CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Communication occupies an indispensable role in human life. All human relationships are intrinsically intertwined through various means of communication and established in sharing information. What is breath to life is communication significant to human growth and development. Communication has become the decisive factor in every facet of human life.

The evolution of the communication process amongst mankind is stupendous. In the remote past our precursors in primitive cultures conversed with sounds and signs, later on language emerged as the medium of communication using edicts and scrolls. Then 500 years ago Gutenberg invented the printing-machine which altered the course of communication amid populace. Afterwards the telegraph and wireless communications ascertained their preeminence 160 years ago. Subsequently the age of television surfaced and had its sway for half-a-century. Almost 4 decades ago computers were instigated which in the field of communication, it is indeed, ‘a giant leap for mankind.’ “In the introduction of computers we finally have in one tool the intellectual content of print, the image of video, the sensory impact of sound of the speed of electronics” (Shefrin, 2015).

The origin of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has totally changed the pattern of human communication process. The evolution of the Web has revolutionized the process of communication affecting every fascia of human life. It has unshackled novel pathways, prospects and spaces for people to interact, socialize, generate and promote their work and spread knowledge online.
The IT revolution and the digital age have paved way for the emergence of e-culture which has brought plethora of changes in our life styles and personality. We live in a world of web were Internet has become part of our self. Emails, e-banking, and e-commerce have become part of our daily routines. The modern civilization is acclimatizing to the transformations Internet technology is creating in our lives. Now with the advent of mobile technologies social media have developed into a rampant and dominant platform for social networking and information sharing.

Social media displays exceedingly imperative place in the contemporary world. Empirical surveys designate that fairly sizable populace expends 25 percent of their time on social networking platforms; this set out to illustrate how pertinent and popular social media platforms have surfaced into in present scenario. The significance of social media can be felt in numerous fields such as commerce, amusement, foodstuff, standard of living, welfare and a multitude of other functions. It has altered the manner masses lead their life nowadays, it has enabled communication very simple and effortless. Social media platforms might appear in diverse forms for instance blogs, business forum, digital audio formats, weblogs, photo sharing, goods/services appraisals, micro-blogs, and so forth.

1.1 Social Media

Social media are net-based online applications that facilitate users discern and know novel information, share out ideas, network with new people and groups. It permits the haggling of user-generated materials akin to facts, photos, and films. In social media unlike in conventional media, subject matter can be produced by
everyone, in addition, contribute to it and remark on it. Social media could contain a text format; it may be an audio or video, an image or other visual forms that bring jointly groups of people and support individuals who desire to connect with others.

There are two vocabularies that people frequently find perplexed, explicitly, *social media* and *social networks*. The term social media is higher to social networks and includes diverse media that masses utilize for online communication and collaboration and furthermore to widen social interaction. An examination of the various definitions given by researchers will explain the concept of social media.

Social media is the relationships that exist between networks of people (Walter and Riviera 2004). Safco and Brake (2009) defined social media as activities, practices and behaviors among communities who gather online information, knowledge and feedback to share and it is based on web-based applications that provide the utility to create and transmit content in the form of text, pictures, videos and audios. Constantinides and Fountain (2008) defined social media elaborately categorizing it into five sections, specifically, a) blogs, b) social networks, c) content communities, d) forum, and e) content aggregators. Social media is defined by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010:60) "as a group of internet applications built on the ideological and technical foundations of web 2.0 that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content".
1.2 Social networks

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define for social networks as sites often including social media platforms to facilitate interactions and conversations among people in a virtual community. Any social network site in general encompasses three fundamental aspects, to be precise, (1) profiles, (2) friends list, and (3) comments although additional features are given by various sites (Danah, 2007). Constructing social networks is controlled by social media and the word is used whilst it is in some way (platform) of people's interaction such as Facebook, Instagram, Quora, LinkedIn, MySpace etc. Networks suggests to the creation of personal profiles and interaction with purpose of joining a group of people with similar interests.

Nowadays multifarious prospects are accessible online to populace throughout various platforms made available by social networking sites transcending all barriers for instance educated or uneducated, male or female, modern or traditional folk, rural or urban, no human being is devoid of the influence of social networking.

1.3 Social Media Platforms

There are numerous social networks available online for social interaction, communication and sharing information. The social networks widely utilized by common people are Facebook, Instagram, UTube, Quora, Twitter, LinkedIn, Simcity, Vine, Viber and Whatsapp. However, the present study concentrates on Facebook as it has the largest users especially among youth in the age group 18-25 years and most of them are college/ University students.
1.4 Facebook

The rationale of Facebook is to provide expertise to the world to be more open and stay connected. Facebook's latest mission statement is that people use Facebook to stay connected with friends and family, discover what is going on in the world and share and express what matters to them. Facebook was established in 2004 in the precincts of Harvard University by a 19-year old Mark Zuckerberg with his sophomore fellow Eduardo Saverin as hobby project with the financial help from Saverin. Facebook has a catchphrase: “Face book is a social utility to share and express what matters to them”.

At the present time it is observed that Facebook has become a crucial part of almost every college student’s daily life (Zaremohzzabieh et al, 2014). Among social networks, Facebook is the most frequently visited site compared to Google, YouTube and Twitter and similar networks. Average time used is estimated to be 107.95 minutes daily as claimed by Marshall et al (2015).

It must not be tacit that all readers are familiar with Facebook and the services accessible to its consumers. Brief overview of its features based upon the Facebook Timeline layout as it was available in 2012 is presented. Any individual can create an account on the website Facebook.com. One has to provide personal information such as name, date of birth, gender, and email address. The new user chooses a password and gets account access. Facebook opts for a highly standardized layout of user accounts. Regarding of whose account it is, many features appear on the same place on the screen, making it easy to recognize and find the data on is searching for. There are two important pages on this account:
home and profile. The profile page, also often called ‘the wall’, is where users present themselves. A small profile picture adds to a large cover photo at the top of the page, below which the name of the user is presented along with some basic information and a few buttons referring to friends, photos, and “likes”. Below that is the area where “status updates” appear. Users can post anything they want in their status, and friends can respond to this statement by text comments or liking it (shown directly below the status). On the home page, also often called, “news feed” users are informed of the status updates and other activities (joining groups or becoming fan of something they like) from their friends. It thus automatically and chronologically reflects the highlights of what friends have been doing in the past hours.

Once a profile is created, the new user can start looking for friends and send friend requests. When accepted, Facebook connects the two individuals by allowing them to see each other’s profile page and by adding their activities to one another’s news feed. Facebook thus functions as online application to see and to be seen (Stroud, 2008).

1.5 Reasons to join Facebook

It is exciting to apprehend why persons want to join Facebook and the causes were explored initially by Sledgianowski and Kulviwat (2009) and it was found that perceived playfulness and critical mass of the site were the major driving force to join Facebook. Normative pressure, trust, usefulness and ease of use were the other motivating factors. Later studies found that the motivation to join Facebook is the importance of pressure. Cheung and Lee (2010) established
that the significance was social identity (being member of a group and attaching emotion to it). Two factors, explicitly, perceived usefulness and social identity were identified by Kwon and Wen (2010) to join Facebook. It is persistent pressure that remained the main cause even after joining the social networking platform. A study by Skageby (2009) confirmed the pressure of coworkers and employers to join Facebook.

Irrespective of the reason to join Facebook researches indicate that there are many personality and demographic factors that influence the intensity of Facebook usage. Initially studies on Facebook done in the US by researchers among students designate that males were not frequent users of Facebook (Hargittai, 2007; Raacke and Bonds-Raacke, 2008). Later study by Lewis et al (2008) manifested that women were likely to maintain Facebook profile. On the other hand, the studies by Ross et al., (2009), Correa et al., (2010) and Wilson et al., (2010) found that Facebook usage was related to extraversion, openness to new experience, and conscientiousness respectively. In addition Facebook usage also has numerous psychological implications which affect the mental health and self-esteem of the user.

1.6 Personality

The study necessitates a lucid understanding of the concept of personality to study the relationship of personality with Facebook usage. Defining personality has always remained a perplexing task for the psychologists.

Personality can be defined as the combination of traits and behaviors of an individual. The term personality is used in a number of ways including the
apparent features of a person. However, psychologists use it to refer to the characteristic pattern of thinking, feeling and acting. By characteristic pattern it is meant that the consistent and distinctive ways individual’s ideas, feelings and actions are organized. When talking about personality it usually refers to the totality or whole of the person. Thus, the enduring pattern expressed by the person in various situations is the hallmark of personality. The individual differences in personality have been categorized by psychologists in five major domains, viz., extroversion, and emotional stability, openness to new experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness (McCrae and Costa 1997; John and Srivastava 1999).

1.7 Big Five Personality Factors

The five factors became known as the Big Five (Goldberg, 1981) a title chosen not to reflect the intrinsic greatness but to emphasize that each of these factors is extremely broad. It does not imply that personality differences can be reduced to only five traits. The five dimensions represent personality at the broadest level of abstraction, and each dimension summarizes a large number of distinct more personality characteristics. Big Five uses short phrases based on the trait adjustments known to be prototypical markers of the Big Five (John, 1989, 1990).

The five factors Goldberg identified as primary factors of personality are, namely, Openness to experience, Conscientiousness, Extroversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism. A popular anagram for the Big Five is “OCEAN” from the letters of personality dimensions.
1. **Openness to Experience:** Openness to new experience refers to a person’s ability to look for new experiences and also the capacity to make room for them and visualize the future creatively. People who are highly open to experience are imaginative, and appreciate art. They cooperate well with other people; curious and prefer variety to routine. Openness to experience has been described as the breadth, depth, originality and complexity of an individual’s mental experiential life (John and Srivastava, 1999). It is also sometimes called intellect or imagination. Openness to experience concerns an individual’s willingness to try new things, to be vulnerable, and the ability to think outside the box. An individual who is high in openness to experience is likely someone who has a love of learning, enjoys the arts, engages in a creative career or hobby, and likes meeting new people (Lebowitz, 2016). People with low score in “Openness to new experience” are people closed off to new experiences. They prefer safety and convention, difficult to adapt to new things, which is why they prefer a rigid schedule. They tend towards technical activities and show little interest in the abstract.

2. **Conscientiousness:** Conscientiousness refers to the capacity for self control and the ability to act effectively related to planning, organizational and executive skills and also related to persistence, ability to follow through on the goals and objective and punctuality. These people tend to be perfectionists and workaholics. Traits within the conscientiousness factor include: persistent, ambitious, thorough, self-disciplined, consistent, predictable, controlled, reliable, resourceful, hard working, energetic, persevering and planner. Someone who is high in conscientiousness is likely to be successful in school and in their career, to
excel in leadership positions and to doggedly pursue their goals with determination and forethought (Lebowitz, 2016). A person who is low in conscientiousness is much more likely to procrastinate, to be flighty, impetuous, and impulsive.

3. **Extroversion**: This factor has two familiar ends of the spectrum: extroversion and introversion. It concerns where an individual draws their energy and how they interact with others. In general, extroverts draw energy or “recharge” from interacting with others, while introverts get tired from interacting with others and replenish their energy from solitude. Extroverts are comfortable in group setting, work well in teams and are optimistic and enthusiastic. The traits associated with extroversion are: sociable, assertive, merry, outgoing, energetic, talkative, articulate, fun-loving, affectionate, friendly and socially confident. People high in extroversion tend to seek out opportunities for social interaction, where they are often the “life of the party.” They are comfortable with others, gregarious, and prone to action rather than contemplation (Lebowitz, 2016). People low in extroversion are more likely to be people “of few words,” people who are quiet, introspective, reserved, and thoughtful. They feel uncomfortable in large groups.

4. **Agreeableness**: Agreeableness refers to a person’s capacity for empathy. Agreeableness contrasts a pro-social and communal orientation toward others with antagonism and includes traits such as altruism, tender-mindedness, trust and modesty. This factor concerns how well people get along with others. While extroversion concerns sources of energy and the pursuit of interactions with others, agreeableness concerns your orientation to others. It is a construct that rests on how you generally interact with others. The following traits fall under the umbrella
of agreeableness: altruistic, trusting, modest, humble, patient, moderate, tactful, polite, kind, loyal, unselfish, helpful, sensitive, amiable, cheerful and considerate. People high in agreeableness tend to be well-liked, respected, and sensitive to the needs of others. They likely have few enemies, are sympathetic, and affectionate to their friends and loved ones, as well as sympathetic to the plights of strangers (Lebowitz, 2016). People on the low end of the agreeableness spectrum are less likely to be trusted and liked by others. They tend to be callous, blunt, rude, ill-tempered, antagonistic, and sarcastic. Although not all people who are low in agreeableness are cruel or abrasive, they are not likely to leave others with a warm fuzzy feeling.

5. **Neuroticism**: Neuroticism contrasts emotional stability and even-temperedness with negative emotionality, such as feeling anxious, nervous, sad and tense. Neuroticism is the one Big Five factor in which a high score indicates more negative traits. Neuroticism is not a factor of meanness or incompetence, but one of confidence and being comfortable in one’s own skin. It encompasses one’s emotional stability and general temper. These following traits are commonly associated with neuroticism: awkward, pessimistic, moody, jealous, testy, fearful, nervous, anxious, timid, wary, self-critical, diffident, insecure, unstable and oversensitive. Those high in neuroticism are generally given to anxiety, sadness, worry, and low self-esteem. They may be temperamental or easily angered, and they tend to be self-conscious and unsure of themselves (Lebowitz, 2016). Individuals who score on the low end of neuroticism are more likely to feel confident, sure of themselves, and adventurous. They may also be brave and unencumbered by worry or self-doubt.
1.8 Personality and Social Media

A social media is online community where people share information about themselves on specific websites and connects with others through their social links in both real and virtual world, where users interacts with each other via the inbuilt communication facilities.

Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1989) details how internal cognitions and environmental factors work in conjunction to alter self-beliefs, which are central determinants of human affect and behaviour. A new and very popular aspect of this phenomenon is online self-presentation on websites (Krämer and Winter, 2008). Thus, the individual’s ‘internal cognition’ might affect the preferences of using social media as communication platform. Self construal is characterized by separateness from others, by attention to one’s abilities, traits, preferences, and wishes, and by the primacy of one’s individual goals over those of in-groups (Coleman, 2009).

Users of social networking sites have more control over their self-presentational behavior than in face-to-face communication, which provides an ideal setting for precise impression management as described by Goffman (1959). Hence, social networking sites enable them to communicate with their peers in a more organized way which might encourage their willingness to communicate. Adaptation to the environment plays a severely important role in individual's engagement in social networking sites “because the symbolic environment occupies a major part of people's everyday lives, much of the social construction of reality and shaping of public consciousness occurs through electronic acculturation” (Bandura, 2001).
1.9 Personality and Facebook

There are several studies that relate to social media use and depression. Ross et al, (2008) examined the influence of personality and competency factors on Facebook use and found that, consistent with previous research, personality variables were associated with some aspects of Facebook use. For example, individuals high on the trait of extraversion were found to be significantly more active on Facebook, since extraverts are more likely to engage in social activities (Costa and McCrae, 1992a, 1992b)

It is reasonable to assume that these individuals maintained stronger ties to their groups through Facebook. Levels of extraversion were not associated with the number of "Facebook Friends," or communicative functions of Facebook. These results suggested that although those high on the trait of extraversion may utilize Facebook as a social tool, they did not use Facebook as an alternative to social activities. This is consistent with research by Amiel and Saragent, 2004) who found that extraverts do not use the Internet as a substitute for real-world interactions. Those high on the trait of neuroticism reported that the Wall was their favourite Facebook component, whereas those low on neuroticism preferred photos. In other words, people low on neuroticism would like to pay more attention to photos posted on Facebook. Their emotional change would more likely relate to photo content. Openness to Experience was found to be related to online sociability knowledge. A willingness to consider alternative methods of communication was found to be important in Facebook use. As expected, higher levels of Openness to Experience were associated with a greater tendency to be sociable through
Facebook. Considering that those who are high on the trait of Openness to Experience are more likely to have a wide variety of interests and willingness to pursue those interests through unusual means (Butt & Phillips, 2008).

Ross et al. (2009) and Amichai-Hamburger and Vinitzky (2010) looked specifically at the relationship between the Big Five factors and usage of Facebook. Their results showed that a number of these factors were associated with particular patterns of Facebook use. For example, extraverted individuals generally had more Facebook Friends (Amichai-Hamburger & Vinitzky, 2010), and belonged to more Facebook Groups (Ross et al. 2009) than introverted individuals. Furthermore, individuals who were high in neuroticism were more likely than emotionally stable individuals to prefer to use the Wall (Ross et al. 2009). As Ross et al. (2009) explained, a possible reason for the latter result was that the Wall offered people with neurotic tendencies the opportunity to take their time formulating messages and responses. As a consequence, the potential for unintentionally revealing personal information to others was reduced.

1.10 Mental Health

The concept of mental health emerged from the Mental Hygiene Movement initiated in 1908 by consumers of psychic services and professionals interested in increasing the treatment of people with mental disorders. Mental health is more than a science discipline. Mental health is a political and ideological movement, involves diverse segments of society interested in promotion of human rights of people with mental disorders and the quality of their treatment (Bertolote, 2008). Mental health and mental well being are critical to a happy satisfactory meaningful
life. Mental health influences various domains, law, religion, state policy, politics, personal life, social life etc. Mental health includes individual’s emotions, psychology and social well being. It affects how the individual thinks and acts. It also helps to determine how the individual handles stress, relates to others and makes choices. Mental health is important in every stage of life from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2014) mental health includes "subjective well-being, perceived self-efficacy, autonomy, competence, inter-generational dependence, and self-actualization of one's intellectual and emotional potential, among others." The WHO further states that the well-being of an individual is encompassed in the realization of their abilities, coping with normal stresses of life, productive work and contribution to their community.

1.11 Social Media and Mental Health

The advent of social media has enormously altered the universal culture into one of over-sharing. Nowadays, as more and more time is being spent online by people, it is important to look at how this may affect the mental health of people (Melissa and Wilodt, 2015. There have been significant links between online presence and other aspects of mental health. Social comparisons develop inferiority and this shows symptoms of depression. Further it can cause irritation, exhaustion and jealousy.

Another area of concern is body image. Body dysmorphia is “a preoccupation with what they imagine to be a defective body part or a distorted view of some small and insignificant defect.” Studies suggest that due to more time spent on social media
networks one may be led to body image insecurity. The photos of friends are more invidious than the photos of more influential celebrities. Incessant exposure can promote distorted body image perception. Increased use of social media has additionally been associated with higher rates of disordered eating.

1.12 Self-Esteem

Though the term self-esteem is in common usage only a few know its psychological importance. Part of the problem is that the term is used in three different ways, namely, global self-esteem, self-evaluation and self-worth. Most often, the term “self-esteem” is used to refer to a personality variable that captures the way people generally feel about themselves.

Attempts to define self-esteem have ranged from an emphasis on primitive libidinal impulses (Kernberg, 1975), to the perception that one is a valuable member of a meaningful universe (Solomon et al, 1991). Brown defines that self esteem in terms of feeling of affection for oneself (1993). The term self-esteem is also used to refer to the way people evaluate their various abilities and attributes. Some researchers (Butler et al, 1994; Leary et al, 1995) use the term self esteem to refer to the emotions called feelings of self-worth, and trait self-esteem to refer to the way people generally feel about themselves.

1.13 Social Media and Self Esteem

Self-preservation was cited from Reich (2010) where students can choose on Facebook what to post. This user-generated and operated framework interacts with self-esteem, especially for those that may need an extra buffer in articulating thoughts and or feelings (2010).
Social media has also benefited students reporting lower levels of self-esteem or high levels of introversion (Steinfield et al., 2008; Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe, 2007). Students used social media to find a vehicle for their voice, even if they were internally struggling with self-confidence. Gonzales and Hancock (2011) explained this further, finding social media can enhance self-esteem with social functions of self-awareness.

When exploring the relationship between Facebook intensity, friendship contingent self-esteem and personality of US college students, Pettijohn II et al., (2012) discovered a positive link. For example, those students who relate their esteem to friendships are more active and connected on Facebook.

1.14 Need for the Study

The foremost rationale of edification is to make students to acquire knowledge in the respective field that they opt and develop their academic achievements to unearth exultant prospects in their professional career. The dawn of digital age has made available a surfeit of avenues for sharing of knowledge which so far was unprecedented in the history of mankind. In this era of Internet and e-culture exchange of information and social interaction has transcended the limitations of time, space and geographical boundaries. Connecting to people any time anywhere has become a reality due to social media. Social media platforms are exceptional tools for educational triumph. Burgeoning of social media platform has given enormous opportunities especially for students to enhancing their knowledge fulfilling their career aspirations. But social media is double edged, it is
both a tool for education as well a means for entertainment. Many students tend to use social media excessively for entertainment rather than education avenues. Studies reveal excessive use of social media only for entertainment leads to Internet addiction which has serious psychological implications. The negative outcomes of social media among students have led them to procrastination, behavioral maladies, loneliness and a sense of complacency. Students become unmotivated, pessimistic and non-enterprising, lacking assiduity and perseverance. The overall personality development of the University students is crippled. Nowadays more time is spent on various social networking platforms by students. The issue has drawn the attention of all stakeholders in the field of higher education. Hence there is an urgent need to address this issue to uncover the psychological causes responsible for negative outcomes due to social media usage.

1.15 Significance of the Present Study

In the present scenario the students are overwhelmed by the brunt of social media particularly Facebook which has become a crucial part of almost every college student’s daily life (Zaremohzzabieh et al, 2014). Several studies in the East and West show that college students are severely influenced by Facebook (Norman et al, 2017; Brailovskaia and Margraf, 2016). This research will empirically uncover the psychological implications of Facebook usage among students which would be of importance to the students themselves, teachers, parents, student counselors, academicians, therapists and policy makers.
1.16 Summary

The present chapter deals with the introduction of the study, conceptual framework with the presentation of the characteristics of social media and details concerning the most popular social networking platform, Facebook, its use and influence on individuals. Further the chapter describes the salient concepts pertaining to personality, mental health and self esteem, need of the study and significance of the study. The next chapter will provide a panoramic view of different studies undertaken in different contexts in various countries.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

1. Social Media: Social media are activities, practices and behaviors among communities who gather online information, knowledge and feedback to share and it is based on web-based applications that provide the utility to create and transmit content in the form of text, pictures, videos and audios (Safco & Brake, 2009).

2. Personality: The Big Five Factors identified as primary factors of personality are, namely, Openness to experience, Conscientiousness, Extroversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism represent personality at the broadest level of abstraction, and each dimension summarizes a large number of distinct more personality characteristics (Goldberg, 1981).
3. **Mental Health:** Mental health includes "subjective well-being, perceived self-efficacy, autonomy, competence, inter-generational dependence, and self-actualization of one's intellectual and emotional potential, among others." (World Health Organization, 2014).

4. **Self-Esteem:** feeling of affection for oneself and the perception that one is a valuable member of a meaningful universe (Solomon et al, 1991; Brown, 1993).