CHAPTER-1
INTRODUCTION

Curtain Raiser

With the passage of time development in each and every field has become primordial. With changing times development as visualized by progressive change has become a hallmark of human history. Since time immemorial human beings have been creating better facilities and devices to enhance their survival and leisure. As such, technological advancement is a classic case of human progress. Viewed in this context, the most popular technological innovation of the 21st century is Internet. It is emerging as the most essential and endearing object, both in public and private space today.

Internet subsequently brought forward a plethora of advantages to human society and led to far reaching changes in various fields. The contribution of Internet is bringing forward the propensity of Social Networking Sites. Social Networking Sites are highly vital sites which are the precursors of communication development. Therefore, Social Networking Sites enable rapid communication and social interaction across the globe. Besides, innumerable facilities have been provided to those involved in Social Networking Sites.

It is noteworthy that the group of people who mainly use these sites are youngsters. The youth are more prone to be attracted to these
sites than any other category of people. These sites are considered to be in trend and have created a virtual revolution in youth behaviour and attitudes. As such through these networking sites adolescents can interact with a variety of people worldwide, share pictures and posts, get access to various platforms and many other avenues. This in turn creates an inclination towards the usage of the various Social Networking Sites.

In India, the trend of using Social Networking Sites is quite alarming. More and more college students are drawn towards these networking sites enabling both communication and entertainment. Consequently this sets the backdrop of the study in order to probe into this phenomenon further. Interpersonal relationships are the foundation for learning and human development. Thus, it is crucial to analyse how far Social Networking Sites are influencing interpersonal relationships among college students in the Indian context.

India has always placed a great value on personal relationships and their cultivation and preservation. Traditions and values are the most basic components of Indian society and these elements only define the nature of interpersonal relationships that one is involved in. Yet a drastic change has been noticed in this area. A detailed and critical analysis thus is required not only to understand the situation better but also provide the denominators along with solutions. Social Networking Sites are like a drug to the current generation and is
certainly affecting the interpersonal relationships among college students in India.

**Background to the Study**

In the last decades of the 20th century, the world and especially India witnessed a remarkable and rapid advancement in information and communication technologies. In this era, “communication” has emerged as the most popular term. Today the communication revolution has brought people together regardless of geographical boundaries.

The need to communicate is part of a person’s inherent being. Since the beginning of time the human race has communicated using different techniques and methods. Circumstances and available technology have dictated the method and means of communications. Hence, from time to time, new communication technologies have been invented for better individual as well as mass communication. With the advent of the printing technology the new era of mass communication began. Then came the invention of wireless communication – Radio was discovered. Later, the invention of Television made an immense impact worldwide. Recently, the emergence of Internet has brought an outstanding innovation in the field of communication in the history of humankind.

As such, users of internet at global level rose to 2.73 billion in 2013, which is 39% of the total population of the world (7.1 billion)
Rapid expansion of internet has changed the lives of many people worldwide. Very significantly internet has brought the world into a single room. Right from getting access to news across the world to a wealth of shopping knowledge, job opportunities, and choice of life partners, there is a plethora of information available to internet users. Internet is now used for communication, entertainment and information. For a long time, access to ‘information’ has been denied to people on the basis of their gender, class or caste. But today these barriers have been broken down through the Knowledge Revolution.

The contemporary period has been labelled as the Information Age, Communication Age and, the present Networking Age (Kumar; 1994). The internet offers a wide variety of communication tools. Billions of people use facilities like search engines, web pages, e-mails, e-books, e-journals, e-newspapers, internet banking, internet telephony, conferencing, multi-media sharing, online news rooms, gaming, shopping, blogging, and more importantly, social networking. Today internet is an essential communication medium in professional as well as personal life.

Among the various tools that internet has brought our way Social Networking has become a global phenomenon. Millions of people now use internet to engage in social networks. There are more than 300 Social Networking Sites (Also referred to as SNS) and the total number of people using Social Networking Sites around the world is 1.73 billion in 2013 and it will increase to 2.55 billion by 2017 (Wikipedia.com). In
recent years, usage of Social Networking Sites has grown rapidly. It took 38 years to attract 50 million listeners for wireless radio system, 13 years for television to attract 50 million viewers; but in only 4 years the internet has attracted 50 million surfers (Hannemyr; 2003). As a matter of fact, IPods took 3 years to reach 50 million users, but Facebook, one of the leading Social Networking Sites, added over 200 million users in just 12 months (Facebook.com). This shows the penetration capacity and popularity of Social Networking Sites.

Social Networking Sites are a type of virtual community that has grown tremendously in popularity. Through Social Networking Sites people can use network of online friends and group memberships to keep in touch with current friends, reconnect with old friends or create real-life friendships through similar interest or groups. Besides, establishing social relationships, members of Social Networking Sites can share interest and their ideas with other like-minded members by joining groups or forums. They can also participate in discussions through Social Networking Sites. Members are updated instantly about their friends and groups. In short, Social Networking Sites are hub for communication, entertainment and information.

These Social Networking Sites offer a wide variety of resources and services such as messaging, blogging, sharing photos, audios and videos, group discussion, and distribution of applications. Youngsters, especially college students, are the avid users of these sites. Social Networking Sites enable students to get in touch with their friends,
faculty members, and institutions and also allow them to connect with more friends. The youth can use these sites to create and share their identities and profiles that may include personal information, pictures, blog entries, videos and music clips. They can join groups and communicate with other students and faculty members by commenting on topics or by introducing topics that they hope to encourage discussion. They can share information, exchange files and seek comments, advice, give opinions, and suggestions, and ideas instantly and interactively. Students also use these sites as a platform to connect with long lost classmates, batchmates and family members. These sites provide an online platform for students of diverse backgrounds and nationalities.

Since the last decade the usage of Social Networking Sites among the college students is increasing rapidly throughout the world and evidently Social Networking Sites have become a significant part of their lives (Gemmill and Peterson; 2006). Students constitute one group that is eager to know the technological advancements and latest trends and they accept these changes with an open mind. Compared to any other category of people the usage of Social Networking Sites among college students is more. This is mainly because college students are more prone to be attracted to the new technology and Social Networking Sites in particular.

In India also, various studies have acknowledged this phenomenon and hence today the usage of SNS has become an
intrinsic part of students’ lives in Indian society. The EDUCAUSE data shows that the percentage of students who said they never use SNS has fallen from 25% to 11% in 2008 (Alexander; 2006). Furthermore, in the research studies of Chernigo Barnett and 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.

The ‘Internet’ which is seen as the harbinger of the Information Technology (IT) revolution cannot be treated just as an innovation. It is to be seen as a medium that has redefined the very meaning of interpersonal relationships. Today an individual can develop contacts and keep connected with persons or groups with whom no face-to-face meeting is done or required. Hence, Social interaction today has acquired a new meaning. It thus becomes very critical for sociologists to examine the nature of impact that this ‘new media’ has made on the very pattern of human interaction. This impact is being experienced very strongly in Indian society, which has always taken pride in its intra-family relationships and primary kin networks.

Consequently, the increasing usage of social networking sites has a major impact on interpersonal relationships of students. As such, the major theme of the present study is concentrated on this dimension only. Social Networking Sites influence the interpersonal relationships of college students in innumerable ways. For example through Social Networking Sites, users meet other people and these
people can affect the user’s relationships either positively or negatively. An interpersonal relationship is a relatively long-term association between two or more people. This association may be based on emotions like love and liking, 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, and neighbourhoods. They may be regulated by law, custom, or mutual agreement and are the basis of social groups and society as a whole. These impacts are so widespread that they attracted the attention of social scientists worldwide. However, the range of studies conducted in relation to the usage of SNS among college students is negligible in India. Therefore, the proposed study makes an attempt to fill in this gap, to some extent, by concentrating on the impact of Social Networking Sites on college students in India.

**Significance and Need of the Study**

Recent advances in IT suggest that today’s society faces the challenge of a ‘communication revolution’. As a result, the means of communication among college students and with their members of family, friends and teachers is facing vigorous changes and will continue in the near future.

IT is progressing at an ever increasing pace which consequently is changing the nature and means of communication and subsequently the nature of interpersonal relationships. Certainly studies are not
lacking on the effectiveness of the new techniques, yet there is a paucity of research directed towards studying the effects on society of the media in their newly developing forms. Very little work has been done on the role of SNS in changing interpersonal relationships of college students and their family relations.

Present study makes an attempt to fill the gap in empirical research in this area. The study assures significance because today, more than ever before it has become necessary for sociologists to analyse the changes in behaviour patterns of users connected through a technological device.

Scholarly reviews of new media and everyday family life pointed out that more research is needed concerning the impact of media usage on interpersonal relationships among college students (Weatherall & Ramsay; 2006). In this direction, the range of studies conducted to deal with the usage of SNS among college students is negligible in India. Hence, the proposed study makes an attempt to bridge this gap, to some extent, by concentrating on the impact of SNS on college students.

The interesting discussion published in the UNESCO Report (No. 59 of 1970) entitled “Mass Media – the need for research” stipulates that in dealing with the influence of the media in developing countries, thinking and research have often been confined to specific technologies. These are important, but the wider impact of media at the socio-
cultural level may be more pivotal in terms of social change and development.

However, notwithstanding the fragmentations of our world, there can be little doubt that all of us in some way or other, will have to contend with a changing situation in which the new IT media is playing an increasingly dominant role. There are many speculations about the nature and extent of this role of the SNS and about possible repercussions at family level. It may be interesting to follow these speculations.

Furthermore, the present study has multiple direct uses to different sections of the society. First of all, the study makes the students aware of how does Social Networking Sites influence them and how they affect their interpersonal relationships. This educates students regarding the proper usage of social networking sites. It also helps students to improve their social life with the use of social networking sites along with members of their family, friends and teachers.

Second, the study facilitates parents to understand their children’s purpose of using social networking sites and for them to be aware of the influence of the social networking sites that might affect their children. With enough knowledge, parents can think of possible preventive ways if their child is prone to develop a weak interpersonal
relationship with other people because of too much usage and dependence to Social Networking Sites.

Third, the study can also aid teachers by suggesting several ways by which they could relate with students’ social activities especially in the matter of using Social Networking Sites. In line with this, teachers, as students’ second parents, will have the knowledge of how to help students, if ever they are encountering problems in managing interpersonal relationships at various levels. With the help of this study college administrators and policy makers can get useful insights for solving problems of the students regarding cyber crimes and probable abuse of these sites.

Fourth, the findings of the study can also give essential inputs for the developers of different Social Networking Sites to be aware of the influences that the latter is having on students. As being responsible for maintaining and making these Social Networking Sites, they should be conscious of their social responsibilities. By considering the pros and cons of excessive usage of Social Networking Sites especially on youth, they can at least minimise the harmful effects.

This study can also serve as a guide for further studies for future researchers concerning the influence of Social Networking Sites on the interpersonal relationship of college students. It is hoped that the findings of the study will throw up critical questions for exploring new sociological dimensions of Social Networking Sites usage.
Statement of the Problem

Social Networking Sites are important tools of communication, entertainment and sharing in this era. As such there has been considerable rise in its usage especially in the Indian Society. As a matter of fact, the youngsters are more prone to be involved in Social Networking sites than any other group. Social Networking Sites facilitate sharing of information, increasing contacts and so on. Yet a drastic change has been noticed pertaining to the usage of Social Networking Sites in relation to interpersonal relationships among this age group.

However, there has been constant speculation about the changes in the interpersonal relationships due to the SNS. The interpersonal relationships are said to face drastic changes especially among the youth, being the most frequent and ardent users. Consequently a study is required to analyze this aspect in a detailed manner. It is noteworthy that very little research work has been conducted in this aspect especially in the Indian context. For a more specialized study college students in India are focused upon. College students have a high probability to be affected by Social Networking Sites. They spend most of their time on these sites thus it is essential to study this category for the better understanding of the nature of their interpersonal relationships and the variables affecting them.
Therefore, the present study is conducted to examine the influence of the usage of Social Networking Sites on the changing nature of interpersonal relationships of college students. Particularly, the researcher seeks answers to the following questions:

a) What is the profile of the students in terms of using Social Networking Sites? (Frequency of Using, Purpose of Using, Number of friends, etc.).

b) What is the influence of Social Networking Sites on interpersonal relationships of college students (towards their: Family, Friends, Teachers and Others).

**Definition of Key Concepts Used in the Study**

In this study, which investigates the influence of Social Networking Sites on interpersonal relationships of college students, a few key concepts have been used. These terms are used within the context of the study. In this section that follows, key concepts used in the study have been defined.

**Addiction:** Addiction is the continued repetition of a behaviour despite adverse consequences, or a neurological impairment leading to such behaviours.

**Academic Performance:** Academic performance refers to how students deal with their studies and how they cope with or accomplish different tasks given to them by their teachers.
Consumerism Attitudes: Consumerism is a social and economic order that encourages the purchase of goods and services in ever-greater amounts. In an abstract sense, it is the consideration that the free choice of consumers should strongly orient the choice what is produced and how, therefore the economic organization of a society.

Face-to-face Friendship: It is a type of friendship wherein students can actually be with the person/s and see them more often and understand each other well enough.

Friend: A friend is one who is connected to the user. Users establish contacts with other users by sending friend request, which must be accepted by the other users in order to establish a link between them. This connection does not really mean friendship in the everyday vernacular sense, and the reasons people are connected are varied.

Internet: The Internet is a global system of interconnected computer networks that uses the standard Internet protocol suite to serve several billion users worldwide. It is the network of networks that consists of millions of private, public, academic, business, and government networks, of local to global scope, that are linked by a broad array of electronic, wireless and optical networking technologies. The Internet carries an extensive range of information resources and services, such as the inter-linked hypertext documents of the World Wide Web (WWW), the infrastructure to support email, and peer-to-peer networks.
**Interpersonal Relationship:** An interpersonal relationship is a relatively long-term association between two or more people. This association may be based on emotions like love and liking, 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, and neighbourhoods. They may be regulated by law, custom, or mutual agreement and are the basis of social groups and society as a whole.

**Offline Friend:** It is a term used to refer to a person who is a friend in real life.

**Online Friend:** It is a term used to refer to a person added on Social Networking Site account.

**Privacy:** It is the ability of an individual or group to secure their personal information and activities apart from others.

**Profile:** It is the personal home page of the user of Social Networking Sites. It usually contains identifiable information about the user, profile photo, contact information and friends list. This is offered by social networking sites that contains all the personal information about the person and their activities.

**Social behaviour:** It is behaviour directed towards society, or taking place between, members of the same species.
**Social Games:** These are defined as games found in social networking sites which allow social interaction with friends during the game play.

**Social Network:** A social network is a collection of individuals linked together by a set of relations. It refers to a social structure made up of individuals who are connected to each other and have a complex set of relationships or ties between themselves.

**Social Networking:** It refers to a social structure made of nodes that are tied by one or more specific types of interdependency, such as friendship, kinship, financial exchange, dislike, sexual relationships, or relationships of beliefs, knowledge or prestige.

**Social Networking Sites:** Social Networking Sites can be broadly defined as internet-based social spaces designed to facilitate communication, collaboration, and content sharing across networks of contacts. Social Networking Sites allow users to manage, build and represent their social networks online. It focuses on building online communities of people who share interests and/or activities, or who are interested in exploring the interests and activities of others. Social networking sites are web based and provide a variety of ways for users to interact.

**Student:** According to Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, student is a person who is learning at a school or college or university. For the purpose of this study, the researcher selected students from the
Pre-University and Degree level colleges from Bangalore and Mysore cites in the age group of 14-24 years.

**Trustworthiness:** Trustworthiness is a value considered to be a virtue. A trustworthy person is someone in whom you can place your trust and rest assured that the trust shall not be betrayed. A person can prove their trustworthiness by fulfilling an assigned responsibility - and as an extension of that, not to let down expectations.

**Objectives of the Study**

The study proposes to address the following objectives:

1. Engage in a sociological analysis of the concept of ‘interpersonal relationship’ with special focus on the changing nature of interpersonal relationships.
2. Analyse the growth in the number and the pattern of impact of Social Networking Sites with special emphasis on Indian youth. (The analysis would take into consideration factors such as gender, urban-rural background, medium of education and other parameters).
3. Create a social profile of SNS users with the help of the study data as a base.
4. Examine the relationship between the usage of SNS and changing life styles, attitudes and behaviour of college youth, with
reference to interpersonal relationships in primary and secondary groups.

5. Understand the perceptions and feelings of families about the changes taking place in the behaviour and attitudes of their children.

6. Review the influence of SNS on choice of profession, marital partners and other key decisions in the life of college students.

Theoretical Framework

Different theoretical paradigms in sociology have been postulated about the impact of technology on social relationships. Each being unique and enriching, these theories have provided a framework for understanding the growing influence of technology on human lives.

In the Durkheimian perspective, point-to-point communications media reinforce organic solidarity, while broadcast media like radio or television yield powerful collective representations (Alexander; 1988). The Durkheimian perspective sensitizes us to new media’s impact on community and family structure.

Marxists on the other hand focus upon exploitation of communications media to enhance elite control of both politics and production through cultural hegemony and enhanced surveillance (Schiller; 1996). The Marxian perspective addresses issues of power and inequality in access to new technology.
Weberians, however, try to identify the ways by which point-to-point media advance rationalization by reducing limits of time and space, and broadcast media provide the elements of distinctive status cultures (Collins; 1979). Weberian tradition raises the question of the effect of Internet technology on bureaucracy and familial institutions.

Critical theory raises important questions about how the Internet may affect the recreational aspects in family relationships. Critical theorists problematize the effects of technological change on political deliberation and the integrity of civil society (Habermas; 1989). Daniel Bell (1977) appears to have been the first sociologist to write about the social impact of digital communications media themselves. Bell predicted that major social consequences would derive from two related developments: the invention of miniature electronic and optical circuits capable of speeding the flow of information through networks; and the impending integration of computer processing and telecommunications into what Harvard's Anthony Oettinger dubbed "communications" technology. Anticipating the democratization of electronic mail and telefaxing, as well as digital transmission of newspapers and magazines, Bell explored the policy dilemmas these changes would raise, calling "the social organization of the new 'communications' technology" the most central issue "for the post-industrial society" (1977). The work of Habermas and Calhoun leads us to ask how the Internet may alter the everyday communication.
In addition Manuel Castells has argued that the world is entering an "information age" in which digital information technology "provides the material basis" for the "pervasive expansion" of what he calls "the networking form of organization" in every realm of social structure (1996). According to Castells, the Internet's integration of print, oral, and audiovisual modalities into a single system promises an impact on society comparable to that of the alphabet, creating new forms of identity and inequality, submerging power in decentred flows, and establishing new forms of social organization. The comprehensive visions of Bell and Castells, like the other theoretical traditions described, suggest a range of empirical questions one must answer to understand the Internet's influence upon society.

In general, online relationships contain much weaker ties than face-to-face relationships (Vitak: 2008). Social networking sites such as Facebook offer users a convenient method for maintaining a large number of weak ties. While maintenance of strong ties typically requires significant commitments of time and energy, weak ties may be managed solely through the connections that link Facebook “friends.” Facebook allows users to stay up-to-date on their weak ties’ lives simply by viewing the information available in those friends’ profiles and by connecting through actions such as pokes, private messages, wall postings and photo comments by offering multiple methods of interaction, SNS saves users significant time, thus enabling them to create and maintain a massive social network, although predominantly
composed of weak connections between users. For example, a recent survey found that the average user had 180 friends on the website, which is far more “friends” than the average person would say they have in the real world. In cases where factors such as distance change a face-to-face relationship into a primarily online relationship, strong ties are maintained and even strengthened further. Social networking sites are tools for persons to keep in touch with their distant friends by following their updates, sending a message or posting comments—users have a quick and easy way to stay connected thus keeping the relationship healthy when they are too busy to commit more time to face-to-face interaction (Vitak: 2008).

**Social Network Analysis**

Social Network Analysis has emerged as a key technique in sociological understanding. It has also gained significance in communication studies, economics, geography, information science, organizational studies and social psychology. However, our concern is with internet-based social networking. Here, the ‘nodes’ are the individual actors within the networks and ‘ties’ are the relationships between them. There may be one or more ties between the nodes. In this sense, these individual actors interact or share their interests, ideas or information with others.

Furthermore it has now moved from being a suggestive metaphor to an analytic approach to a paradigm, with its own theoretical
statements, methods, social network analysis software, and researchers. Analysts reason from whole to part; from structure to relation to individual; from behavior to attitude. They typically either study whole networks (also known as complete networks), all of the ties containing specified relations in a defined population, or personal networks (also known as egocentric networks), the ties that specified people have, such as their "personal communities". The distinction between whole/complete networks and personal/egocentric networks depend largely on how analysts are able to gather data. That is, for groups such as companies, schools, or membership societies, the analyst is expected to have complete information about who is in the network, all participants being both potential egos and alters.

Personal/egocentric studies are typically conducted when identities of egos are known, but not their alters. These studies rely on the egos to provide information about the identities of alters and there is no expectation that the various egos or sets of alters will be tied to each other.

There is no assumption that groups are the building blocks of society: the approach is open to studying less-bounded social systems, from nonlocal communities to links among websites. Rather than treating individuals (persons, organizations, states) as discrete units of analysis, it focuses on how the structure of ties affects individuals and their relationships. In contrast to analyses that assume that socialization into norms determines behaviour, network analysis looks
for understanding the extent to which the structure and composition of ties affect norms. The shape of a social network helps determine a network's usefulness to its individuals. Smaller, tighter networks can be less useful to their members than networks with lots of loose connections (weak ties) to individuals outside the main network. More open networks, with many weak ties and social connections, are more likely to introduce new ideas and opportunities to their members than closed networks with many redundant ties. In other words, a group of friends who only do things with each other already share the same knowledge and opportunities. A group of individuals with connections to other social worlds is likely to have access to a wider range of information. It is better for individual success to have connections to a variety of networks rather than many connections within a single network. Similarly, individuals can exercise influence or act as brokers within their social networks by bridging two networks that are not directly linked (called filling structural holes).

The power of social network analysis stems from its difference from traditional social scientific studies, which assume that it is the attributes of individual actors—whether they are friendly or unfriendly, smart or less interactive, etc.—that matter. Social network analysis produces an alternate view, where individual attributes are less important than their relationships and ties with other actors within the network. This approach has turned out to be useful for explaining many real-world phenomena, but leaves less room for individual
agency, the ability for individuals to influence their success, because so much of it rests within the structure of their network.

Social networks have also been used to examine how organizations interact with each other, characterizing the many informal connections that link executives together, as well as associations and connections between individual employees at different organizations. For example, power within organizations often comes more from the degree to which an individual within a network is at the center of many relationships than actual job title. Social networks moreover play a key role in hiring, in business success, and in job performance. Networks provide ways for companies to gather information, deter competition, and collude in setting prices or policies.

Precursors of social networks in the late 1800s include Émile Durkheim and Ferdinand Tönnies. Tönnies argued that social groups can exist as personal and direct social ties that either link individuals who share values and belief (gemeinschaft) or impersonal, formal, and instrumental social links (gesellschaft). Durkheim gave a non-individualistic explanation of social facts arguing that social phenomena arise when interacting individuals constitute a reality that can no longer be accounted for in terms of the properties of individual actors. He distinguished between a traditional society – "mechanical solidarity" – which prevails if individual differences are minimized, and the modern society – "organic solidarity" – that develops out of cooperation between differentiated individuals with independent roles.
Georg Simmel, writing at the turn of the twentieth century, was the first scholar to think directly in social network terms. His essays pointed to the nature of network size on interaction and to the likelihood of interaction in ramified, loosely-knit networks rather than groups (Simmel, 1908/1971).

After a hiatus in the first decades of the twentieth century, three main traditions in social networks appeared. In the 1930s, J.L. Moreno pioneered the systematic recording and analysis of social interaction in small groups, especially classrooms and work groups (sociometry), while a Harvard group led by W. Lloyd Warner and Elton Mayo explored interpersonal relations at work. In 1940, A.R. Radcliffe-Brown’s presidential address to British anthropologists urged the systematic study of networks. However, it took about 15 years before this call was followed-up systematically. Social network analysis developed with the kinship studies of Elizabeth Bott in England in the 1950s and the 1950s–1960s urbanization studies of the University of Manchester group of anthropologists (centered around Max Gluckman and later J. Clyde Mitchell) investigating community networks in southern Africa, India and the United Kingdom. Concomitantly, British anthropologist S.F. Nadel codified a theory of social structure that was influential in later network analysis.

In the 1960s-1970s, a growing number of scholars worked to combine the different tracks and traditions. One group was centered on Harrison White and his students at the Harvard University Department
of Social Relations: Ivan Chase, Bonnie Erickson, Harriet Friedmann, Mark Granovetter, Nancy Howell, Joel Levine, Nicholas Mullins, John Padgett, Michael Schwartz and Barry Wellman. Also independently active in the Harvard Social Relations department at the time was Charles Tilly, who focused on networks in political and community sociology and social movements, and Stanley Milgram, who developed the "six degrees of separation" thesis. Mark Granovetter and Barry Wellman are among the former students of White who have elaborated and popularized social network analysis. Significant independent work was also done by scholars elsewhere: University of California Irvine social scientists interested in mathematical applications, centered around Linton Freeman, including John Boyd, Susan Freeman, Kathryn Faust, A. Kimball Romney and Douglas White; quantitative analysts at the University of Chicago, including Joseph Galaskiewicz, Wendy Griswold, Edward Laumann, Peter Marsden, Martina Morris, and John Padgett; and communication scholars at Michigan State University, including Nan Lin and Everett Rogers. A substantively-oriented University of Toronto sociology group developed in the 1970s, centered on former students of Harrison White: S.D. Berkowitz, Harriet Friedmann, Nancy Leslie Howard, Nancy Howell, Lorne Tepperman and Barry Wellman, and also including noted modeller and game theorist Anatol Rapoport. In terms of theory, it critiqued methodological individualism and group-based analyses, arguing that seeing the world as social networks offered more analytic leverage.
Research Methodology

Research Design

This study primarily uses descriptive research design. The survey technique is used to collect demographic data about respondents’ behaviour, beliefs, opinions, interests and the generated data has been organized, analysed and interpreted. To facilitate a comparative analysis of the users of Social Networking Sites purposive sampling method is used.

Sampling Technique

A detailed list of all the colleges providing education for pre-university and degree courses in Bangalore and Mysore cities was obtained from university and department sources. Before taking a final decision on the sample, informal visits to selected colleges were also completed to test the feasibility of selecting an institution for choosing the sample. Table numbers 1.1 and 1.2 clearly indicate the sampling structure adopted in this research.
**Table No. 1.1 Classification of the Sample on the Basis of Gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Level of Student’s Education</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of College Students in Bangalore City</td>
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<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Degree Level</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of College Students in Mysore City</td>
<td>Pre-University Level</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Degree Level</td>
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<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>218</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the preliminary stage the researcher distributed survey forms to all the students of the selected colleges in order to determine the users of Social Networking Sites. After the collection of all the survey forms, a list of the respondents are active users was prepared and a meeting of users of Social Networking Sites who was organized and then the copies of main questionnaires distributed to the respondents.

A purposive sample of 436 students of the selected pre-university and degree colleges in Bangalore and Mysore cities was selected for eliciting the study data. The respondents were being classified on the basis of gender as male & female students and were on these categories given equal share. Further these selected respondents were divided on the basis of their level of education to provide an adequate
representation to the different categories that are involved in the study to make it more authentic and representative.

**Table No. 1. 2 Classification of the Sample on the Basis of Level of Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>Stream/ Specialization</th>
<th>College Students in Mysore City</th>
<th>College Students in Bangalore City</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
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<td>Number of Students</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>218</strong></td>
<td><strong>218</strong></td>
<td><strong>436</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Study Area**

The primary data for this study was generated from the selected pre-university and degree colleges in Bangalore and Mysore cities, which are; Govt. P.U. College, Dayananda P.U. College, Mahajanas Degree College, Govt. First Grade College and Christ College. The choice of Bangalore city was primarily rooted in the fact that it is considered India’s IT hub and is also home to the highest number of Internet connections in the state. Further, these cities have large number of educational institutions and colleges, where majority of the students
are well aware of modern information technologies and studies have shown that they are constant users of social networking sites.

Bangalore is the capital city of Karnataka state, located in the south-eastern part of Karnataka, having a population of 84,25,970 (Census; 2011) and it is known as India’s third most populous city and fifth-most populous urban agglomeration. A demographically diverse city, Bangalore is a major economic and cultural hub and the second fastest growing major metropolis in India. Bangalore is home to many well-recognized colleges and research institutions in India. There are 540 colleges affiliated to Bangalore University, 150 MBA colleges and more than 50 Engineering colleges in Bangalore.

Mysore is one of the important cities in Karnataka state and it is the second-largest city in the state. According to the Census of India – 2011, the population of Mysore is 8,87,446. Mysore is also known as a traditional city and it is located southwest of the state capital Bangalore. In Mysore tourism is the major industry. There are more than 127 colleges affiliated to the University of Mysore.

**Methods of Data Collection**

The researcher has made use of the methods of questionnaire and interview to gather the primary data required for the study. Primarily the study is a questionnaire based survey of usage of Social Networking Sites among college students in Bangalore and Mysore cities. The simple, well organized questionnaire was designed in such a manner as
to collect the relevant data from the study sample. The appropriate questions were added in the questionnaire and questions that could create confusion were eliminated. The questionnaire was designed keeping in mind the objectives of the study. Its design has been based on review of literature. In the questionnaire mostly close-ended questions have been added. It contains different types of questions which have been framed to obtain relevant information on various aspects of usage of Social Networking Sites.

Before the final distribution of the questionnaires it was pretested among the study group, and finalized based on the responses received. With the help of few sample questions a brief questionnaire was distributed to all the selected colleges in order to identify the users of Social Networking Sites. After collecting these questionnaires, a list of the respondents who are users of Social Networking sites were organized and the copies of the main questionnaires were circulated.

The questionnaire is divided into two sections. Each section of the questionnaire contains a variety of questions. These questions are arranged in a logical manner. The first section of the questionnaire generated 'Demographic data' containing general information about the respondents. It covered such aspects as gender, age, educational qualification, economic background, etc. In general it aimed at creating on social profile of Social Networking Sites users, contains questions that elicit information on usage of Social Networking Sites which encompasses questions regarding various aspects of Social Networking
Sites, most used Social Networking Sites, purpose, time spent on Social Networking Sites, functions, communities/groups joined, security concerns, impact of Social Networking Sites on their interpersonal relationships, lifestyles, attitudes and behaviour.

**Statistical Analysis of Research Data**

The researcher used the following statistical methods to analyse the primary data of the research: Frequency, Percentage, Measures of Central Tendency, Correlation, Regression Analysis and Chi-Square.

First, frequency tables have been used to analyse how frequently college students used Social Networking Sites. Second, the technique of Percentage is used to determine the percentage of the respondents out of total population in terms of frequency of using Social Networking Sites. Through this, the researcher also determined the percentage of the respondents who are affected by the influence of social networking sites. Third, the Measures of Central Tendency are used to determine the average result of the primary data gathered from the respondents.

Fourth, the method of Correlation is used to analyse the impact of Social Networking Sites on the changing nature of interpersonal relationships, on changing lifestyles, behaviour and attitudes of the college students. Lastly, the methods of Regression Analysis and Chi-Square are used to analyse the number and the usage pattern of the college students.
Classification of Chapters

The thesis has been divided into 8 chapters and the classification of chapters is as follows:

Chapter – 1 – Introduction

This chapter gives a broad introduction about the influence of the usage of Social Networking Sites on interpersonal relationships of college students. An attempt has also been made to provide a theoretical understanding of the subject under study. The chapter gives a statement of the problem, outlines the objectives and discusses the significance of the study. This chapter is also meant to serve as an introduction to the understanding of social network and social networking sites in a historical setting.

All the key concepts used in the thesis are defined in the course of this chapter. These concepts are frequently used in discourses on Social Networking Sites and hence an attempt has been made to provide this conceptual clarity. Further in this chapter a note on the research methodology has been provided. This includes explanation of the research design, sample selection procedure, field location, data collection and interpretation techniques.

Chapter – 2 – Review of Literature

The aim of this chapter is to provide essential background information to help in the discussion that will follow in the coming chapters by
emphasizing those points that may have a beaming on the contents of this thesis.

In this chapter, a review of selected literature has been undertaken to understand the nature of existing studies on various aspects of Social Networking Sites. Special emphasis has been given to sociological writings on information technology, social networking sites, interpersonal relationships and their impact on the college students. Principally, the chapter has been classified into several sub-sections.

Chapter – 3 – Overview on Social Networking Sites in India

The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview on Social Networking Sites in India. This chapter not only traces historical facts but also tries to attempt projections on the usage pattern of Social Networking Sites among college going youth. A profile of Social Networking Sites usage is created in this chapter.

Chapter – 4 – Profile of SNS Users

This chapter provides a demographic profile and Social Networking Sites usage pattern of college students who have participated in the study. In depth analysis has been conducted using basic variables such as age, gender, education, income, etc. which help in better understanding of the respondents’ socio-economic background. This also serves as a base for the chapters that follow.
Chapter – 5 – Changing Nature of Interpersonal Relationships in the Family

The sixth chapter is an endeavour to analyse data which has been collected during the field work. Primarily the data has been analyzed using statistical methods. It is evident that the nature of interpersonal relationships is changing and further there is an existence of the influence of Social Networking Sites on interpersonal relationships among college students with members of their families. Inferences are drawn using statistical methods which are presented through tables and graphs to have a clear picture of the findings during research.

Chapter – 6 – SNS and the Changing Nature of Inter-Personal Relationships with Friends, Teachers and Others

This is an extension of the previous chapter. In this chapter the changing nature of interpersonal relationships peers and teachers is analysed. It also focuses on the interpersonal relationships pertaining to friends, teachers and others.

Chapter – 7 – Social Networking Sites and Future

The chapter examines how issues arising from the above accounts have implications for a sociological discourse on the understanding of the influence of usage of Social Networking Sites on interpersonal relationships of college students. With increasing usage of Social Networking Sites the impacts are far reaching on every realm of society, hence recent trends and future implications of Social Networking Sites
on the nature of interpersonal relationships in particular and on society in general are projected with the help of the study data.

Chapter – 8 – Concluding Remarks

The final chapter titled concluding remarks discusses the major findings in the study. Limitations of the study are also examined in the middle of the chapter. This final chapter also throws up some useful suggestions for further research in the area.

References


