect of Social networking sites on various aspects of adolescents’ lives is detailed below with a view to understand the change in their behaviour.

6.5(i) Effect on Academic Performance

They learn a lot of things online which are positive as well as negative. It is essential to analyze the effect of social networking sites on various aspects of adolescents’ life. The following diagram highlights the effect of social networking sites on the academic performance of adolescents.

![Diagram 6.5(i)](image)

Majority of the adolescents access their account daily, checking it several times a day to see if they have received new messages and updates. About half of the respondents’ i.e.50% had negative effect on
studies because it led to decline in their study hours which results in poor performance in academics. Only 10% accept that it leads to positive effect and 40% said that use of social networking sites has no effect on their studies.

6.5(ii) Effect on Health

Besides social and psychological effects of using social networking sites it is seen that they do have effect on health of those who are using it excessively. The following diagram shows the effects of Social networking sites on health of adolescents.

**Effect on Health (%)**

![Diagram 6.5(ii)](image)
38% of adolescents have ill effects of Social networking sites on their health. Excessive use of social networking site leads to negative physical health because it reduces face-to-face contact, leads to poor sleep, eye strain and poor diet habits. Only 62% did not have any effect on their health.

6.5 (iii) Effect on Outdoor Activities

Playing outdoor is very important for development of physical and mental health. The study also tries to find out the effect of Social networking sites on outdoor activities of adolescents.

**Effect on Outdoor Activities (%)**

![Diagram 6.5(iii)]

The study finds that 55% adolescents have now reduced their play outside after joining Social networking sites. They agreed that they spend more time on Social networking sites in comparison to going out.

As new generation dedicated to online pursuits grows up, adolescents
are becoming weaker, less muscular and unable to do physical tasks that previous generations found simple.

**6.5(iv) Effect on Family Interaction**

Adolescence is possibly the most essential time for social and cognitive development in one’s life. In this period they learn to form and maintain intimate friendships and other essential interpersonal skills. The following diagram shows the effect of social networking sites on Family Interaction.

**Effect on Family Interaction (%)**

![Pie Chart]

**Diagram 6.5(iv)**

Adolescent stage is period of life when an individual wants to do something according to his or her will but social restrictions restrict them. Indian society is in a phase of development characterized by rapid
cultural changes. It is important to observe the change in the interaction of family as a result of adolescents’ involvement in online networking. The above diagram reveals that majority of adolescents (56%) spent less time with their family, and only 44% say that they spent about the same time with the family.

6.5 (v) Effect on Personality

The addiction of virtual world incorporates the experience of the ‘classic’ addiction symptoms, namely mood modification (i.e., engagement in Social networking sites leads to a favourable change in emotional states), withdrawal symptoms (i.e., experiencing unpleasant physical and emotional symptoms when Social networking sites use is restricted or stopped), conflict (i.e., interpersonal problems ensue because of Social networking sites usage), and relapse (i.e., addicts quickly revert back in their excessive Social networking sites usage after an abstinence period).
Effect on Personality (%)  

Diagram 6.5(v)

The study reveals that 55% adolescents have negative effect of social networking sites on their personality. It is seen that these adolescents keep on checking their account again and again to check their inbox. They have developed an urge to be online always. Moreover, any restriction on their Social networking sites use leads to a feeling of aggression and frustration among them. Excessive use of Social networking sites makes them less social and interpersonal.

6.6 Online Behaviour of Adolescents

The online behaviour of adolescents differs from their offline behaviour. Some of the variables are considered to determine whether their online behaviour is leading to deviance.
6.6(i) Posting of Personal Information/Photos

Diagram 6.6(i)

In this survey, 60% adolescents said that they have posted personal information on Social networking sites, while 40% said that they have not posted any personal information online, which means some are aware of the harmful effects of posting information on Social networking sites.

6.6(ii) Abusive Language

The present generation of adolescents use new terminology for conversation on social networking sites. Not only this they learn many bad and abusive words through these Social Networking sites. The following diagram shows the number of respondents who have observed their friends using this language on Social networking sites.
Diagram 6.6(ii)

In the study conducted, 32% adolescents agreed that Social networking sites are breeding grounds for learning abusive words and vulgar language while 68% said that no such thing exists. The fact that no formal or informal control is present on these sites makes adolescents liberal to adapt such terms and use them with ease.

6.6(iii) Friendship with Strangers

Users on Social networking sites do involve in doing friendship with strangers whom they don’t know in real life. The following diagram shows the percentage of adolescents in the sample who like to involve in such friendships.
Friendship with Strangers (%)

Diagram 6.6(iii)

Approximately 48% of the users accepted that they are friends with strangers while 52% accepted that they are friends with already known persons. The friends who are unknown in real life may pose problems for adolescents. These strangers may lure them for criminal activities.

6.6(iv) Creating Fake Profile

The number of Fake Profiles on social networking sites has increased. Adolescents are also involved in framing dual identity for various reasons.
Creating Fake Profile (%)

![Creating Fake Profile (%) Diagram](image)

**Diagram 6.6(iv)**

The study shows that many adolescents (41%) create fake profiles. The reasons are; living two lives, anonymity, sending offensive messages through the fake profiles and defaming or harassing someone.

**6.6(v) Sending Indecent messages/material**

Legally, obscenity refers to words, images or actions that offend the sexual morality of its viewers. This could range from simple profanity to offensive pictures or videos. This is the act of sending sexually explicit messages and/or photographs, primarily between mobile phones and on social networking sites.
Many adolescents (28%) are also involved in sending indecent messages or explicit material to someone through social networking sites. They have seen their friends doing so. They do so out of frustration or simply to harass someone.

**6.6(vi) Cracking Password**

Adolescents are very much involved in trying out new things. They even try to crack passwords on social networking sites.
The study says that 51% of adolescents are involved in cracking passwords on these sites. They may know the names of the persons and on the basis of some personal information they try to crack the passwords. Besides this many software are available on Internet which helps in cracking passwords easily. Adolescents take help of these applications.

6.6(vi) Hacking

Hacking can be done through Social networking sites because access to others profile, photos and information is quite easy. Some of the teens may get involved in this just to prove themselves technically sound in comparison to their peers. The following diagram highlights Hacking done by the users.
Diagram 6.6(vii)

Majority of adolescents (80%) have not tried hacking but still 20% said that they have tried hacking through Social networking sites. The adolescents who are involved in hacking do so because of variety of reasons such as Curiosity, Fun, and Revenge.

6.6(viii) Spreading Viruses

Virus on Social networking sites uses worm-like tactics to spread, taking over the account and sending out spam messages containing an embedded link.
Spreading Viruses

Diagram 6.6(viii)

The Virus exposure extracts private information, including data related to online banking and credit card transactions, making it a threat that may have serious repercussions. The study reveals that many adolescents (33%) are involved in spreading viruses. The reasons are simply to harass someone or to feel superior in front of their peers.

6.6(ix) Identity Theft

Identity theft is a form of stealing someone's identity in which someone pretends to be someone else by assuming that person's identity, usually as a method to gain access to resources or obtain credit and other benefits in that person's name. Identity theft occurs when someone uses another's personally identifying information, like their name, identifying
number, or credit card number, without their permission, to commit fraud or other crimes.

**Identity Theft (%)**

![Identity Theft Pie Chart]

**Diagram 6.6(ix)**

Many Adolescents i.e. 39% are involved in identity theft. Information such as full name, date of birth, hometown, pet names, interests and hobbies, nature of work, and home or office address are just some of the personal details posted on profile. These details are also used for stealing the identity and then using it against someone. Most of them agreed to do it for entertainment.

**6.6(x) Illegal Downloading**

The Internet has brought unimaginable access to information and extraordinary flexibility and opportunities for exploration and
communication. A large percentage of people who use the Internet have downloaded music or movies.

**Illegal Downloading (%)**

![Diagram 6.6(x)](image)

**Diagram 6.6(x)**

The study reveals that a significant number of adolescents (65%) are involved in illegal download of music, videos and software from the Internet. In addition they also download many games from social networking sites illegally.

**6.6(xi) Hate/Offensive Messages**

Social networking sites provide opportunities to users to send hate messages to those people whom they don’t like. It provides an easy platform to the users to harass others. The following diagram presents the percentage of adolescents who like to send hate messages to their friends and teachers.
32% adolescents like to send hate or offensive messages to their friends or teachers if they have some grudges against them. Majority of adolescents (68%) are still not involved in such type of deviance.

**6.6(xii) Online Flaming**

Online Flaming means quarrels with someone online on an issue. Many Adolescents who are unable to fight in physical space can go online and have a virtual fight because it is easier and leaves no traces. The following diagram shows the percentage of respondents who get involved in online flaming.
When asked about online flaming (Fighting, using vulgar language and Expressions), 32% adolescents agreed and 68% denied. As compared to face-to-face flaming, online flaming is easy due to lack of social cues, which decrease in individuals' concern for social evaluation and fear of social sanctions or reprisals. When social identity and in group status are salient, computer mediation can decrease flaming because individuals focus their attention on the social context (and associated norms) rather than themselves.

6.6(xiii) Involved in Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying is bullying someone in cyber space. This has assumed dangerous proportion on social networking sites. The following diagram presents the number of adolescents who are involved in cyber bullying.
The study presents the fact that 54% adolescents are involved in cyber bullying. They do it for various reasons such as to take revenge, to show their power to someone or just for entertainment. The effects of cyber bullying are fear, embarrassment, sadness, anger, poor concentration, absenteeism from school and low achievement.

6.6(xiv) Involved in Cyber Defamation

The tort of cyber defamation is considered to be the act of defaming, insulting, offending or otherwise causing harm through false statements pertaining to an individual in cyberspace. This is commonly done through the Internet via websites, blogs, forums, emails and instant messaging, chat rooms and now in the social networking sphere.
Involved in Cyber Defamation (%)

Diagram 6.6(xiv)

The study shows that 45% of adolescents have seen their friends’ involvement in cyber defamation. Cyber or online defamation is considered to be as harmful as the form of libel and slander in the physical world. In some cases, the effects of online defamation could be worse than an offline incident due to the global nature of the Internet and the fact that the statements can be accessed virtually by anyone. In addition to this, the issue of anonymity online raises even more concern when dealing with defamation because the origin of the statements may be very difficult to trace.
6.6(xv) Compliance with Restrictions

Even though parents set some rules and restrictions on use of social networking sites, adolescents accept some while deny others.

**Diagram 6.6(xv)**

The above diagram indicates that only 40% adolescents agree to restrictions on meeting new people online, only 30% agree on giving personal details on social networking sites, about 20% agree on restrictions to post photographs and only 25% comply with the restrictions on posting videos on these social networking sites. This means majority of adolescents do not accept many norms and rules set.
by their parents which shows clearly a move towards deviance. Parents also feel helpless to go against the wishes of their children because nowadays due to less number of children more importance is given to them. This can cause some form of family disorganization in future. It is normal for adolescents to break any norms set by their parents in contemporary society.

6.7 Awareness, Privacy and Victimization Online

An understanding of awareness and privacy of adolescents will help to understand their vulnerability to victimization to cyber crime.

6.7(i) Awareness about Security

Facts prove that information/Photographs once posted on the Internet can’t be taken back. Even if it is deleted, it is saved somewhere with the administrator. It is important to find about adolescents awareness on it. The following diagram depicts how many teens are aware of this fact:
Diagram 6.7(i)

In this sample, 60% adolescents are not aware of the fact that the information or photographs once posted online are permanent and can be used for any purpose, while only 40% were aware of the above fact. Even after deleting it from our profile, it is stored on the website server, or there is a probability that it is saved without sender’s approval by someone. The important thing to note is that it can be misused in various forms not known to general people.

6.7(ii) Privacy Settings

Privacy settings allow users to determine who can see their profile on social networking sites. They are powerful tools to protect information.
Diagram 6.7(ii)

It is observed in the study that 45% of teens say that the profile they use is set to be private so that only their friends can view the content they post. However, 5% said that their profile is partially private so that friends of friends or their networks can see some version of their profile but half of them i.e. 50% accept that their profile is set to public so that everyone can see it. The reasons given by these adolescents on privacy issues are; Lack of awareness on privacy, assumption that social networking sites has taken care of all Privacy and Safety issues, felt that they were ‘invincible’, and the need for interaction outweighed the need to be aware of privacy. This attitude of adolescents makes them
vulnerable to cyber criminals who can use the information posted on these profiles.

6.7(iii) Cyber Crime through Social Networking Sites

Cyber criminals use social media not only to commit crime online, but also to carry out real world crime owing to ‘over-sharing’ across these social platforms. Although features of social networking sites differ, majority of them allow users to provide information about them and offer some type of communication mechanism that enables them to connect with other users. The various forms of cyber crime are cyber bullying, cyber defamation, identity theft and facing discriminating content online. Cyber bullying is a type of bullying that takes place using electronic technology. Cyber defamation is publishing of defamatory material against another person on internet. If someone publishes some defamatory statement about some other person on a website with the intention to defame the other it is cyber defamation. Since the information is available to the entire world, the harm caused is widespread and irreparable. Identity theft is a fraud that results in the loss of personal data, such as passwords, user name, banking information, or credit card numbers. This provides easy source to cyber criminals to illicit information about anyone. The following diagram
highlights forms of cyber crime faced by adolescents in the study conducted.

![Forms of Cyber Crime Faced(%)](image)

(Figures overlap because respondents have given more than one answer)

**Figure 6.7(iii)**

The above diagram reveals that 68% respondents have faced cyber bullying, 64% have faced cyber defamation, 63% have faced identity theft and 66% have faced discriminating content on these social networking sites. Adolescents share personal information that makes them vulnerable to online crime and identity theft. These aspects of online life of adolescents have been relatively unexplored and need extensive research.
6.8 Conclusion

Indian Society is in a transitional phase of development and is still in the initial stage of network structure. The media landscape has changed profoundly in India. The socialisation of Indian adolescents is changing and it is influenced by mass media and social media. Social networking sites allow the formation of new types of relations. The younger generation and adolescents are net savvy and use technology without knowing its abuse. The major findings of this study reveal that although a major and relevant change has occurred in the lifestyle of contemporary adolescents, it is not without pros and cons. Besides some good effects of social networking sites, a process of cultural erosion is witnessed which is characterized by lack of norms. It also involves complete freedom from traditional values and beliefs. Due to change in socialisation and loosening of social control, adolescents have developed their own culture which promotes ‘individualization’. The result is the concentration on the self – to develop oneself, create one’s own lifestyle, mirror oneself in comparison with others and adapt modern values and belief system. It is evident in the above study that adolescents experiment with many things on social networking sites without parental solicitation. However, they are not aware of Net etiquette. This has given rise to deviant culture. However, it is not perceived as deviant by
adolescents. Moreover, this culture has also attracted cyber criminals on social networking sites. Many adolescents intentionally or unintentionally get involved in cyber crimes perpetuated on these sites. A lot of combined effort is needed by parents, law, cyber officials and technical experts to control cyber crimes on social networking sites.

**Notes and References**

1. **Technological Spurt**-Technology is the making, modification, usage, and knowledge of tools, machines, techniques, and methods of organization, in order to solve a problem, improve a pre-existing solution to a problem, achieve a goal, handle an applied input/output relation or perform a specific function. The rise of communication technology, has lessened barriers to human interaction and, as a result, has helped spawn new subcultures; the rise of cyber culture has, at its basis, the development of the Internet and the computer. This era has seen a sudden increase in technological usage which is often referred as technological spurt.

2. **Digital Divide**-A digital divide is an economic inequality between groups, broadly construed, in terms of access to, use of, or knowledge of information and communication technologies. The divide within countries refers to inequalities between individuals, households, businesses, and geographic areas at different socioeconomic and other demographic levels, while the divide between countries is referred to as the global digital divide, which designates nations as the units of analysis and
examines the gap between developing and developed countries on an international scale.

3. **Digital Netizens** - The word Netizen is made of the English words Internet and citizen. It is defined as an entity or person actively involved in online communities and a user of the Internet, especially an avid one. The term can also imply an interest in improving the Internet, especially in regard to open access and free speech. Netizens are also commonly referred to as cybercitizens, which has the same meaning.

4. **Netiquette** - Netiquette, or net etiquette, refers to etiquette on the Internet. Good netiquette involves respecting others' privacy and not doing anything online that will annoy or frustrate other people. Etiquette in technology governs what conduct is socially acceptable in an online or digital situation. While etiquette is incorporated into culture, etiquette in technology is a fairly recent concept. The rules of etiquette that apply when communicating over the Internet or social networks are different than in person or by audio (such as telephone) or videophone (such as Skype video). It is a social code of network communication.