

Usage of Social Media among Slum Youth of Bhopal

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to study the social media usage pattern among the slum youth of Bhopal. In the era where social media is increasing its reach in every nook and corner of the world and has become a popular platform for sharing the views, thoughts, beliefs, information, traditions, knowledge, etc. by the means of this study it has been tried to find its reach among the slum youth. The study also tries to examine the various benefits of the social media in the life of the slum youth. The study establishes the fact that the social media is widely used by the slum youth. They access social media mostly with their smart phones. The study also concludes that the slum youth is getting educated these days and using the social media even for gaining the information about the world happenings.

Keywords: Social media, Youth

I INTRODUCTION

In the current era technology is a vital part of everyday life and mobile networks as well as the Internet have enabled large number of people to communicate globally in real time. For many of us, mobile phones, laptops, tablets and other technological devices have become inseparable part of our daily lives. In addition to merely finding information online, the Internet is used as a platform for creating new information collectively. Social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter and blogs give people the possibility to network and share, discuss and create information together. In 2012, roughly one fourth of world's Internet users were also using Facebook (Internet world stats, 2012).

Social media is a wider term. It includes social networking sites. In this study the social networking sites used for communicating like facebook, twitter etc are only included. Instant messaging app whatsapp and facebook app are also taken into account. Although the difference between social media and social networking is subtle, they're not the same. Social networking is really a subcategory of social media. The easiest way to understand the difference between social media and social networking is by thinking about the terms "media" and "networking" separately. Media refers to the information you're actually sharing—whether it's a link to an article, a video, an animated GIF, a PDF document, a simple status update or anything else. Networking, on the other hand, has to do with who your audience is and the relationships you have with them. Your network can include people like friends, relatives, colleagues, anyone from your past, current customers, mentors and even complete strangers.

In the research the social networking sites like facebook and twitter are included. Facebook require an account before most data can be accessed. Furthermore, many account based sites also encourage users to create connections between

other users on the site; connections which can be a means of filtering content. In this type of site, which have sometimes been more narrowly defined as "social networking sites".

II ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

(a) **Important features-** Various definitions of social media have been given. Social media are web-based communication tools that enable people to interact with each other by both sharing and consuming information. Some of the definitions have been included here to clear the meaning of the term:-

Below are some of the important common social media features:-

- (i) **User accounts:** If a site allows visitors to create their own accounts that they can log into, then that's a good sign there's going to be social interaction. You can't really share information or interact with others online without doing it through a user account.
- (ii) **Profile pages:** Since social media is all about communication, a profile page is often necessary to represent an individual. It often includes information about the individual user, like a profile photo, bio, website, feed of recent posts, recommendations, recent activity and more.
- (iii) **Friends, followers, groups, hash tags and so on:** Individuals use their accounts to connect with other users. They can also use them to subscribe to certain forms of information.
- (iv) **News feeds:** When users connect with other users on social media, they're basically saying, "I want to get information from these people." That information is updated for them in real-time via their news feed.

- (v) **Personalization:** Social media sites usually give users the flexibility to configure their user settings, customize their profiles to look a specific way, organize their friends or followers, manage the information they see in their news feeds and even give feedback on what they do or don't want to see.
- (vi) **Notifications:** Any site or app that notifies users about specific information is definitely playing the social media game. Users have total control over these notifications and can choose to receive the types of notifications that they want.
- (vii) **Information updating, saving or posting:** If a site or an app allows you to post absolutely anything, with or without a user account, then it's social! It could be a simple text-based message, a photo upload, and a YouTube video, a link to an article or anything else.
- (viii) **Like buttons and comment sections:** Two of the most common ways we interact on social media are via buttons that represent a "like" plus comment sections where we can share our thoughts.
- (ix) **Review, rating or voting systems:** Besides liking and commenting, lots of social media sites and apps rely on the collective effort of the community to review, rate and vote on information that they know about or have used. Think of your favourite shopping sites or movie review sites that use this social media feature.

(b) Definition of Youth

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines youth as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence and awareness of our interdependence as members of a community. Youth is a more fluid category than a fixed age-group. The UN, for statistical consistency across regions, defines 'youth', as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, without prejudice to other definitions by Member States.

United Nations (UN) defines youth as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, without prejudice to other definitions by Member States.

The African Youth Charter defines youth as any individual between 15-35 years of age. National Youth Policy (2014) defines youth as those aged 15 to 29 in the national youth policy (2014). This age group constitutes 27.5% of India's population according to 2011 census.

(c) Social media and youth

Youth across the globe is one of the major users of social media. The communication pattern has changed drastically in the recent years. Even the school going children have their accounts on various social media platforms.

Social media tools are woven into many young people's day-to-day lives. Young people are in conversation and communication with their peer groups using a wide variety of different media and media devices every day.

10 years ago, young people may have only been in touch with friends and peer-groups when hanging out at school, or meeting up in town. Now young people can be touch through instant messaging, social networks, online games and many other tools. Young people are growing up in a constantly connected society.

Young people are using social network sites for:

- (i) Keeping in touch with friends and acquaintances;
- (ii) Developing new contacts often with friends of friends, or people with shared interests;
- (iii) Sharing content, engaging in self expression & exploring identity;
- (iv) Hanging out and consuming content including commercial and user-generated content;
- (v) Accessing information and informal learning;
- (vi) Participating in informal groups, and formal youth engagement opportunities.

III RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

As mentioned social media is increasing its reach throughout the county so is in India. These days' smart phones can be seen in the hand of every other person. It seems that the smart phones with the internet connection have become the necessity of life. Slum youth is also actively using the social media these days. The research is aiming to find out social media usage pattern of the slum youths in Bhopal. Very fewer studies in this regard have been conducted in the country. Even with their limited resources they are using the smart phones and accessing the social media. Few years back buying a smart phone was a costly affair. Now the smart phones are available at very low prices. With the availability of cheap smart phones the social media has increased its reach in every nook and corner of the country. With its nationwide usage the social media is also affecting the life of the youth in both positive and negative way. In the study it has been tried to what the slum youth feels after using the social media sites and apps. Various studies have conducted to find out the reason why

the people are using social media so frequently what the purpose behind it is. Social media usage is becoming a kind of addiction these days. Recently a school in Chennai is giving admission to the students who do not have account on any social media and promise not to open. The students were ought to fill an oath form for this. In the study it has also been tried out to find out the reasons behind social media usage. There can be many uses like love oriented, friendship oriented or others. The social is considered to change the friendship patterns across the globe. It has made the connectivity very convenient. The main reason of usage of the usage of the social media by the slum youth is also tried to study. In some areas the slums are considered to be orthodox and conservative. They don't allow their girls to watch more TV, listen to music, use mobile phone or access internet. Even with their limited resources the slum youth manage to recharge their smart phones with the various net packs available in the market of various subscribers. They put various kinds of restrictions. In the research it has been tried to find out the barriers that the slum youth (both boys and girls) come across while accessing social media.

Uses and gratification theory introduced by Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch provides the theoretical frame work of this study. The theory is an approach to understanding why and how people actively seek out specific media to satisfy specific needs. UGT is an audience- centered approach to understanding mass communication. The theory focuses on what people do to the media. It is the theory which explains of how people use media for their need and gratification. In other words we can say this theory states what people do with media rather than what media does to people.

It assumes that audience members are not passive consumers of media. Rather, the audience has power over their media consumption and assumes an active role in interpreting and integrating media into their own lives. Unlike other theoretical perspectives, UGT holds that audiences are responsible for choosing media to meet their desires and needs to achieve gratification. This theory would then imply that the media compete against other information sources for viewers' gratification.

IV LITERATURE REVIEW

(a) Review of foreign literature:

Eric Rice, Anamika Barman Adhikari (2013):

In the study conducted on the topic *Internet and social Media use as a resource among homeless youth* it was concluded that may be these people may have less access to the internet as the housed people does. They use the internet to obtain information, fulfil recreation and entertainment

needs, and to socialize. When homeless youth reported their online activities at last access, the most common responses were checking e-mail (64%) and checking social networking websites (56%). Clearly socializing is a critical part of time online for homeless youth, just as it is for housed youth. Like their housed counterparts, homeless youth spend some of their time online having fun.

(b) Review of Indian literature

Nimmi Rangaswamy (2013):

The study on urban slum *Local Pocket Internet and Global Social Media Bridging the Digital Gap: Facebook and Sub – Stratum in Urban India* found out that the communities in which our users live are constrained by various socio-economic and cultural factors impacting the everyday of Facebook use. Limited education, restricted English communication skills, and offline personalities rooted in socio-economic barriers shape and mould Facebook as a channel offering multiple affordances seldom available in their lived social reality. Entering and immersing in the social media world of Facebook is a path to satiating many desires, be it exploring heterosexual romantic possibilities like chatting/ dating, pushing boundaries of a limited communication repertoire, acquiring digital literacy including netiquette and gaining a toehold in global communities and citizenship. It appears Facebook is a path to global modernity catapulting these youth away from the lived reality of the urban slums and down-market neighbourhoods.

Affordances for low-income India on Facebook are driven primarily by two market forces: the affordable mobile phone and the micro pre-pay mobile internet. The 'pocket internet' as it is called has revolutionized access, affordability and use of the internet as an 'everyday' technology. Feature phones afford users the ability to do practically anything on Facebook. Users can post and consume content the same way they would on a computer.

V RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

(a) General objective

The overall objective of the study is to study the overall social media usage pattern of the slum youth of Bhopal. It has been tried to analyses that which sites they are mostly using, the intentions behind using them, the benefit of the social media in their life and the barriers through which they come across while accessing social media.

(b) Specific objectives

- (i) To determine the social media usage habits of the slum youth. In this objective it has tried to study that what are mostly used and preferred social networking and social media site is used by the youth.

- (ii) To study the sources used by them for accessing social media. In this objective the platforms like smart phone , cyber cafe or others used by them for accessing social media has been studied.
- (iii) To study the reasons behind using social media. In this objective it is tried to study the reasons of using social media. There can be many intentions of the youth behind using social media like gaining knowledge, information, love, friendship etc.
- (iv) To determine the barriers through which the slum youth come across while accessing social media. There are many barriers trough which the slum youth come across while accessing social media. Financial and social barriers are tried to study
- (v) To determine the benefits of social media in their life. Finally in the last objective it has tried to find out what according to the slum youth is the benefit of social media in their life

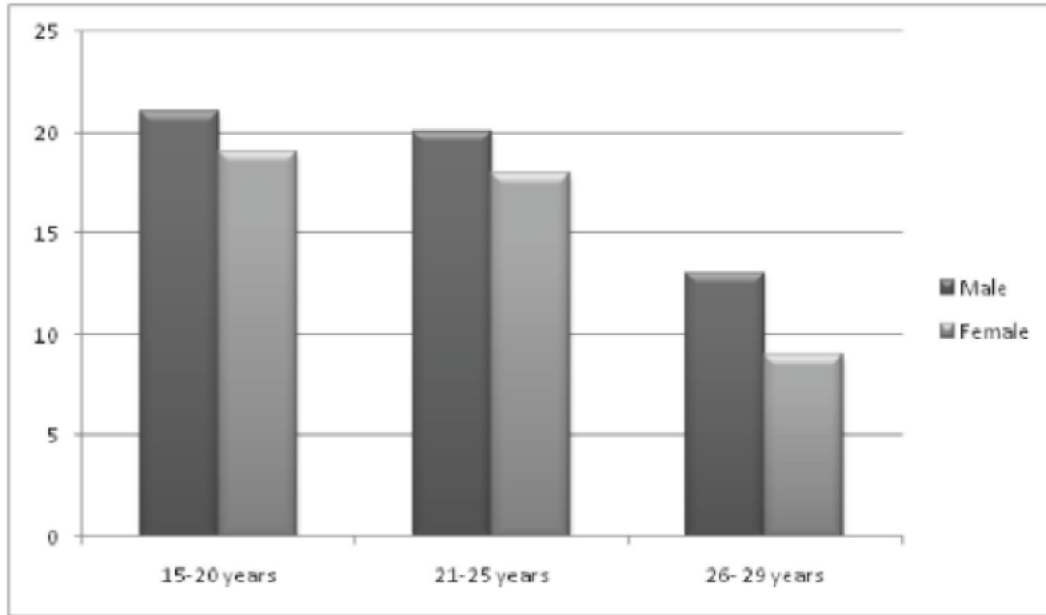
VI METHODOLOGY

- (a) **Research Design**-Descriptive research design has been used in the study. The descriptive research depicts the participants in an accurate way. It's all about describing people who take part in the study.
- (b) **Research Area**-The study is done by collecting the data from three slums of Bhopal that are Ishwar Nagar, Sai Baba Nagar and Bandganga.
- (c) **Data collection method**-The survey has been conducted. Primary data is collected by the questionnaire tool. The questionnaire is filled by the youth of the three slums.
- (d) **Sampling techniques**-Under the non probability sampling technique, purposive sampling has been used. The purposive sampling has been done because the earlier pilot study was conducted on a sample of 8 youth from Shahpura slum area. Out of them 5 were having smart phones. Among them four were using their phones mostly for accessing whatsapp and facebook. They usually opt for cheaper mobile internet packs which are for fewer days. None of them are going to cyber cafe for internet use.
- (e) **Sample Size**-The questionnaire has been filled by 100 respondents from the slums of the above mentioned area. The youth according to National Youth Policy (2014) from 15- 29 years has been included in the study. The sample includes both boys and girls.

VII DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1
Demographic Details

Gender	15-20 years	21-25 years	26-29 years	Total
Male	21	20	13	54
Female	19	18	9	46
Total	40	38	22	100



Graph.1 Age of the respondents

Table 2
Education Level

Gender	Masters	Bachelors	Higher Secondary	High School	Illiterate	Total
Male	5	21	11	21	0	54
Female	4	16	9	13	0	46

Table 3
Occupation

Occupation	Male			Female			Percentage (%)
	15-20 yrs	21-25 yrs	26-29 yrs	15-20 yrs	21-25 yrs	26-29 yrs	
Govt. Employee	-	1	1	0	0	0	2
Pvt. Employee	1	5	3	1	1	0	11
Businessman	2	3	8	-	-	-	13
Student	18	11	1	17	14	7	68
Housewife	-	-	-	1	2	2	5
Servant	-	-	-	-	1	-	1

Table 4
Monthly Family Income

Income	Male			Female			Total
	15-20 yrs	21-25 yrs	26-29 yrs	15-20 yrs	21-25 yrs	26-29 yrs	
Rs 1,000-5,000	6	3	2	5	5	4	25
Rs 6,000-10,000	5	3	4	5	7	2	26
Rs 11,000-15,000	4	5	3	3	3	2	20
Rs 16,000-20,000	2	3	2	1	1	1	10
Above Rs 20,000	4	6	2	5	2	-	19
Total	21	20	13	19	18	9	100

Table 5
Per day usage of smart phone

Hours	Male			Female			Percentage (%)
	15-20 yrs	21-25 yrs	26-29 yrs	15-20 yrs	21-25 yrs	26-29 yrs	
0-1hrs	1	4	2	2	6	1	16
1-2 hrs	2	8	6	6	4	3	29
2-3hrs	10	3	5	6	6	2	32
More than 3 hrs	8	5	0	5	2	3	23
Total	21	20	13	19	18	9	100

Table 6
Reasons of using smart phone

Reason	Present	Respondents		Absent	Percentage (%)		
		Male	Female		Present	Absent	Total
Playing games	71	35	36	29	71	29	100
Use of social sites	93	48	45	7	93	7	100
Sending message	60	34	28	40	60	40	100
Online booking	45	30	15	55	45	55	100
Using apps	39	25	14	61	39	61	100
Others	7	4	3	93	7	93	100

When asked about the reason for which reason mostly the slum youth use their phone then it came out to be for accessing social sites. 65%

respondents answered that they mostly use smart phone for accessing social networking sites.

Table 7
Most likely reason for using smart phone

	Male			Female		
	Age (in years)					
	15-20	21-25	26-29	15-20	21-25	26-29
Using social sites	9	15	10	13	14	4

Highest number of respondents who are using social networking sites in their phones are falling under the age group of 21-25 years of age. 15

males and 14 females under this age group are mostly using their phone for accessing social networking site

Table 8
Social sites/apps used

Social site/app	Present	Respondents		Absent	Percentage (%)		
		Male	Female		Present	Absent	Total
Facebook	91	48	43	9	91	9	100
Whatsapp	97	51	46	3	97	3	100
Twitter	13	9	4	87	13	87	100
Hike	31	17	14	63	31	69	100
Skype	35	28	7	65	35	65	100
Others	14	12	2	86	14	86	100

The above table reveals that as in other sections of the society facebook has also increased its reach among economically backward classes as well. Whatsapp the instant messaging app which has been introduced few years back has increased its reach tremendously among the slum youth as well.

All the female respondents are using whatsapp. Twitter on the other hand has very low popularity among the slum youth. Hike although have considerable number of users. Only two females out of the total respondents are using the other apps or sites than the above mentioned options.

Table 9
Mostly used social site/ app:

Social site/apps	Number of respondents
Facebook	40
Whatsapp	58
Twitter	0
Hike	1
Skype	1
Others	0
Total	100

When the respondents were asked about the social site/ app they use mostly then the result clearly indicated the highest usage of whatsapp . Whatsapp has been used by 58 respondents whereas facebook has been liked by 40 respondents. This result also

clearly shows the increase of whatsapp use by the youth. Hike and skype has been liked by 1 respondent each. Whatsapp has been used by 35 males and 23 females.

Table 10
Sources used for accessing social media:

Source	Male	Female	Total
Smart phone	51	44	95
Cyber cafe	1	1	1
Both of the above	1	1	2
Others	1	0	1
Total	54	46	100

When the respondents were asked about the platforms/ sources they use for accessing social media then 95 % respondents have answered that they use only smart for accessing them. Reaming categories have only one respondent in each of

them. Out of 100 respondents 51 males and 44 females use the smart phone for accessing social media and apps. This figure clearly indicates the rise of uses of smart phone among the slum youth these days.

Table 11
Reasons for using social site/apps:

Reason	Present	Respondents		Absent	Percentage (%)		
		Male	Female		Present	Absent	Total
Entertainment	91	46	45	9	91	9	100
Knowledge	78	39	39	22	78	22	100
Information/ news	59	26	33	41	59	41	100
Love	26	13	13	74	26	74	100
Friendship	62	28	34	38	62	38	100
Others	9	7	2	91	9	91	100

Table 12
Most likely reason for using social media/ app:

Reason	Male			Female			Total
	15-20 yrs	21-25 yrs	26-29 yrs	15-20 yrs	21-25 yrs	26-29 yrs	
Entertainment	9	9	6	11	12	6	53
Knowledge	8	6	3	5	3	1	26
Information	2	3	1	2	2	1	11
Love	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Friendship	2	2	2	1	1	1	9
Total	21	20	13	13	18	9	100

Highest numbers of respondents i.e. 53 have said that they use their favourite social site/ app due to entertainment. Out of these in male category there is equal number of respondents in 15-20 and 21-25 years age group. While talking about females the

highest number of respondents i.e. are there in the 21-25 years age group. As compared to males higher number of female uses the social site / apps with the whole sole motive of entertainment.

Table 13
Barriers faced while using social media/ app:

Barrier	Male			Female			Total
	15-20 yrs	21-25 yrs	26-29 yrs	15-20 yrs	21-25 yrs	26-29 yrs	
Family pressure	9	2	1	7	6	6	31
Financial condition	2	3	2	4	7	3	21
No problem	10	15	10	8	5	0	48
Total	21	20	13	19	18	9	100

When asked about the barriers that the respondents face while using social media then 31 respondents have answered that they find family pressure as a barrier. The family members force them for not using their phones or scold them for using social media. Among them the highest number of male and female falls under the age group of 15 -20 years age group.

21 respondents have said that they find the financial condition is the barrier in their usage. Financial condition problem is more prevalent among the females.

48 respondents face no difficulty while accessing social media. Among them there are 35 males and 13 females. The table shows that most of the males do not find any difficulty in accessing social media. While large number of females find difficulty in accessing social media either in the form of family pressure or financial problem.

Table 14
Benefits of using social media:

Benefit	Present	Respondents		Absent	Percentage (%)		
		Male	Female		Present	Absent	Total
Time saving	68	36	32	32	68	32	100
Easy reach	62	29	33	38	62	38	100
Cost saving	32	21	11	68	32	68	100
Connecting with family	76	38	38	24	76	24	100
Informing the world happenings	63	32	31	37	63	37	100
Others	5	3	2	95	5	95	100

Table 15
Most preferred benefit of social media

Reason	Male			Female			Total
	15-20 yrs	21-25 yrs	26-29 yrs	15-20 yrs	21-25 yrs	26-29 yrs	
Time saving	2	3	1	2	5	3	16
Easy reach	2	2	2	3	1	4	14
Cost saving	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Connecting with family	7	13	7	7	11	1	46
Informing the world happenings	10	2	3	7	1	1	24
Total	21	20	13	19	18	9	100

When asked about the most preferred benefit of social media then 46 respondents answered that the main benefit of social media is that helps in connecting with the family members situated in other cities or somewhere else. After this the respondents answered that social media also helps in informing with the world happenings by this it

means that it helps the users to know about what is going around in their surroundings as well as in world. Time saving and easy reach has been chosen by 16 and 14 respondents respectively. None of the respondent has chosen the cost saving feature as their favourite benefit.

Table 16
Effect of social media in their daily life:

Reason	Male			Female			Total
	15-20 yrs	21-25 yrs	26-29 yrs	15-20 yrs	21-25 yrs	26-29 yrs	
Not at all	1	1	1	3	0	1	7
Not very much	5	4	4	1	4	4	22
Somewhat	9	6	3	6	6	1	31
Much	6	9	4	9	8	2	38
Very much	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
Total	21	20	13	19	18	9	100

The respondents were asked that what changes they feel in their life after they started using social media. They were asked that if they find some effect in their daily life. Most of the respondents have said that they have found much change in their daily life after they have started using social media. 31 respondents said that they feel that they have found somewhat change in their life. 22 respondents have felt that they have experienced very much change in their daily life. Only 2 respondents have felt that they have experienced very much change in their daily life.

VIII CONCLUSION

The data is collected from males and females of various age groups ranging from 15- 29 years of age. The sample has been collected from 100 respondents among them 13 are married and 87 are unmarried.

The respondents have various occupations. Most of them i.e. 68% are students.

The common notion that the slum youth is not very much educated is proven wrong here. The slums youth is educated and even some of them are pursuing their master's degree.

Most of the youth use their smart phones for 2 hours per day.

93% of them use their smart phone for accessing social media. Among them the highest numbers of respondents are falling under the age group of 21-25 years of age.

Whatsapp users have outnumbered the facebook users. Whatsapp is gaining popularity even in the slum areas.

Whatsapp has become the second most favourite social site. Whatsapp has been liked and used more by the slum youth.

Most of the respondents feel that the best feature of their favourite social site /app is that it provides information to them.

95% respondents access social media by their smart phone. This shows that the cyber cafes have lost their popularity.

Most of the respondents access their favourite social site/ app with the motive of entertainment. As compared to males more females use it for entertainment purpose. Knowledge gaining is the second most popular reason for using social media. This shows that the slum youth these days is aware about the happenings in their surroundings and is interested in gaining knowledge.

Most of the respondents do not face any difficulty while accessing social media. Family pressure is the prevalent problem among males and females. The family member them scold them and pressurise them for not using it.

Most of the respondents feel that the main benefit of social media in their life is that it helps them in connecting with their family members. They can easily connect with various people by sitting at one place.

IX LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The time available for conducting the study was not sufficient. If there would have been more time then the study would have been conducted in more appropriate way. At present only three slums have been taken into account if there would have been

more time than some more or major slum areas of Bhopal would have been taken into account. Then the results could have been generalised more appropriately. There could have been more equal gender distribution. As already mentioned purposive sampling has been adopted in this research, further studies could apply random sampling. The data is not collected on the media literacy or media competence of these youth. It is entirely possible that youth who are more digital media savvy are capable of both making internet searches for jobs and using the internet to effectively communicate with their social networks.

X RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In the result of this study the popularity of whatsapp over facebook can be clearly seen. Future studies could focus on why whatsapp has created such a popular phenomenon compared to other social networking sites. Since there is high usage of whatsapp, it would be interesting to understand why people use it so frequently. Research can also be done on gender and usage of social networking websites for better understanding the effects on males and females of these sites. The study could also be conducted on the social media usage by all the age groups of the slums. Study could also be done on how the reach of smart phones in the slums has increased the social media usage.

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