Social Media and Social Ills: Overcoming the Challenges in the Contemporary Era

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Abstract

Social media has become an integral part of modern society, offering unprecedented opportunities for communication, education, entertainment, and activism. However, social media also poses significant challenges and risks for individuals and communities, such as cyber bullying, misinformation, privacy predation, mental depression, social isolation, and addiction. Especially, this paper reviews the situations of the positive and negative effects of social media on various aspects of human well-being for the children & teens age group, such as physical and mental health, social capital, personal privacy, civic engagement, and democratic participation. It also discusses the potential strategies and interventions to overcome the challenges and enhance the benefits of social media in the contemporary era. To overcome these challenges, the article proposes solutions such as enhancing content moderation procedures, promoting digital and medical literacy and critical thinking among users, implementing transparent and accountable procedures, and fostering collaboration between platforms, policymakers, and civil society organizations. These include promoting digital literacy, fostering online civility, regulating harmful content, supporting vulnerable users, and encouraging positive online behaviors. The paper concludes by highlighting the need for more interdisciplinary and collaborative research on the complex and dynamic relationship between social media and social ills.

Keywords: social ills, social media, cyber bullying, technology, medical specialists, digital era

Introduction

Societies are intricate systems that face diverse challenges and problems impeding the well-being and advancement of their members. These challenges, referred to as social problems, encompass a wide range of issues that affect individuals, communities, and society as a whole. From poverty and inequality to discrimination and violence, these

problems highlight areas where societies fail to achieve equality, justice, and harmony. Social problems have profound effects on individuals and communities, often leading to severe consequences that perpetuate cycles of disadvantage and impede social progress. They create obstacles to equal opportunities, undermine social unity, and amplify divisions within society. Additionally, social problems have far-reaching impacts not only on those directly affected but also on the broader social, economic, and political landscape. Recognizing and comprehending social problems is crucial for instigating change and working towards a more equitable and inclusive society. By addressing these issues, societies can strive to ensure equal access to necessities, eradicate discrimination, ensure safety and security, promote mental and physical well-being and safeguard the environment. Resolving social problems necessitates collaborative efforts from governments, organizations, communities, and individuals, as everyone has a role to play in fostering positive social transformation.

In our dynamic and interconnected world, it is vital to be mindful of persistent social problems and their ramifications. By acknowledging these challenges, we can foster a shared commitment to understanding, empathy, and action, thereby laying the foundation for a society that values and uplifts all its members. Only through a comprehensive understanding of social problems can we effectively address them and strive for a more just and prosperous future. So, the term 'social ills can refer to social ills refer to various problems and challenges that affect societies and communities, often resulting in negative consequences for individuals and the overall well-being of the population. These social issues can manifest in different forms and have wide-ranging impacts on different aspects of society. Some examples include but are not limited to, crime, homelessness, drug use, and poor education. While these types of issues are rather widely acknowledged as social evils the world over, they are also subject to historical, cultural, and social factors which affect how they are interpreted and presented.

Social ills are problems or challenges that exist within a society and negatively impact individuals, communities, and the overall well-being of the population. These issues can manifest in various forms and have adverse effects on different aspects of society, including social, economic, and cultural dimensions. Social ills are often characterized by factors such as inequality, injustice, discrimination, and the violation of human rights. They can encompass a wide range of problems, including poverty,

violence, substance abuse, crime, environmental degradation, and inadequate access to education or healthcare. These social problems are interconnected and can exacerbate one another. For example, poverty can contribute to limited access to education, which, in turn, can perpetuate the cycle of poverty. Discrimination and inequality can create social tensions and hinder the development of a harmonious and inclusive society.

So, addressing these social ills requires understanding their root causes, implementing policies and initiatives to promote social justice, equality, and sustainable development, and fostering a collective effort from individuals, communities, and institutions. It also involves creating opportunities for all individuals to thrive, ensuring access to basic needs and resources, and striving for a society that values diversity, inclusivity, and respect for human rights.

Social Media and Social Ills in the History

Historically, a great many phenomena have been labeled social evils. According to the University of Chicago Press, in the early 20th century, philanthropist Joseph Rowntree was among the first to use the term in Britain. For Rowntree, the worst evils were "gambling, war, slavery, and poverty." All of these seem to work against society's moral fabric, degrade the human experience, or encourage vice. While some critics point to criminological sources of social ills, such as drugs, theft, or prostitution, others point toward economic structures that cause widespread injustice and which then, in turn, sponsor social deterioration. In 2014, for example, the Huffington Post cites Pope Francis as determining that "unfettered capitalism" was the root of all social evil, and that combating the "wealth gap" inherent to that system was a top priority in recuperating society as a whole.

In some cases, there is no complete agreement as to any one issue constituting a social ill. During the Temperance Movement in the United States, many women and religious organizations depicted alcohol consumption as the most toxic element within society. When that lobby finally got Prohibition implemented, there was a widespread backlash against the law, as well as a tremendous upsurge in crime. Thus, attempting to eradicate one social evil spawned the proliferation of others. This is a classic example of some people's social and religious attitudes identifying something as a social evil, and another set of the population as doing the opposite.

As a statistical report, the Internet, social media, mobile apps, and other digital communications technologies have become part of everyday life for billions of people around the world. According to recent statistics for January 2020, 4.54 billion people are active Internet users, encompassing 59 % of the global population (Statista, 2020a). Social media usage has become an integral element in the lives of many people across the world. In 2019 2.95 billion people were active social media users worldwide. This is forecast to increase to almost 3.43 billion by 2023 (Statistica, 2020b). Digital and social media marketing allows companies to achieve their marketing objectives at relatively low costs (Ajina, 2019). Facebook pages have more than 50 million registered businesses and over 88 % of businesses use Twitter for their marketing purposes (Lister, 2017). Digital and social media technologies and applications have also been widely used for creating awareness of public services and political promotions (Grover et al., 2019; Hossain et al., 2018; Kapoor and Dwivedi, 2015; Shareef et al., 2016). People spend an increasing amount of time online searching for information, on products and services communicating with other consumers about their experiences, and engaging with companies. Organizations have responded to this change in consumer behavior by making digital and social media an essential and integral component of their business marketing plans (Stephen, 2016).

In the modern era, social media has become ubiquitous, with approximately 4.33 billion users worldwide as of early 2021, representing over 55 percent of the global population (Global Social Media Stats, April 2021). This staggering statistic underscores the profound impact of social media on our interconnected world. It serves as a vital tool for communication, facilitating the dissemination of information and fostering community engagement.

Stafen (2011) emphasizes the prevalence of social networks in contemporary society, noting their role in facilitating daily activities. However, alongside the benefits, there are challenges inherent in the use of social media. Issues such as exposure to inappropriate content and addiction have prompted scrutiny from researchers and concern among users.

Marsh and Kelly (2015) explore the negative consequences of social networking addiction, highlighting how individuals or groups can exploit these platforms to harm others. They underscore the potential for information leaks and reputational damage,

emphasizing the need for awareness and education on responsible social media use.

Investopedia defines social media as internet-based platforms that enable individuals to interact and share various aspects of their lives. The proliferation of smartphones has further accelerated the adoption of social media, even in countries with lower income levels like Nepal. While platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram dominate globally, native social media platforms in Nepal struggle to gain traction due to a lack of innovation.

In today's digital age, social media has become an indispensable aspect of daily life, particularly for younger generations who have grown up immersed in its influence. Concerns among parents, educators, and mental health professionals about its impact on development and well-being underscore the need for ongoing research and dialogue on responsible usage.

Figure 1

The Different Aspects of Social Media

Source:- Social Media Stock Vector by ©trueffelpix 45536701 (depositphotos.com)

This picture is a graphical representation of various elements and concepts associated with social media. It highlights different aspects like collaboration, information exchange, virtual community, and types of content shared on social media platforms. The media contribute to shaping the public mind set and bringing about major changes in society. The change may be both, positive and negative. However, the media in Nepal have not always been what they should be in the real sense. Today, the mass media's inclination towards sensationalism is increasing. Due to intense and often unhealthy competition between media houses, they are unable to broadcast and print the kind of news and programs needed for the constructive uplift of the nation. Many of the news stories they carry seem more or less opinionated.

Similarly, the focus is mainly on maximizing the number of readers and viewers. To win the race, Television channels always jump on to anything for the flash breaking news. Thus, introspection or self-inspection by the media is urgently needed to uplift their professional standards. It is in the best interest of the media, and society, therefore, that news organizations subject themselves to intense internal scrutiny and avoid unethical journalism. Many national, regional, and international conferences are frequently held in the capital and elsewhere in the country but these events are rarely able to find space in the media. Even the important deliberations, outcomes, and recommendations of the seminars and colloquial often go unreported in the mainstream media.

Results and Discussion

The Social Problems in Social Media

Social media not only brings positive effects but also brings many negative impacts to us on social interaction. Nila Eslit, (2017) states that one of the negative effects of social media on social interaction is a false sense of connectivity. So, some of the most social ills in media are described as follows:

Obesity

One of the negative effects of using social media is creating obesity problems in people, especially children and teenagers. Besides altering our nutritional habits,

sedentary life, sleep disorders, and other factors that increase obesity, social media takes place among these factors now. Obesity is among the primary epidemics that threaten global health. It is a serious health problem in our country as it is all over the world. And it increases more and more. In fact, since the 1970s, obesity rates have increased in every country of the world. Obesity also brings other diseases. It causes heart and vascular diseases, diabetes, cancer, and skeletal and muscular system disorders.

The World Health Organization describes obesity as "the accumulation of excess fat on the body in a way that will distract health". We define obesity as the increase in the amount of fat in our bodies, that is, adiposity. There are some criteria to determine this body mass index is the most frequently used among them. In adult individuals, the figure calculated by dividing the body weight in kg into the square of the length in meters is the body mass index value. We consider this value as normal between 18.5- 25, overweight between 25-30, and obesity over 30. In addition to the amount of body fat, distribution is also important. Fattening around the abdomen and the abdominal organs is named male-type or apple-type obesity. A waist circumference over 80 cm for women and 94 cm for men mean an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and metabolic disease. In this sense using many social technologies can be considered as harmful activity that impairs obesity of the people in general.

Aggressive Behavior

Social media and websites play important roles in the lives of children and adolescents and largely affect values, beliefs, and behavior. Research studies have revealed that watching violence on television is one of the factors independently contributing to the development of aggressive behavior. Exposure to media violence increases the risk of aggressive and violent behavior in viewers.

Generally, aggression has been defined as certain activities carried out and directed to intentionally inflict harm on another individual. The aggressive person believes that the aggressive behavior will inflict harm on the target individual and that he is motivated to avoid such aggressive behaviors (Anderson and Bushman, 2002b; Berkowitz, 1993; Geen, 2001; Swing and Anderson, 2010). Aggressive behavior does not always occur in physical form and nature. Psychologists distinguish less serious forms of aggression such as verbal retaliation, engagement in spreading rumors or insulting

people, and profanity (Ostrow and Godleski, 2010). Relational or social aggression intends to inflict emotional rather than physical harm on a person. Social aggression is observed more among girls as compared to Girls Boys (Spieker, Campbell, Vandergrift, et al., 2012). Media violence has been defined as a visual portrayal of physical aggression carried out by a person to harm another and refers to aggressive and violent behavior portrayed through story characters in the media (Turhan ŞENGÖNÜL,2017).

The effects of violence and violent media increase aggressive thoughts. One result is that people who consume a lot of violent media are more likely to attend to hostile information and expect others to behave in a hostile manner. They may also interpret ambiguous situations in the worst possible light, assuming that the behavior of others reflects hostility rather than other, more positive traits such as assertiveness. Some researchers have also found that violent media also increase aggressive feelings. Most importantly, exposure to violent media also makes people act more aggressively toward others.

Cyber Bullying

Generally, Cyber bullying is the act of intimidating, threatening, or coercing people online through the use of social media, email, text messages, blog posts, or other digital or electronic methods. Also called digital harassment, cyber bullying usually involves the use of derogatory, aggressive, or threatening language. To mask their real identity, cyber bullies often hide behind fake digital personas. Cyber bullying often involves sending the victim threatening messages, posting compromising photos or videos of the victim on social media sites, or even creating a fake website about the victim. While bullying is not new, cyber bullying takes harassment to a frightening new level. As has often been documented in the news, the effects of cyber bullying can be devastating and even fatal (Nica Latto,2020).

Similarly, Nica Argues that According to the Cyber bullying Research Center, about 34% of middle school and high school students have experienced online harassment. Several research studies have shown that cyber bullying is linked to low self-esteem, anger, frustration, and suicidal thoughts. Given the gravity of the issue, both parents and kids need to understand what to do about cyber bullying and the many forms it can take.

As social media is popular among adolescents, others warn of the negative influence of social media such as cyber bullying behavior. Smith et al (2008) defined cyber bullying as "aggressive and intentional behavior of an individual or a particular group using electronic forms of contact that are carried out repeatedly and overtime against an individual or a certain group who cannot easily defend themselves. Smith et al (2008) discussed four key elements that characterize cyber bullying: repetition, power imbalance, intention, and aggression. Cyber bullying that occurs in social media may be reproduced many times. Pictures, messages, or videos posted on social media can quickly and easily spread. Once a particular content item such as a picture or video is created and posted on social media, it becomes difficult to control. Such content could be archived and forwarded by strangers (Slonje & Smith, 2008).

Cyber bullying is a form of bullying that is only done through the web and other technologies (Idrees Ahmad, 2015). Nila Eslit (2017) explains that children and teenagers are vulnerable to cyber bullying since different social media platforms are easy to be accessed by anyone. With so many children and teenagers using social media nowadays, they easily become targets of cyber bullying.

Influence on Social Isolation and Real-Life Interactions

Social media has revolutionized the way we connect and communicate with others, especially children and teenagers. While it offers numerous benefits and opportunities, there is growing concern about the potential negative impact on social interactions and real-life connections. This introduction will delve into the issue of social isolation and decreased real-life interactions resulting from the pervasive use of social media among children and teens.

In today's digital age, social media platforms have become integral parts of young people's lives, shaping their relationships and social experiences. However, spending excessive time on social media can lead to a shift in how children and teens engage with others, often substituting face-to-face interactions with digital communication. This phenomenon raises questions about the potential consequences for their social development and overall well-being.

One major consequence of social media use is the tendency for children and teens to become digitally reliant, prioritizing virtual connections over in-person relationships.

The allure of likes, comments, and online validation can create a sense of social satisfaction, but it may not foster the depth and authenticity found in real-life interactions. This shift towards shallow relationships and superficial connections can contribute to a sense of social isolation. Moreover, the fear of missing out (FOMO) has become increasingly prevalent in the social media landscape. Constant exposure to the highlight reels of others' lives can lead children and teens to feel excluded or left out, fueling anxiety and further deterring them from seeking real-life interactions. Cyberbullying and negative online experiences also play a significant role, as they can cause emotional distress and prompt individuals to withdraw from social interactions as a protective measure.

Additionally, the unrealistic social comparisons prevalent on social media can erode self-esteem and confidence. The constant exposure to carefully curated content can create a distorted perception of reality, making children and teens feel inadequate or unable to measure up to perceived ideals. Consequently, they may retreat from real-life interactions, fearing judgment or rejection.

Overall, the decline in real-life interactions and the rise of social isolation among children and teens due to their engagement with social media pose significant concerns. It is crucial to address these issues proactively and find a balance between the benefits of technology and the importance of authentic, face-to-face connections. By fostering healthy digital habits, encouraging offline activities, and promoting open communication, we can mitigate the negative impacts of social media and nurture the social well-being of young individuals.

Negative Effects on Mental Health

According to Shumard Charles, M.D., 2019, Mental health issues have risen significantly over the last decade and the rise of digital media may be one reason why according to a national survey released Thursday. The American Psychological Association found sharp increases in the number of young adults and adolescents who reported experiencing negative psychological symptoms -specifically in those born in 1995 or later, known as iGen. Coincidentally, the greatest spike in symptoms occurred in 2011, around the same time social media bursts onto the scene. Digital media use has had a bigger impact on teens and young adults than older adults who tend to have more stable

social lives. "Cultural trends in the last 10 years may have had a larger effect on mood disorders and suicide-related outcomes among younger generations compared with older generations," said Twenge. These results, which are unlikely to be due to genetics or economic woes, suggest that more research is needed to understand how digital communication versus face-to-face social interaction influences mood disorders and suicide-related outcomes, she added The new survey also found that young people are not sleeping as much as previous generations, which may also play a role in the rise of mental health issues. Sleep deprivation affects mood and is associated with anxiety and depression, research shows. "Teenagers use social media in a way that affects their sleep," said Fobian, 2019. "They are exposed to light right before bed and that light exposure alone delays their sleep by 30 minutes. It also affects their social interactions with others."

Jealousy may cause conflict among couples because they feel insecure and uncertain in a relationship. According to Buunk & Dijkstra (as cited in Wilkerson, 2017), women tend to be more jealous of emotional infidelity than men and men tend to be more jealous of sexual infidelity than women. When the conflict becomes more serious, it may end a relationship. Sometimes, couples feel uneasy to break up with face-to-face communication, so they tend to use social media as a platform to break up with their partner.

Several studies indicate excessive screen time delays speech ability in children. (Kuta, 2017) Language development in young children is directly related to the number of time parents spends speaking to them rather than exposing them to devices screen. As per the American Association of Pediatricians (AAP, 2016), almost 75% of teens have a smartphone, while 25% of teens define themselves as "constantly connected" to the Internet, which exposes them to risks of obesity, negative effects on school performance, sleep deprivation, etc. While there are social evils in the virtual world and its excessive use leads to a negative impact on the child's health.

Texting and Sexting

According to Rice, (2020) Sexting is sending sexually explicit messages, photos, or videos via cell phone, computer, or any digital device. Sexting includes photos and videos containing nudity or showing simulated sex acts. It also includes text messages

that discuss or propose sex acts. As teens and children increasingly carry smartphones and use tablets, social media, apps, and messaging, the risks that they will send or receive sexually explicit content have become a concern for parents, teachers, and law enforcement. Sexting is often done as a joke, a way of getting attention, or as flirting. Parents should discuss the issue with their children to ensure they understand the risks and what to do if or when they're pressured to participate.

Texting & sexting intimate messages are common in modern relationships. It can be a way to build intimacy, particularly in long-distance relationships. For you both to feel safe and trusting of each other, it's important to set some clear boundaries. What you feel comfortable with in-person - you might not be comfortable with the text, video, or phone conversations – and that's OK. You and your partner should accept each other's boundaries and decide together whether or not this is something you want to do.

You must be confident you can trust someone before sending them sexualized images or videos of yourself. Even though it is a crime to share images without someone's consent, once you've sent something, it's hard for you to know or control who it may be shared with or even how long that person will have your photos or video. It is a part of the fun of being in a relationship that is learning about each other and the kind of intimacy you want together. If you have established boundaries, then sexting can be a healthy way to build your relationship and have fun with your partner, even when they're not with you.

The Problematic and Illegal Content

According to Majid Altuwairiqi1, Theodoros Kostoulas1, Georgina Powell, and Raian Ali Bournemouth University, UK (2017), social media became prominent in our daily lives, determining a major way how an individual shares information and exchanges knowledge. The use of social media has created a new set of cyber social norms around expectancy and responsiveness as well as group membership and relatedness. While many benefits can be identified regarding these norms in human communication and socialness, negative experiences emerging from them have become evident. Recent studies have demonstrated similarities between certain symptoms of using social media and symptoms of behavioral addiction. Moreover, research has indicated that excessive and obsessive usage of technology is associated with undesirable life experiences

characterized by measures such as reduced creativity, increased anxiety as well as neglecting reality.

Social media can have a significant influence on human emotions such as joy, happiness, anger, sadness, fear as well as surprise. Social media users can take advantage of various features such as posting videos and pictures, commenting on them, posting events, searching for new friends, expressing themselves, and sharing daily activities with others. Research has found that young adults used social media to communicate with friends and family. In addition, other research has reported that college students spend most of their time reading about the activities of their friends rather than adding content to their profiles. Others explained that seeking information and social interaction was a drive to use social media. Accordingly, people can experience emotions through online interaction, especially in the case of problematic attachment to social media. Indeed, their problematic attachment to social media may reinforce and provide strength to the emotions evoked by interaction.

Privacy Predator

Generally, A privacy predator is someone who violates your privacy by failing to properly protect, manage, store, or handle Personally Identifiable Information (PII), sensitive third-party corporate information subject to a non-disclosure agreement or similar agreement, or the unintentional violation of a Privacy Law.

Children and teenagers are particularly vulnerable to privacy predators due to their limited understanding of online risks and their tendency to share personal information freely. Privacy predators specifically target this demographic to exploit their innocence, trust, and lack of experience with online privacy.

Online platforms and social media have become integral parts of children's and teens' lives, providing privacy predators with ample opportunities to exploit their personal information. These predators may use various techniques such as grooming, sex portion, cyber bullying, or identity theft to manipulate and harm young individuals.

Grooming is a particularly concerning tactic used by privacy predators to build trust and establish relationships with children and teens. They may pose as peers or authority figures, gradually gaining personal information and exploiting their targets emotionally or sexually. This form of manipulation can have devastating consequences

for the victims, leading to psychological trauma and other long-term effects.

Privacy predators may also engage in cyber bullying, targeting young individuals to harass, embarrass, or intimidate them online. This can severely impact their mental and emotional well-being, leading to social isolation, depression, and even self-harm or suicide.

Additionally, the personal information shared by children and teens online can be used for identity theft, potentially leading to financial loss and reputational damage. Privacy predators may also exploit this information for targeted advertising or other unethical purposes, infringing upon the privacy and autonomy of young individuals.

To address this issue, parents, educators, and policymakers must prioritize online safety and privacy education. Children and teens should be taught about the risks associated with sharing personal information online and provided with the necessary tools to protect themselves. Parents and guardians should maintain open communication with their children, discussing safe online practices and monitoring their digital activities.

Furthermore, regulatory bodies and technology companies should implement stringent privacy protections, age verification measures, and robust reporting mechanisms to identify and mitigate the activities of privacy predators targeting children and teens.

In summary, privacy predators pose a significant threat to the privacy and well-being of children and teens in the digital age. Addressing this issue requires a multi-faceted approach involving education, awareness, and collaboration between parents, educators, policymakers, and technology providers.

Recommendations for Addressing Social Problems on Social Media Affecting Children and Teens

Through Medical Counseling

This study brings together the collective insights from several leading experts to discuss the significant opportunities, challenges, and future research agenda relating to key aspects of digital and social media marketing. The insights listed in this paper cover a wide spectrum of digital and social media marketing topics, reflecting the views of each of the invited experts. The research offers a significant and timely contribution to the literature offering key insight to researchers in the advancement of knowledge within this

marketing domain. This topic is positioned as a timely addition to the literature as the digital and social media marketing industry matures and takes its position as an integral and critical component of an organization's marketing strategy.

Under the new American Academy of Pediatrics policy statements on digital media use by children from infancy to adolescence, we suggest that families emphasize using media to connect, co-view, and create. We recommend that clinicians encourage parents to choose high-quality content and use mediation strategies. For restrictive mediation, we advise parents to minimize screen time for young children so that they have time for the hands-on play and interactions needed for optimal development. Active mediation is recommended for children, especially young children, and is essential for children < 2 years old, who can be taught to use media to connect with loved ones (eg, via video chat) and learn more about the world by having a parent reteach what is viewed on the screen. Parents should also be encouraged by providers to help frame a child's relationship to digital media, discussing online etiquette, empathy, ethics, internet safety, personal boundaries, and how to regulate their media habits. We advise medical specialists to encourage parents to monitor children's screen time and are mindful of how parents' screen use may affect family dynamics. Also, Medical specialists could recognize and support the many functional purposes that media use serves for families (especially low-income or stressed families), such as avoiding conflict in the house, getting things done in single-parent families, keeping difficult kids calm, offering social support from peers, and that changing media use habits will not be possible unless we offer alternative approaches to each of these functional needs.

Many parents struggle with the rating system as currently constructed, finding it difficult to make sense of a system that is plagued with inconsistency and lack of clarity. We encourage policymakers to consider ways to streamline the rating system, making it more accessible and understandable to empower parents. As more and more schoolwork and testing become digitized, educators should be cognizant of how much they are assigning screen-based homework and how that connects to the family rules about media, parents' ability to mediate use, and children's opportunities to engage with the physical, face-to-face world. Ideally, educators and families could work together around thoughtful screen time that supports children's development.

In UAE most easy and common software that can be installed are Norton Internet

Security (NIS) by Etisalat to manage and track child's online activities and restrict access to inappropriate content through strong passwords. Here are a few guidelines given by most Medical Specialists:

• Limit the use of electronic devices and social media to a maximum of 2 hours a day.

• Do not hand over cell phones to children aged below 2 years as they are still developing short and long-sightedness.

• At least 1 hour before sleeping, children should not be exposed to vibrant rays of electronic devices, to have a smooth sleep at night.

• Encourage children to use electronic devices such as desktops, laptops, I-pad, and others in public areas i.e., sitting rooms.

• Social gatherings without internet connectivity and devices should be practiced at home. For example, at mealtimes, all family members should be present at the dining table without electronic items in their hands and pockets.

• Build a regular activity of discussion and talking with children to develop a strong bond so that they look to parents and guardians for support and help with issues rather than opinions from strangers in the virtual world.

• Explain to children how important it is to protect personal information and not to trust anyone in virtual life as we do in real physical life. The difference between reality and fantasy should be explained briefly so that they would know to make wise decisions.

• Rather than online games, more physical games are to be played, in which all family members should actively participate.

Guidelines for Parents

• Setting time limits on how much time kids can spend on social media each day.

• Monitoring their children's online activity.

• Talking to their kids about the risks associated with using social media.

• Encouraging them to use social media in moderation.

• Providing alternatives to social media, such as books, sports, and face-to-face interactions.

Guidelines for Internet Safety: Recommendations Based on Age Groups for Children and Teens

These days, we're all spending more time than usual on the web and this goes for kids and teens, too. As a parent, you want to make sure that your kids have a safe experience every time they are online. There is plenty to be wary of on the Internet, too. Not only are there viruses and hackers who can steal your information, but there are also cyber bullies, inappropriate content, and online predators that target kids and teens.

Children and teens need to use the internet to research school assignments, communicate with teachers and other students, play interactive games, and complete other essential tasks. It can be a wonderful place to learn and socialize. But parents need to be aware of what their kids see and hear on the Internet, who they meet, and what they share about themselves. To help you make sure your kids/children have a safe online experience, here are some guidelines to follow.

General Guidelines

It is important to have some general guidelines in mind when it comes to children and teens using the Internet. Each age group has its own concerns and activities that need to be regulated by parents. Some of these guidelines include keeping usernames and passwords safe, changing passwords periodically, not giving out personal information online, being cautious on social media, using a trusted cyber security solution, checking age requirements, explaining location sharing, creating a list of Internet rules, using the Golden Rule online, setting parental controls, running antivirus programs, educating children about fake ads, warning them about meeting strangers in person, and monitoring their internet history.

Age-Based Guidelines

Aside from general guidelines, there are specific guidelines for different age groups when it comes to Internet usage.

For children aged 2 to 4, avoid allowing them unsupervised Internet use, don't expose them to frightening images, prevent them from clicking on links, limit their computer time, and introduce them to age-appropriate computer skills through educational games.

For ages 5 to 7, supervise their Internet and phone use, shield them from scary images, discourage link clicking, use kid-friendly search engines with parental controls, apply suitable filters, control their online time, curate a list of approved sites, place devices in open areas, block inappropriate communication features, and emphasize not sharing personal info.

For children aged 8 to 10, parents should talk to them about their internet interests and educate them about the risks of being online. It's important to stress that they should not share personal information and to avoid exposing them to scary content. Parents should teach their children how to communicate properly online and encourage them to speak up if they feel uncomfortable. Parents can also monitor their children's internet usage and utilize parental controls and filters to protect their safety and privacy.

For children aged 11 to 13, parents should prohibit their children from using internet devices in their bedrooms and use age-appropriate parental controls and monitoring tools. It's important to discuss online encounters with children and caution them about sharing personal information. Parents should also prohibit their children from meeting people they have only met online in person and monitor their emails and instant messages. Parents should encourage ethical online behavior and monitor their browsing history. It's also important for parents to follow age restrictions on social media platforms and suggest appropriate sites for their age. Finally, parents should restrict their children from posting images or videos online without approval.

For teenagers between the ages of 14 and 18, it is important to establish rules for Internet use at home. Parents should also use age-appropriate controls to monitor their online activity and become familiar with the messaging apps they use. It is also important to remember that devices beyond computers can also access the Internet, so keep those in communal areas. It is important to discuss online friendships and monitor instant messaging contacts, requiring approval for in-person meetings with online friends. It is also important to educate teenagers on safeguarding personal information, ethical behavior online, spam, and copyright issues. Parental monitoring of online financial transactions is crucial, as well as discussing inappropriate content and safe downloading practices. Lastly, parents should periodically review browser history to ensure their child's safety

Ensuring the safety of your children online is equally crucial as their safety in

real-life situations. Nowadays, kids have numerous reasons for using the internet - from academic research to attending virtual events, interactive games with peers, and extracurricular learning. While the internet offers exciting and informative content, it poses potential risks to kids who are not aware of online threats. Therefore, it is essential to educate children on safe internet usage and prevent them from encountering any harm.

Transparent and Accountable Procedures

Transparency and accountability are crucial in maintaining effective governance across the public sector, with the two concepts being tightly interconnected. This relationship is particularly vital when addressing social issues concerning children and teenagers on social media, given the potential risks associated with online platforms. Here are key steps to address these concerns:

Age Verification and Access Control

Social media platforms should employ reliable age verification methods to ensure young users access age-appropriate content, including age restrictions and parental consent requirements.

Privacy and Data Protection

Prioritize user privacy by clearly communicating data collection and usage policies, especially for young users. Implement consent mechanisms to ensure users actively agree to share their personal information.

Content Moderation and Safety

Establish robust content moderation, safety measures, and transparent community guidelines to address harmful content. Create clear processes for reporting and responding to inappropriate content.

Digital Literacy and Education

Empower children and teenagers with digital literacy resources, training, and guidelines on safe and responsible social media use, fostering critical thinking and awareness of online risks.

Reporting and Accountability

Implement clear reporting mechanisms and accountability measures for users, encouraging them to report harmful activities. Establish transparent procedures for reviewing reports and taking action against offenders.

Collaboration with Parents/Guardians

Actively engage parents and guardians by providing information and tools to understand and monitor their children's online activities. Foster regular communication to address concerns and gather feedback.

External Audits and Independent Oversight

Enhance transparency and accountability by subjecting social media platforms to external audits and independent oversight, evaluating procedures and adherence to best practices while providing recommendations.

So, transparency and accountability are vital when addressing social issues on social media involving children and teenagers, and these procedures aim to ensure their safety and responsible online engagement.

The Content Moderation Procedures

Generally, Content Moderation is the practice of monitoring and applying a pre-determined set of rules and guidelines to user-generated submissions to determine best if the communication (a post, in particular) is permissible or not. Improving the procedures for content moderation in social media platforms is crucial for safeguarding the online safety and well-being of children and teenagers. Implementing the following strategies and approaches can contribute to enhancing content moderation for social ills in social media targeting this age group.

Collaborate with Experts and Organizations

Social media platforms should collaborate with child psychologists, policymakers, educators, and child protection organizations to develop comprehensive guidelines for content moderation. These experts can provide insights into the specific challenges children and teens face online and help design effective moderation procedures.

Clear Community Guidelines

Establish clear and easily understandable community guidelines that explicitly state what is acceptable and unacceptable content on the platform. These guidelines should address issues such as bullying, harassment, hate speech, nudity, violence, and other harmful content.

Age-appropriate Content Filtering

Implement age-appropriate content filtering mechanisms that restrict access to inappropriate content for different age groups. This can be achieved through the use of algorithms and machine learning techniques that analyze and categorize content based on its appropriateness.

User Reporting System

Encourage users to report any harmful or inappropriate content they come across. Create a user-friendly reporting system that allows individuals to easily flag and report content that violates community guidelines. Prompt and diligent review of these reports is crucial for effective content moderation.

Human Moderation Team

Invest in a dedicated team of content moderators who are trained in handling issues related to child and teen safety. These moderators should be equipped with the necessary knowledge and resources to identify and address harmful content promptly.

Enhanced Parental Controls

Provide parents and guardians with robust tools to monitor and control their children's online activities. This can include features such as content filtering, time limits, and activity monitoring to ensure a safer online environment for children and teens.

Regular Audits and Transparency

Conduct regular audits of content moderation practices to ensure compliance with guidelines and best practices. Maintain transparency by regularly publishing reports on the effectiveness of moderation efforts, including the number of flagged and removed

content and the response time to user reports.

Educational Campaigns and Resources

Develop educational campaigns and resources that raise awareness about online safety among children, teens, parents, and educators. These initiatives can help individuals understand the potential risks of social media and provide guidance on responsible online behavior.

Collaboration between Platform

Foster collaboration between social media platforms to share best practices and insights regarding content moderation for children and teens. This can help create a unified approach toward safeguarding young users across different platforms.

Develop Transparent Reporting Mechanisms

Establish mechanisms for reporting social ills on platforms, ensuring that users can easily report harmful content or activities. Collaboration with policymakers and civil society organizations can help design efficient reporting systems and ensure appropriate follow-up actions.

Foster Responsible Platform Design

Platforms should involve policymakers and civil society organizations in the design process to create user-friendly interfaces that prioritize safety, well-being, and positive user experiences. Regular feedback and input from stakeholders can help shape responsible platform design.

Evaluate and Iterate on Interventions

Collaboratively monitor and evaluate the impact of interventions implemented to address social ills. Platforms, policymakers, and civil society organizations should regularly assess the effectiveness of their initiatives and make adjustments based on data-driven insights

So it is crucial to acknowledge that no moderation system can be entirely error-free, and a blend of these methods is essential for effective content moderation and

ensuring the safety of young individuals on social media platforms. Continuous evaluation and adjustment are also necessary for this process.

Conclusion

This research paper focuses on the negative impacts of social media on children and adolescents' well-being in today's world. It primarily discusses the adverse consequences of social media usage on this vulnerable age group and proposes strategies to mitigate these challenges. Key findings include the prevalence of cyberbullying, misinformation spread, and online harassment among young users, which can lead to emotional distress and psychological harm. Addressing these issues requires a collaborative approach involving education on online safety, promoting empathy and respect, and implementing stricter controls on social media platforms.

The study also highlights the detrimental effects of excessive social media use on the physical, social, and psychological health of youngsters and adolescents, including mental health issues, dignity undermining, academic struggles, and social isolation. To encourage responsible social media use among children and teenagers, parents, educators, cyber experts, healthcare professionals, and caregivers must offer guidance and set appropriate boundaries.

Social media's role in spreading false information and fake news among young individuals is also emphasized, as their limited media literacy and critical thinking skills make them vulnerable to sharing inaccurate content. To combat this, it's crucial to educate children and teenagers about media literacy, fact-checking, and critical online assessment.

Social media platforms have a significant responsibility in creating secure and age-appropriate online spaces for children and adolescents. This involves implementing measures like age-based verification, improving privacy controls, and developing efficient reporting and moderation systems to combat cyberbullying and harassment. In conclusion, while social media is deeply ingrained in the lives of young people, it's essential to address its challenges to create a safer and healthier digital environment for the younger generation.

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