

ABSTRACT

Internet has been a very facilitating medium and making lives easier for many of us. Internet is increasingly becoming a channel through which people, and especially adolescents, socialize and be in constant contact with their family, relatives and friends. More than a medium of acquiring knowledge, for adolescents, it has become a medium of expression of their implicit feelings and to know what is happening in their peer group. The Internet has been transforming the social world of adolescents and youth. Much research has been documented on the Internet usage and its prevalence in the Western world and its positive or negative impact on individuals. However, there is scarcity of evidence in this regard in the Indian context which represents a unique social and cultural background. Thus, the current study fills in the gap in international research on Internet use literature by investigating the prevalence and nature of Internet use among adolescents in India. The study also explores the impact of high and low Internet use on various psycho-social concomitants, such as general physical health, mental health, social health, and routine habits on the adolescents. Population for the research included adolescents of Vadodara District in Gujarat. A total of 1657 adolescents were taken as the sample for the study. A survey research was conducted on 1657 adolescents using a self developed questionnaire along with Young's Internet Addiction test. Results indicate that 44.8% of the participants are Average Users of the Internet, while 14.8% of the participants were Above Average Users of the Internet.

Results indicate that participants use the Internet mainly for socializing and downloading. Social networking sites are the most commonly visited sites by these adolescents. Significant difference was seen between the impact of Internet use and all psycho social concomitants.

Findings of the present study indicate that growing use of Internet is a prevalent public health issue which needs to be addressed. These results will help parents, teachers, counselors and

other care givers to take preventive and intervention measures to curb the tendency to over use the Internet.

Keywords: *Internet, Internet usage, Prevalence, Adolescents, physical health, mental health, social health, sleeping habits, eating habits.*