



Darker Shade Of Smart Phones: Boon To Bane

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Abstract:

The development and modernization of technology has made people's lives easier, but as it is said science or technology is a boon, but is also has darker shade i.e. bane for the society also. The technology though has contributed positively to social well-being of the humans, but it has also brought some problems and threats stemming from irresponsible use of mobile phones among users. India's telecommunication network is the second largest in the world, based on the total number of telephone users. As the Indian GDP is growing with the per capita income, people's purchasing power is also growing steadily, thus it has an impact on standard of living which also improves. We observe that mobile phones are almost omnipresent among school and college students. Today the cell phone is everywhere and so common that it goes unnoticed. Indian telecom industry has shown exponential growth, with steady increase in purchasing power of the Indian middle class and lower middle class. It has opened the flood gates for the manufacturers of mobile phone as well as cellular service providers.

This paper attempts to examine the extent of addictive behavior towards the usage of mobile phones. It also reveals the relation between the users of the mobiles and the psychological behavior among themselves in the close knit society. The study focuses on exploring the pattern of mobile phone usage among teens and young adults in Bhopal. It also attempts to examine the extent of addictive behavior towards the usage of mobile phones. Questionnaire survey method was used to elicit the responses. College students (engineering and management) were considered as population and simple random sampling technique were used to select



the sample of 200 students. The collected data were analyzed with the help of various tools and techniques to draw meaningful inferences and conclusion.

Key Words: Smart Phone, Cell Phone Radiation, and Addiction.

Introduction:

Mobile phones, assist you to the lot of business such as, make schedule of working, and keep in touch with the peers and pals. Initially, when they first came, mobile phones were useful for communicating; now they are of multiple usages. With the arrival of sophisticated mobile phone it can be used for entertainment purposes also. Gone are the days when people used mobile phones, but the new generation is using smart phones, because it is easier / faster to remain in contact with your friends or family members by not just calling or sending messages but surfing internet and using several applications. In real sense smart phone is a mobile phone with advanced features and functionality beyond traditional functionalities like making phone calls and sending text messages. The smart phone have inbuilt features / capabilities of cameras, games, videos, navigation, recording, send / receive e-mail, built in apps, wireless internet, bluetooth and much more. Sadia Quraishi (2008) has pointed out another negative impact of mobile phone on students learning by saying that most of the students write the abbreviations while messaging to others. The same habit has been developed, and they use the same abbreviation in solving the papers in the examination hall. They write, “U”, “2”, “Btw”, “Becoz”, “R” and, “BV” instead of, You, two / to, Between, because, or / are, and, wife respectively, which is a wrong way of writing.

Review of Literature:

The craze of mobile phone started after 1980's in the world, but it has now touched the level of esteem. When they were launched, it became a status symbol but nowadays it has become a dire need of the day and is in the reach of a common man. According to a famous researcher on mobile phone, Jon Agar (2005), until not very long ago, the mobile phone was expensive and the preserve of a rich few.



Today's environment conforms that adolescents are using various new information and communication technologies almost every time. Adolescents are spending maximum time on televisions programs (Verma, 2012). Adolescents of modern period are spending unnecessary and maximum time with cell phone. They are heavy users of this medium. It seems difficult for them to do their daily activities in due time, poor fragmented sleep, late bed time and early wake up, seriously affect their mental health, learning capacity and quality of life (Fallone, 2006).

Cell phone radiation has capability to damage the structure of cells in the body that has strong effect on human health. It can increase the risk of cancer. Thyroid gland and bone becomes sensitive in the time of radiation. Radiation also exposes leukemia, which is a kind of cancer. Other types are lung, skin, thyroid, brain, breast, stomach, cancer, nervous system disorder and brain tumor (Hardell and Others IARC). researcher have noticed that continuous use of mobile phones affects adolescents health and behavior, which effects on the immunological system, reproductive effects, changes in hormone levels, headaches, irritability, fatigue and cardiovascular effects. Hardell (2002) concluded, "For people who have used cell phones for ten years or longer, and when they are used mainly on one side of the head, the risk of malignant brain tumor is doubled and is even higher for person with first use before the age of 20 years". Medical literatures also proves that the electromagnetic radiation of mobile phones and towers affect biological system of not only human beings, but also the birds, and trees. In human beings antioxidant defense systems are affected (Ozguner et al., 2005). A new lingo has emerged i.e. 'Techno-stress' which means "a disease caused by the lack of ability to cope with the new technologies especially mobile / smart phones in a healthy manner" (Brod, 1984). Techno-stress can also be said to happen on the concerning person when he / she experiencing stress due to overload or excess of information (Ragu-Nathan, Tarafdar, Ragu-Nathan, & Tu, 2008).

Abdus-Salam, (2008); Kundi, (2008); Ahlbom, (2009); Croft, (2009); Han, (2009); Khurana, (2009); Kohil, (2009); have reported, on the basis of their long term studies, that radiation from cell phone significantly contributed the risks for cancer in adolescents as well as in adults. Narayanan, (2010) found that memory retention and retrieval were significantly affected by mobile phone exposures. Thomee, and others, (2011) conducted a study to see the relationship between mobile phone use and stress, sleep disturbances and depression in students. It was found that over use / too much use of mobile phone cause sleep disturbances



and creates the symptoms of depression. It was concluded that unlimited mobile phone use was a risk factor for mental health for young adults.

Addiction to smart phone is a serious problem. According to various reports and researches, the addiction to smart phone is increasing rapidly among adults. College students are addicted to smart phones, they over use social networking sites including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, etc. The addiction to smart phone can be described as wanting to be in constant communication with people even though when there is no real need for communication. It thus shows that there is a serious psychic problem. It is also established that obsession with our smart phone is also responsible for significantly altering our brain's perception for the device. In continuation to above research, it is also true that people are so dependent that they show anxiety, etc. when they do not receive any messages or updates. Main purpose of phones or the mobiles phones were better / faster communication, since the smart phones came they added the internet, apps, etc. which brought the world on their palms. Now with the connectivity this was also a source of entertainment and users relieve their stress or pass their free time on it (Thomé, Härenstam, & Hagberg, 2011). It has been observed that habitual usage of smart phones leads to mental health problems i.e. sleep disturbances and depression (Thomé, Eklöf, Gustafsson, Nilsson, & Hagberg, 2007; Thomé et al., 2011). It has been rightly said that science helps the people but also side effects, science is a boon and bane to mankind. In the same way mobile phones are both boon and bane; continuous use of them can bring heightened psychological distress (Chesley, 2005).

Most of the time the problem is not with the use of the smart phone, but it comes when the device takes over a function that human brain is capable to perform perfectly. It's like multiplying 6 by 8, resulting the opening calculator in your smart phone instead quickly calculating in your mind and getting result 48 or waiting for an elevator to take you to first floor of building instead of the stairs; the ride may be quicker but your muscles won't get a workout. Smart phone's can be considered as mental elevators, taking the basic and useful functions off the brain. Another psychological impact is that users check their mobiles almost all the times, while at work time, with family or even when with friends. Teachers restrict the students to use cell phones in class rooms as it creates disturbance, and may cause harassment for other colleagues. Cell phones have video cameras, blue tooth devices, etc. so students photograph others and share the content via blue



tooth as a result harassment occurs (Obringer & Coffey, 2007). In this way, cell phones create disturbance and nuisance in society.

Mobiles have also helped facilitate the social emancipation of young people from parental authority (Ling, 2004). If teenagers have mobile phones, their parents often feel more security when their progeny travel independently outside the home. Teenagers are also freed from having to talk from a family landline, which is often in quasi-public space (Ling & Baron, In Press). For young adults living away from home, these freedoms are magnified. The popularity of smart phones has been increasing rapidly in recent years. Thus, smart phones have now become an integral part of the daily lives of many individuals. However, negative aspects of their use have emerged, such as the disruption of social interactions. In addition, researchers have found close relationship between their overuse and poor mental health (e.g., sleep deprivation).

Objectives:

- To understand the behaviour pattern of cell phone usage among students.
- To examine the impact of mobile usage on student's relationship with peers / society.

Research Methodology:

This research is about usage of mobile phones and how students make use of it.

Research design:

Descriptive research design has been used for the study.

Sampling techniques:

Stratified random sampling has been derived from non - probability sampling method to select students in Bhopal, India.

Sample size & Data collection:



From the total student's population of Bhopal, 200 students (engineering and management) are chosen as sample size for the study and the data is collected through a Structured Questionnaire.

Tools and Techniques:

Percentage Analysis, Mean Score.

Composition:

	Male	Female	Total
Graduate Course	73	27	100
Post Graduate Course	66	34	100
Total	139	61	200

The above mentioned composition shows the demographical details of this study. Out of 200 respondents 69.5% were male are using the smart phones while rest 30.5% were female students. As this study is conducted with an aim to explore the behaviour pattern of mobile phone usage students of both graduate level courses and post graduate courses were included for this study. To analyze the data, student's responses were converted into numerical scale according to the following description: Strongly Agree 5, Agree 4, Undecided 3, Disagree 2, and Strongly Disagree 1.

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

S. No	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Score
1	The student can easily contact with class fellows to get help in studies.	25	75	50	25	25	3.3
2	The student's academic performance has suffered due to this technology.	50	50	25	25	50	3.1
3	Maximum time, of usage on mobile internet is for - Whats App,	75	25	25	50	25	3.4



	Facebook, Twitter, etc.						
4	The Mobile Phone helps the students to share helping materials among students.	50	25	50	50	25	3.1
5	The students prefer surfing Internet through Mobile then surfing from Laptop / dongle	50	50	25	50	25	3.3
6	The Mobile Phone is the wastage of time for students.	25	50	0	100	25	2.8
7	The student feels proud of having costly Mobile Phone.	50	75	0	25	50	3.3
8	Students use dictionary / thesaurus / calculator of mobile.	75	75	25	0	25	3.9
9	The parents of female students feel more satisfaction due to Mobile Phone because their daughters can contact them easily	50	25	25	75	25	3.0
10	The student wastes his / her time in writing / sending useless SMSs to friends / colleagues.	25	25	0	50	100	2.1
11	Student enjoys music on Mobile Phone.	25	75	50	25	25	3.3
12	Responses to the question: 'For what purpose(s) do you use social networking sites?'						
	Keeping in touch with friends	200	0	0	0	0	5.0
	Finding out what other people are doing	150	25	25	0	0	4.6
	Tracking down and contacting new friends	200	0	0	0	0	5.0



General chatting with others	200	0	0	0	0	5.0
Posting photos of myself or others	200	0	0	0	0	5.0
Sharing information online with others	200	0	0	0	0	5.0
Telling others what I've been doing	200	0	0	0	0	5.0
Inviting people to an event	0	100	100	0	0	3.5
Playing networking games	200	0	0	0	0	5.0
Making new friends	0	100	100	0	0	3.5
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0.0

Mobile phones are helpful, as they keep the world in our fingers. For the students they are helpful too in their academic life also. The student can easily contact with class fellows to get help in studies by sharing the notes, time table, useful information, etc. (Mean Score **3.3**, **3.1** respectively). The study shows that mostly students use dictionary / thesaurus / calculator of mobile (Mean Score **3.9**). On the negative side of the issue, there are a number of drawbacks of this technology too. Maximum time, of usage on mobile internet is for - Whats App, Facebook, Twitter, etc. The students prefer surfing internet through mobile then surfing from laptop / dongle, this point can be both positive and negative for the students. In case the students are using the smart phones and surfing the net for study purpose only it is positive otherwise if they are just surfing for chatting, socializing then it is negative. (Mean Score **3.4**, **3.3** respectively). The study reveals that student enjoys music on mobile phones / smart phones having latest features (Mean Score **3.3**).

The interesting data which came out through this study among the engineering and management students was that, students are using the smart phones to remain in touch with their pals, the students also track down old friends and try to contact new friends, mostly chatting online is the reason, posting photos and sharing information online, updating the profile, etc. and playing networking games all having (Mean Score **5**). This shows how the new generation is hooked up on the mobile phone. They have made themselves handicapped by hanging themselves with their phones. The mentality of students has changed, they now treat the phones as their best friends, gone are the days of a famous saying that "Man's best friend is books."



13	Is your mobile phone is always "On" i.e. Night also.	Yes	No
		150	50
		75	25
14	The most common places where you use your mobile are		%
	At home	20	10
	In public transport (Car, Taxi, Bus, etc.)	100	50
	At stores / shopping areas	25	12.5
	At work (Library / College Campus)	55	27.5
15	While talking over the phone do you		%
	Stand at one place and complete the conversation	75	37.5
	Roam around	125	62.5

75% of the respondents said that their mobile phones are kept “on” in night also; they do not switch off the mobile in the night. When inquired about the place / area where mostly smart phones are used, **50%** said they often surf, chat while using transportation, i.e. college bus, etc. and **27.5%** said they chat or surf the internet in library or college campus. When calling the friends through the phones, the talks are too long so they keep roaming around, they can’t stand at one place (Respondents **75%**). This shows that students are not asking, enquiring or telling the straight question and answers; instead they are talking and stretching the call.

Conclusion:

Mobile phone addiction is a big social problem. Psychiatrists believe that mobile phone addiction is becoming one of the biggest non-drug addictions in the next century. Young people are pre-occupied with their cell phones. This study facilitated the investigation of an emerging pattern of cell phone usage. Cell phone usage is so strongly integrated into young people’s behaviour that symptoms of behavioural addiction, such as cell phone usage interrupting their day-to-day activities. People feel a bonding towards their mobile phones. Despite of the positive benefits like using cell phone to connect / call family, friend, etc. This study



also identifies the characteristics of those teens and young adult at risk of developing an over involvement with their cell phones.

The findings of the present study can be discussed by using stimulation - habituation assumption. By this assumption, it is assumed that cell phone stimulates the idea of students by producing advances and interesting information which is liked by them. After stimulation the students cultivate a habit to spend much more time with their cell phone. This type of habit strengthens and continues and thus students become habitual to spend maximum time with cell phone. This causes and develops many health and behavioural problems in students. They show many difficulties in their daily activities and relations / bonding also hampers with family members. There is an urgent need to minimize the use of cell phone. They should be advised to spend their energy in reading and other extracurricular activities such as walking, playing games, meeting people personally, etc.

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