

# Impact of technology usage on social maturity of teenagers: Locale differentials

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## ABSTRACT

The present research study was aimed at to assess the impact of technology usage on social maturity of teenagers. The study was carried out in Ludhiana district on sample comprised of 200 rural and urban teenagers in age-group of 16 to 18 years studying in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade in the selected Government Senior Secondary School of urban and rural areas. Further the sample was equally distributed over two sexes (Boys= 100, Girls=100) from rural and urban areas. Social maturity scale by Rao (1986) and technology usage questionnaire was used to assess the social maturity and usage of technology of teenagers. Result revealed that very few teenagers had a high level of social maturity. And there was positive correlation between technology usage and social maturity among urban teenagers whereas, negative association between technology usage and social maturity was found among rural teenagers.

## INTRODUCTION

As we know that we are living in a revolutionary world and in this modern world teens have unprecedented fond of media usage, they use them in excess which is not measurable. Teens are fully immersed in this high-tech world. They are bound or indulge with different type of technologies e.g. computer, cell phones, television, videogames and other technologies rule over their life and also become an integral part of their livelihood. All the modern technology changes the lives of teens in such a way that they provide them the freedom to indulge and perform activities very comfortably. It is becoming most

essential tool in different aspects of life like social, educational and in employment world, due to which social networking sites, online games, and video sharing gadgets, such as iPods and mobile phones are now part of youth culture (UNICEF, 2011).

Modern technology is used to describe media ecology where more traditional media such as books, T.V., and radio are converging with digital media for social communication or it is simply advancement in old technology. We use technology for multipurpose work and as result these may affect our life and the society in positive and negative ways. We use modern technology on daily basis to accomplish specific task or interests

(MacArthur, 2008). So due to advancement in technologies and due to its rapid adoption teens are spending most of their precious time with videogames and continuously observe how to use new technology, social networking sites which resulted with neglect in their real life. Also all these technologies had replaced our traditional way of interaction, like one can easily make 100 of friends online on computer or cell phones, and feels no need to make real friends which leads to loneliness. Many children have become addicts of internet and video games which leaves them with no time to interact with their parents, peers and also with other children. As we know that parental involvement is a major influence in helping teens to avoid the risks such as smoking, drinking, drug use, sexual activity, violence and suicide attempts which teens can grasp through technologies. Also for many families, eating dinner together can be an important way for children and parents to maintain connection. But due to increase rate of technology usage many families feel loneliness, depression and social instability.

Teens are spending more and more of their free time on interacting with different types of media out of which most popular one is internet (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Internet now-a-days becomes an integral part of the teenager's life in such a way that one cannot even imagine how the world exists without this source. The use of internet has been associated with relationship problems, physical ill health, aggressive behaviours and others psychiatric symptoms (Kaiser, 2002). During teenage period parents expect more self-regulation and initiative at that very time so that their early teenagers are beginning to experiment with all kinds of risky behaviours (Barber, 2002). Parents also want their child should be socially well managed and adjustable as it is the one of the vital aspects of everyone's life. As the behaviour of individual depends upon maturation and which is helpful in social adjustment in long run. That's why socialization plays an important role in maturation which could be hinder by children's increased use of smart phones, tablets, T.V., computers, iPods as well as iPads by which social skills got affected.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

### Selection of sample:

The sample was selected from rural and urban areas from the selected zone and block. For rural sample one

block was randomly selected out of 12 blocks of Ludhiana district. In same way one zone was randomly selected out of four zones of Ludhiana district for urban sample.

### Criteria for selection:

Teenagers of 16-18 years of age

They must be using media technology like T.V., computer and mobile phone

### Tools:

*Social maturity scale (SMS) :*

Social maturity scale developed by Rao (1986) was administered to assess the social maturity of respondents. The scale consists of three dimensions namely Personal adequacy, Interpersonal adequacy and Social adequacy.

*Mobile, computer, television usage questionnaire :*

A self structured questionnaire was used to examine the mobile, computer and television usage among teenagers. The questionnaire comprised of items on the aspects of mobile, computer and television usage such as usage of these technologies, timings, frequency and purpose of using these technologies, features used, and opinions about attributes of these technologies and information on activities related to mobile usage. After constructing the questionnaire it was given to the experts in the area of human development to seek suggestions. These suggestions were incorporated into it and then questionnaire was pre-tested on a sample of 15 non-sampled students.

### Procedure for data collection:

The class incharges of 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> class of selected schools were approached to clarify the purpose of the study and selection of sample. The selected teenagers were approached in their respective classrooms to assess the impact of media technology usage on social maturity of teenagers. They were requested to give correct responses and were assured that their identity would be kept confidential and information provided by them would be used exclusively for the purpose of research work.

## OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Table 1, depicts locale-wise distribution of teenagers as per the timings and duration of using technologies which indicates that almost equal percentage of teenagers

Table 1 : Locale - wise distribution of teenagers as per timings and duration of the use of technologies					(n=200)
Timings	Rural (n <sub>1</sub> =100)		Urban (n <sub>2</sub> =100)		Z- value
	f	%	f	%	
<b>Computer</b>					
<i>Morning</i>					
<1 hour	12	12	11	11	0.22
1 -2 hours	5	5	2	2	1.15
2-3 hours	0	0	1	1	1.00
More than 3 hours	0	0	0	0	#NUM!
<i>Evening</i>					
<1 hour	35	35	19	19	2.55*
1 -2 hours	23	23	32	32	1.43
2-3 hours	2	2	8	8	1.95
More than 3 hours	0	0	1	1	1.00
<i>Night</i>					
<1 hour	20	20	18	18	0.36
1 -2 hours	12	12	19	19	1.37
2-3 hours	1	1	3	3	1.01
More than 3 hours	0	0	1	1	1.00
<b>TV</b>					
<i>Morning</i>					
<1 hour	17	17	11	11	1.22
1 -2 hours	1	1	0	0	1.00
2-3 hours	0	0	0	0	#NUM!
More than 3 hours	0	0	0	0	#NUM!
<i>Evening</i>					
<1 hour	15	15	10	10	1.07
1 -2 hours	22	22	12	12	1.88
2-3 hours	11	11	3	3	2.22*
More than 3 hours	0	0	0	0	#NUM!
<i>Night</i>					
<1 hour	20	20	22	22	0.35
1 -2 hours	32	32	32	32	0.00
2-3 hours	15	15	15	15	0.00
More than 3 hours	2	2	5	5	1.15
<b>Mobile phone</b>					
<i>Morning</i>					
<1 hour	12	12	24	24	2.21*
1 -2 hours	3	3	4	4	0.38
2-3 hours	0	0	6	6	2.49*
More than 3 hours	1	1	1	1	0.00
<i>Evening</i>					
<1 hour	13	13	11	11	0.44
1 -2 hours	32	32	28	28	0.62
2-3 hours	7	7	8	8	0.27
More than 3 hours	5	5	8	8	0.86
<i>Night</i>					
<1 hour	23	23	23	23	0.00
1 -2 hour	19	19	13	13	1.16
2-3 hour	16	16	15	15	0.20
More than 3 hours	5	5	21	21	3.36**

\*\* indicates significance of value at P=0.01

irrespective of their locale spent less than 1 hour on computer during morning hours. While, in evening rural respondents in large proportion (35%) were found to spent less than 1 hour on computer and the difference was found to be statistically significant. On contrary to this, more urban respondents (32%) as compared to rural respondents (23%) spent 1 to 2 hours on computer. Though the result was non significant. More number of rural teenagers (20%) reported that they usually spent less than 1 hour on computer during night hours. Whereas, more proportion of urban teenagers (19%) were found to spend 1 to 2 hours.

On T.V. usage 17 per cent of rural teenagers were found to be viewing T.V for less than 1 hour in morning. During evening time, more numbers of rural respondents (15% and 22%) as compared to urban respondents (10% and 12%) watched T.V. for less than 1 hour and 1 to 2 hours, respectively. While, significantly more rural respondents spent 2 to 3 hours with T.V. While majority of respondents in equal number irrespective of locale were watching T.V. for 1 to 2 hours in the night, followed by less than 1 hour and then 2 to 3 hours.

On mobile phone usage, more respondents from urban area (24% and 6%) reported that they usually spent less than 1 hour and 2 to 3 hours on their mobile phones during morning hours. The differences in both cases were found statistically significant. However, during evening more number of rural teenagers spent 1 to 2 hours (32%) and less than 1 hour (13%) on mobile phones. Significantly, more urban teenagers were found to spend more than 3 hours on mobile phones at night. While (23%) respondents from both rural and urban area used phones for less than 1 hour.

Data in Table 2 depicts majority of urban teenagers (62%) had average level of social maturity as compared to rural teenagers (48%). If we see the above average level of social maturity than at this level rural respondent (42%) outnumbered the urban respondents at average level of social maturity. While very few teenagers were found at high level of social maturity. The result of this finding is consistent with the research done by Finely (1996) who said that everyone in the society want their child should be socially well managed and adjustable, as it is the one of the vital aspects of everyone's life. As

**Table 2 : Locale-wise distribution of teenagers as per their level of social maturity (n=200)**

Sr. No.	Levels of social maturity	Usage in hours			
		Rural (n <sub>1</sub> =100)		Urban (n <sub>2</sub> =100)	
		F	%	f	%
1.	Very high (295 above)	0	0.00	0	0.00
2.	High (265-295)	8	8.00	6	6.00
3.	Above average (235-264)	42	42.00	32	32.00
4.	Average (195-234)	48	48.00	62	62.00
5.	Below average (165-194)	2	2.00	0	0.00
6.	Low (134-164)	0	0.00	0	0.00
7.	Very low (less than 134)	0	0.00	0	0.00

**Table 3: Locale-wise differences of teenagers across different dimensions of social maturity (n=200)**

Sr. No.	Dimensions of social maturity	Usage in hours				t- test
		Rural (n <sub>1</sub> =100)		Urban (n <sub>2</sub> =100)		
		Mean	±SD	Mean	±SD	
1.	Work orientation	2.56	0.39	2.65	0.35	-1.77
2.	Self direction	2.25	0.35	2.39	0.34	-3.04**
3.	Ability to take stress	2.47	0.36	2.51	0.35	-0.84
4.	Communication	2.56	0.36	2.50	0.31	1.33
5.	Enlightened trust	2.65	0.31	2.56	0.32	1.97*
6.	Cooperation	2.80	0.38	2.84	0.31	-0.79
7.	Social commitment	2.69	0.28	2.76	0.28	-1.67
8.	Social tolerance	2.66	0.31	2.81	0.31	-3.43**
9.	Openness to change	2.90	0.37	2.98	0.30	-1.78

\* and \*\* indicate significance of values at P=0.05 and 0.01, respectively

Dimension of social maturity	Technology usage	
	Urban (r)	Rural (r)
Work orientation	-0.05	-0.15
Self direction	0.19	-0.17
Ability to take stress	0.10	-0.19
Communication	0.03	0.03
Enlightened trust	-0.14	-0.15
Co-operation	-0.04	0.06
Social commitment	0.03	-0.02
Social tolerance	0.11	-0.05
Openness to change	0.20*	0.05
Overall	0.07	-0.11

\* indicates significance of value at P=0.05 level

we also know the behaviour of individual depends upon social maturation and which help them to do adjustment in long run. That's why socialization plays an important role in maturation. But it was surprisingly to notice that today the socialization could hinder by teenager's increased use of smart phones, tablets, T.V., computers and iPods by which almost 70 per cent of teenagers had a only average level of social maturity by which their social skills got affected.

The data presented in Table 3 clearly represent that locale wise difference of teenagers across different dimensions of social maturity. Statistically on self direction, enlightened trust and social commitment dimensions significant difference was found between locales though other dimensions reported no significant differences between rural and urban teenagers. But while comparing their mean scores; it was found that urban teenagers had better work orientation ability (2.65%), better ability to take stress (2.51%), very co-operative towards other (2.84%) socially also had better commitment (2.76%) and ready to open to change (2.98%) while rural teenagers had better communication pattern (2.56%) and had better enlightened trust (2.65%).

From Table 4 it can be inferred that locale-wise the urban teenagers established significantly positive relation between their social maturity and technology usage. It was found that the urban teenagers established a positive relationship whereas rural teenagers established a negative relationship with technology usage although, the results were non-significant. Further data also indicated that the correlation among different dimensions between urban and rural teenagers are varies. Some dimensions like work orientation, enlightened trust, co-

operation they were found negatively correlated with the usage of technology among urban teenagers. Whereas among rural teenagers work orientation, self-direction, ability to take stress, enlightened trust and social tolerance they were found negatively correlated with technology usage. Further social maturity of urban respondents had a significant positive relationship with the openness to change dimension.

### **Conclusion:**

It has been concluded from the study that overall regarding social maturity of teenagers, it was found that the urban respondents established positive relationship and rural respondents established a negative relationship with technology usage. Parents should motivate their child to involve himself in other physical activities rather than feeling sad and depressed for not using the technology. They should maintain the limit and timings of using technologies especially mobile phone. They should also guide and encourage their children that they should communicate directly with people e.g. face-to-face rather than through technology usage

The implications of the study are:

— The study provides information about technology usage and social maturity among teenagers.

— It can also be useful in planning the guidance programs for parents as well as teenagers for appropriate usage of technologies.

— The results of study would assist psychologists, counselors, psychiatrists and human development professionals in understanding the relation between usage of technology by teenagers and their social maturity.

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