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Social Media, Youth Behaviour and Changing Social Relationships in Godawari, Nepal

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of social media on youth behaviour and social relationships in Godawari Municipality, Lalitpur, Nepal. With the rapid growth of digital platforms, social media has become a central avenue for communication, self-expression, and peer interaction among youths. The research examines the effects of social comparison, peer influence, emotional impact, and parental guidance on the behaviour and social interactions of young people aged 15-24. By exploring these dimensions, the study seeks to understand how social media shapes identity, decision-making, and social norms in an urbanizing Nepali context. An exploratory design was used, combining qualitative insights from semi-structured interviews. The study found that most youths in Lalitpur use social media daily for 1-4 hours, mainly on Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook, primarily for socializing and entertainment. Many experience peer pressure, social comparison, and some level of addiction, while parental guidance helps regulate usage. Social media shapes online identities, peer interactions, and emotional well-being, providing opportunities for connection but also causing misunderstandings, stress, and occasional cyberbullying. Social media has both positive and negative effects on youth behaviour and social relationships, enhancing connectedness while also creating emotional challenges. Overall, the study concludes that mindful social media use can foster positive social interactions, personal growth, and learning among youths, while minimizing potential negative behavioural and emotional effects.

Keywords

Social media, Youth behaviour, Social connection, Social relationship.

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1. Introduction

Social media are the online platforms that allow users to interact, share and network with each other across time and space. Unlike traditional media, social media is participatory, real-time, and user-led, enabling people to interact both with a variety of media and with each other using texts, images, sound and video (Joo & Teng, 2017). Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, as well as YouTube have (in just a generation) revolutionized how we communicate with one another, creating new forms of expression, community, and self-staging. These sites are the only daily reality of growing up for many of today's generations of young people and an integral part of the lifeworld, influencing not only how they get access to information, but also how they make social connections and their self-understanding (Annet, 2024).

For young people, social media is a defining factor in what to do and how to behave. It affects how relationships form and deteriorate, and even end. With the advent of technology, young adults are developing, maintaining and navigating friendships, emotions and validation digitally (Shetty et. al, 2015). The transition from face-to-face to screen-facilitated communication has also changed the process of youth socialization, frequently limiting physical communication, enhancing reliance on online validation, as well as reshaping conflict, intimacy and trust management (Saeed, 2023). The use of social media is associated with both positive and negative effects like increase in connectivity and peer support on one hand and cyberbullying, emotional detachment and relationship conflict on the other (Rustam *et al.*, 2023).

While the South Asian connectivity in the form of a digital has proliferated, the youth of today have access to dimensions in their social behaviour. In Nepal, the internet penetration rate was 85.5% for 2023 and over 65% of the youth age 13-25 use social media daily (NTA, 2023). In spite of this massive penetration and proliferation, we have almost no serious, empirical research on how the digital revolution is affecting the development of societies and cultures on the grassroots level. Hamal (2020) and Khadka (2023) reveal that the social media has been making psychological as well as social impacts in individuals' lifestyle, daily activities, social communication and even religious activities. However, these studies are limited on further exploring

behavioural and psychological changes among the youth or analyzing how such changes occur in specific local contexts like this of Godawari.

Social relationships play a primary role in adolescent development and for most young people today, social media has become the primary means of forging peer connections, establishing norms, and shaping shared values. For example, Al Hasibuzzaman *et al.* (2022) documented displacement of Bangladeshi adolescents from offline to online modalities of talk, and associated altered perceptions and grades of trust, closeness and communicative frequency. Also, in Kathmandu, the studies done by Rijal *et al.* (2024) reported that excessive social media use was associated with higher anxiety and relational conflict among adolescents. Fareed *et al.* (2024) added that social platforms' addiction has significantly associated with aggression, particularly among Pakistani youth that can highlight emotional implications of online behaviour. The implications are that the virtual space is one of the key sites of negotiation with identity, emotion and peers.

The nature of material being read through social media also has an effect upon behaviour. Chung *et al.* (2021) noted a comparable relationship between peer-driven food content and the dietary behaviours and social relationships of adolescents across countries. In Nepal, Subedi *et al.* (2025) demonstrated that personality factors of youth, namely emotional instability and low conscientiousness, were positively associated with the severity of Facebook addiction, impeding social life and relationships of real life. Relational postings such as friendship pictures, support messages and life updates were identified as promoting social media engagement and regulating the manner in which youth experience intimacy and relationships (Muhammad & Shahrom, 2020). Online connections like this are frequently the stand-in for face-to-face bonding, depriving them of the chances to connect one-on-one with real feelings and touch base in physical community space.

In Nepal, overuse of social media is also making way for the decay of family-based socialization. Niroula and Upadhaya (2023) found that, more than half of the Nepalese youth takes 3-5 hours online, and has limited participation in family activities. Regmi *et al.* (2022) pointed out that social media platforms now take center stage in conversations about sensitive subjects such as sexuality that in the past were often addressed by schools or families. These transitions reflect larger trends in social organization, authority, and inter-generational communication. This research is carried out to the effects of social networking sites use on youth behaviour, emotions and relationships.

2. Methodology

This study has used explanatory research design to achieve the objectives of the research. The primary data are collected through semi-structured

interviews from respondents to generate in-depth qualitative details. Primary as well as secondary data has been collected from academic journals, research articles, government reports, reference books and other published sources. These secondary references have given the theoretical base, general knowledge and wider perspectives for evaluating and narrating collected primary data in the study. The research is carried out in Godawari Municipality, Lalitpur district, Nepal and a sample of fifty youths have been considered after considering their availability and willingness to participate in the study using a convenience sampling method. The researcher identified the respondents who use social media as it is through family and friends that the research is be able to collect data from social media users by accessing youths at schools, colleges, community centers and public places in Godawari Municipality. This enabled the researcher to gain information broadly and both males and females of various educational levels have been included, thus yielding adequate insight into social media's impact on youth behaviour and social relationships. The qualitative data has been analyzed using thematic analytical methods.

3. Understanding Social Media

Social media are computer-mediated technologies that facilitate the creation and sharing of information, ideas, career interests and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks. Social media include software apps, like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp and Twitter, that are widely used by youth to meet communication and information-sharing purposes as well as increasingly entertainment uses (Joo & Teng, 2017). Social media is characterized by the production of user-generated content (Safia *et al.*, 2019) which provides users the means to both access and post digital information. This aspect of being part of the editorial process distinguishes social media from traditional mass media.

The 21st century has brought about an accelerated transformation in what social media means, and communication has become naturalized behaviour to young people. Sinkin and Shaharom (2020) have highlighted that platforms were designed to encourage more of an ongoing interaction through likes, shares, stories, reels, algorithm-based recommendations and content feeds. For youths, social media is both an outlet for self-expression and a means of building and maintaining friendships. Yet, while this also provided the opportunity for individuals to socialize in an online environment and expand their social network, it has raised concerns emerging from e.g., identity presentation, social comparison and reduction of face-to-face interaction (Ryan *et al.*, 2017).

But the effects of social media are not limited to communication: It affects behaviour, mental health, lifestyle and education most of all. Individuals in adolescence are also more susceptible to risk, exposure to peer pressure,

cyberbullying and social validation pursuit at this stage of development (Fareed *et al.*, 2024; Smith *et al.*, 2021). For these digital scaffolds are not only a fabric of lives, but their affordance and consequence become increasingly clear for those connected with supporting youth development in the digital era.

4. Impact of Social Media on Youth Behaviour

Social media has also drastically changed the manner in which we interact and communicate with one another. Instagram, TikTok and Snapchat encourage currency of staying relevant and being acknowledged with likes, comments, shares etc., which could shape the way young people perceive themselves; they come to learn their own worth (Joo & Teng, 2017). Such altered behaviour is also linked to enhanced online leisure-time activity behaviour and potential negative effects in terms of physical activity, sleep patterns as well as the preference for virtual rather than face-to-face social interaction (Paakkari *et al.*, 2021).

Moreover, social media significantly affects trends and behaviours that are influenced by peers and viral posts. Research has also demonstrated that looking up to or following popular individuals on social media can lead to behaviour imitation, particularly of the type of influential group an individual is a member of (Chung *et al.*, 2021). It has also been linked to impulsivity, aggression and reduced emotional control among young adults (Fareed *et al.*, 2044).

Social networking activity also has implications for identity and social values. Young people are prone to follow online role models and this can lead to skewed self-view, FOMO i.e. fear of missing out and anxiety (Rustam *et al.*, 2023). A constant desire to prove oneself can foster a need for validation on the internet, and that influences decision-making, especially in response to peer pressure. In connection, delivering of cyberbullying and adverse comments in online setting is also an impact on emotional well-being and social behaviour (Raheeq *et al.*, 2021). Although attitudes toward social media use for social, emotional and cognitive skills were generally positive and while many avenues for connectivity and creativity are provided by social media, the attribute of socializing via new media with youth can have both beneficial and negative effects depending upon the context in which it takes place, along with how individuals are using it.

5. Impact of Social Media on Social Relationships

With social networks, the youth change their social links with mobile technologies. Social networks have transformed the way that individuals born post-2000 create and cultivate relationships. Young people can interact with others beyond physical space including keeping in touch with friends and family members when not together, through social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp (Joo & Teng, 2017). Such online

networks and communities, where experiences, emotions, and views can be exchanged, may in turn contribute towards enhanced experiences of belongingness and social support for at least segments that feel socially disconnected in their offline environment (Taylor *et al.*, 2022).

In the face of advantages of heightened connectivity, social media undermines relationship quality. Further, many of the activities that youth engage in via the internet are shallow or footings for attachment relationships founded on manipulation and curation of a self which may not be conducive to genuine emotional connections (Ryan *et al.*, 2017). The constant need to keep up the online persona could erode away at relationships, in which kids put virtual thumbs ups and likes first before authentic connections in reality (Saeed, 2023). This can be destructive of relational trust and intimacy which are necessary for successful social interaction.

Additionally, social media supports social comparison and is linked to lower quality relationships. Repetitive exposure to idealized images and pages is likely to produce both jealousy, insecurity and dissatisfaction about one's social life (Smith *et al.*, 2021) which may then prompt conflict or withdrawal by peer groups. These perspectives can make young individuals more vulnerable to feeling lonely or upset especially when the identity is not sufficiently established or when they are predisposed to emotionally relying on the self relatively easily (or readily). In the extreme cases, such as cyber bullying and social exclusion in cyberspace, damages affect the social well being and causes to have its effects on social isolation (Al Hasibuzzaman *et al.*, 2022).

Finally, the impact of social media use on social relationships can vary by whether youth utilize these mediums and their digital literacy. In becoming a prudent social media user, social media can be used as a means to social capital, emotional support and positive online interactions (Chen *et al.*, 2023). But if unguided, excessive or inappropriate use may result in relational difficulties, psychological issues and social isolation or estrangement (Khadka, 2023; Regmi *et al.*, 2022). It is essential to underpin these two conflicting effects in order to inform attempts to enable young people to use social media in ways that promote healthy, supportive relationship development.

6. Social Media and Social Relationship Among Youth

Social Networking is a critical application in the delivery of care to adolescents by virtue of providing youth with the means to build and maintain social connections. It makes it possible for young people to stay in touch with friends and far-away family members they wouldn't otherwise have contact with, fostering closer ties among distant relatives and a circle of close friends. (Al Hasibuzzaman *et al.*, 2022). These online spaces can generate ongoing

flows of experiences, affects and everyday life that might reinforce relationships and provide forms of emotional support. Social Media in the Context of Meeting New People and Socializing with New People Among others, youth use social media as a vehicle for building relationships and expanding their social circle outside geographical location (Taylor *et al.*, 2022).

While there's a lot more communicative options available on online platforms, sometimes this is lacking depth and emotional closeness compared to face-to-face relationships (Ryan *et al.*, 2017). Youth also develop online relationships with edited versions of themselves such as text and photo edits which creates an illusion of intimacy (Saeed, 2023). This can result in confusion and a lack of self-belief when it comes to forming meaningful connections outside the online space.

Social media also influences youth relationships, including libraries, through social comparison and referent group effects. Youth are particularly vulnerable to peer influences and behaviours from social media, where they are bombarded by curation lifestyles and social mores (Chung *et al.*, 2021). This type of exposure influences self-esteem, can arouse jealousy or exclusion, and is related to relationship problems both in friendship and romantic relationships. Cyberbullying and online harassment in social media is another menace that negatively impact social well-being and confidence level of the young users (Al Hasibuzzaman *et al.*, 2022).

However, despite the barriers in place, social media allows youth to participate in generating awareness and engagement while providing emotional support. There are opportunities for expression, social activism, community building and support based on shared interests and experiences as well as for young people (Regmi *et al.*, 2022; Niroula & Upadhaya, 2023). Social media may be a vehicle for increasing social capital and strengthening relationships with peers when used mindfully, thus suggesting that its influence on adolescent relationships might be nuanced and dependent upon use and domain.

7. Social Media Addiction and Youth Behavioural Patterns

Social media addiction is an unhealthy use of social networking platforms and websites to the extent that it interferes with normal functioning, relationships, productivity and in work. This aspect is particularly important in adolescents, because their developmental age renders them vulnerable to addiction induced by psychoactive substances (Fareed *et al.*, 2024). Young people can feel some hard-to-resist urges to stay checked in, fed and engaged online about notifications, scrolls and clicks; these factors then make it difficult for them not to lose control over the duration of both time and brain space they're giving social media. Such compulsive behaviour is reminiscent of those found in behavioural addictions such as intensity, tolerance, and withdrawal from off-line activities (Subedi *et al.*, 2025).

The degree of social media addiction in youth is affected by psychological and social factors. For example, the need for social approval, or FOMO (fear of missing out), and peer pressure force adolescents to remain virtually connected throughout the day (Fareed *et al.*, 2024; Shuvra, 2024). Social media is intentionally designed with imbedded 'like' and 'comment' functions together with instant feedback loop that in the long run triggers the reward regions of our brains leading to an addiction cycle (Muhamad & Shahrom, 2020). It's these mechanisms that urge young to disengage and multitask, to be distracted, to focus not as long or deeply as they should on academic and personal tasks.

The impacts of social media addiction on the youth behaviour are also diverse. Excessive use of it may entail disruption of sleep rhythm, reduction in physical activity and damaged cognitive abilities, including attention, memory capacities (Paakkari *et al.*, 2021). When temporarily deprived from using social media, addicted adolescent users experience increased anxiety, anger and mood disturbances (Fareed *et al.*, 2024). Moreover, addictions may foster the withdrawal of the individual from social interactions if adolescents attach more significance to virtual relationships and less to real ones damaging therefore interpersonal skills and emotional competences (Rustam *et al.*, 2023).

Preventing social media addiction in youth requires a mix of educative, awareness and behavioural approaches. Encouraging digital literacy, promoting self-regulatory behaviours may help children to recognize problematic use and form better habits (Subedi *et al.*, 2025). There is thus an expectation that parents, teachers and policy-makers should play a key role in creating nurturing online environments to diminish excessive use and enhance positive online experiences. In an age where digital media infiltrates conversations, body image awareness, and risk factors and protective gestures: its importance being aware of social media as addictive nature to youth is undeniable (Niaz *et al.*, 2044).

8. Social Media and Youth Behaviours in Godawari

Godawari municipality has a diverse economy, with trade, retail, banking, and service sectors providing employment and income for many residents. The town attracts people from surrounding rural areas for business, work, and education, creating a mix of social and economic backgrounds. This economic diversity influences youth lifestyles, including leisure activities, socialization, and use of digital technology.

Godawari is home to many ethnic and cultural groups, including Brahmin, Chhetri, Tamang, Pahari and Newar. The cultural diversity influences social interactions and community life. Cultural practices shape how youth communicate, interact, and express their identity. Social media

provides a space to share cultural experiences and connect with peers across different groups. The town's ethnic and cultural variety makes it a suitable site to study the relationship between social media, youth behaviour, and social relationships in a sociological context.

Young people use social media to maintain friendships, participate in peer groups, and stay informed. The availability of digital infrastructure also influences social behaviour, including how youth spend time with family, engage in peer networks, and express their identities online. Social life in Godawari includes both traditional family structures and youth peer groups. Many families are nuclear; though extended families still exist. Community organizations, youth clubs, and social events provide spaces for young people to interact and develop social skills. These social structures influence friendships, peer pressure, and behaviour both offline and online. Participation in community life and social groups shapes how young people perceive social norms, handle relationships, and negotiate identity. Understanding these social structures is key to analyzing the impact of social media on youth behaviour and social connections.

Based on the data collected from the field study in 2025, Instagram emerged as the most used social media platform, with 17 out of 50 participants (34 percent) reporting it as their primary platform. Following closely, TikTok was preferred by 15 participants (30 percent), while Facebook was used by 13 participants (26 percent). YouTube and Twitter were less popular, with only 4 participants (8 percent) and 1 participant (2 percent) using them, respectively. This distribution indicates a strong preference among youth and young adults for visually engaging and entertainment-oriented platforms like Instagram and TikTok, which offer short-form content and interactive features. Facebook, while still significant, appears slightly less favored, possibly due to perceptions of it being less trendy or more oriented toward older users. YouTube's lower usage suggests that participants primarily engage in brief, scrollable content rather than longer videos, and Twitter's minimal presence highlights limited interest in text-heavy or news-focused platforms among the sample. Overall, the data reflects the growing trend of entertainment and visually driven platforms dominating youth social media behaviour.

The main reason participants use social media is socializing, with 21 out of 50 respondents (42 percent) indicating that staying connected with friends and peers is their primary motivation. Entertainment closely follows, with 19 participants (38 percent) using social media to watch videos, reels, or other enjoyable content. Education accounts for a smaller portion, with 7 participants (14 percent) using platforms for learning purposes, while only 3 participants (6 percent) primarily use social media to access news and updates. This distribution suggests that social media is largely perceived as a

tool for connecting and engaging with peers as well as for leisure, rather than for educational or informational purposes. The high percentages for socializing and entertainment indicate that interactive and enjoyable content drives usage, reflecting youth and young adults' preference for platforms that offer social interaction and amusement simultaneously.

Social media plays a significant role in the daily lives of youth, shaping their behaviour, emotions, and interactions. It influences how they communicate with friends and family, perceive themselves, and respond to peer pressure. This section examines both the positive and negative effects of social media on youth behaviour and social relationships, based on survey data and interviews. According to the survey, 30 percent of respondents reported that social media increased their confidence, 46 percent felt no change, and 24 percent experienced a decrease in confidence. The qualitative interviews help explain these patterns: many youths indicated that exposure to entertaining, educational, or motivational content online positively influenced their mood and self-esteem, making them feel inspired or encouraged. Others noted that constant comparison with peers' achievements or curated lifestyles could sometimes lead to feelings of inadequacy, though this was not universal. For the majority, social media had little effect on their confidence, suggesting that individual mindset and the type of content consumed play a significant role in shaping emotional responses.

9. Impact on Youth Behaviour

Social media plays a pivotal role in shaping youths' sense of belonging with their peer groups. Several participants emphasized its positive influence in maintaining friendships despite physical distance. One participant noted, "Even when I travel to distant places, such as India, it enables me to maintain connections with my friends." Similarly, next participants explained, "After finishing plus two, all my friends went their own ways, and we became distant. Even though we are far apart now, social media helps us stay connected. We can talk on calls daily and share updates about our lives." These accounts highlight that social media allows youth to sustain bonds that would otherwise weaken due to geographical separation.

However, not all participants reported a wholly positive impact. Another participant shared that social media sometimes diminishes the quality of in-person interactions: "Although they are physically present, they are often not fully engaged, which has weakened their overall sense of belonging within the peer group." Next participants echoed this concern, noting that while connections exist online, they are less meaningful than face-to-face engagement. This indicates that digital communication cannot fully replace physical socialization and that over-reliance on online platforms may hinder active participation in peer groups.

Overall, social media serves as both a connector and a barrier. It enables youth to maintain friendships over long distances and stay informed about each other's lives, yet excessive reliance may reduce engagement in meaningful in-person interactions. Youth experiences vary depending on how they balance online communication with physical social engagement, showing that social media's role in peer belonging is nuanced and context-dependent.

Concerns about overuse and its effects on health were common among participants. Another participant shared, "Yes. When I feel lazy, I turn off the lights and use my phone for a long time. Because of that, I get dark circles under my eyes and my head feels heavy." A participant mentioned, "Yes, I have noticed that using social media has affected me, particularly by disrupting my sleeping habits", highlighting the physical consequences of prolonged online engagement. Another participant also reported, "Sometimes, using it too much makes my eyes irritated, I don't get enough sleep, and I start feeling lazy."

However, some participants perceived minimal or manageable risks. One participant explained, "Social media can affect a person's mental and emotional health, but in my case, it has not affected me that much. Personally, I don't feel that it has had a negative impact on me." This shows that youth experiences of risk are mediated by personal discipline, parental guidance, and the type of content consumed.

Overall, while social media can lead to overuse and physical or mental strain, individual experiences vary. The data indicate that risk behaviours are often linked to excessive screen time, nighttime usage, and habitual engagement, emphasizing the importance of moderation and self-regulation among youth.

10. Influence on Social Relationships

Social media has reshaped family communication in diverse ways, particularly in families experiencing physical separation due to migration, work, or education. Several participants highlighted that social media has strengthened long-distance family relationships by enabling frequent and meaningful interaction. For instance, one participant shared, "My father lives abroad, and he often shares useful videos with me on YouTube, and later we discuss what I learned from them." This indicates that social media is not limited to casual conversation but also supports emotional bonding, learning, and parental involvement despite physical distance. Similarly, participants with siblings or relatives living abroad emphasized that video calls and messaging help maintain emotional closeness.

At the same time, participants living with their families reported that social media has not entirely replaced face-to-face communication. Many

stated that conversations still occur naturally at home, especially during meals or shared time. One participant explained, "Since all of us live together at home, social media hasn't really changed the way we communicate." However, several participants also noted a subtle shift in family dynamics, where increased phone usage has reduced the quality of shared time. Statements such as "after meals, everyone becomes busy on their own phones" reflect a growing concern that digital engagement may reduce meaningful family interaction even when members are physically present.

From an interpretive perspective, these findings suggest that social media acts both as a connector and a distractor within family relationships. While it plays a crucial role in maintaining communication across distance, it can also fragment family time in co-residential households. The impact largely depends on family structure, living arrangements, and individual usage patterns, highlighting the need for balanced and mindful social media use within families.

Social media has significantly influenced friendships by increasing the ease and speed of communication. Many participants described social media as an essential tool for staying connected with friends who live far away. One participant stated, "Because many of my friends live far away, social media helps us stay in touch and communicate more easily." Others emphasized its usefulness in coordinating group activities, academic projects, and sharing important information, suggesting that social media enhances functional and practical aspects of friendships.

However, despite improved connectivity, several participants expressed concerns about declining interaction quality. A common theme was that in-person interactions have become less engaging due to excessive phone use. As one participant explained, "Even when we meet, people are often busy on their phones, which reduces the quality of our interactions." This indicates that while social media increases communication frequency, it may simultaneously weaken emotional depth and attentiveness in friendships.

Additionally, some participants reported conflicts arising from social media content, particularly in group chats. One participant mentioned that offensive jokes or misunderstandings can lead to arguments, although these are usually resolved later. Interpreting these findings, social media appears to strengthen friendships structurally by enabling constant contact but may weaken them emotionally when digital interaction replaces meaningful face-to-face engagement. Thus, social media enhances friendships in terms of accessibility while challenging their emotional quality.

Social media emerged as a crucial source of emotional support, particularly for youth experiencing loneliness, stress, or social transitions. Many participants described reconnecting with old friends or maintaining

long-distance friendships as emotionally comforting. Next participant shared, "When I moved to Godawari, I lost contact with many friends, but through social media, I was able to reconnect even with my childhood friends." Such reconnections helped reduce feelings of isolation and restored emotional security.

Participants also reported using social media content to manage emotions. Comedy reels, motivational videos, and interest-based content were commonly used to improve mood. Additionally, some participants highlighted using platforms like ChatGPT to express emotions they could not share with others, indicating that digital spaces provide alternative forms of emotional expression and support.

However, not all emotional effects were positive. Some participants noted that social media can intensify sadness when content mirrors negative moods. This dual impact suggests that social media functions as an emotional amplifier, capable of both comfort and distress. Interpreting these findings, social media serves as an important emotional resource for youth, but its effectiveness depends on content exposure, emotional state, and individual coping strategies.

Emotionally, social comparison on social media was largely reported as positive or neutral. Many participants expressed feelings of motivation, happiness, and inspiration when viewing others' posts. another participant shared, "Seeing other people's posts doesn't make me feel discouraged; instead, it increases my inner confidence." Another noted, "When I see others' achievements, I feel happy for them and motivated to work harder." These responses suggest that social media serves as a source of aspiration rather than emotional harm.

Parents play a significant guiding role in shaping young people's social media behaviour, particularly during early adolescence. Many participants reported that their parents did not impose extremely strict restrictions from the beginning but instead focused on providing guidance and moral direction. One participant stated, "My parents did not impose strict restrictions on my social media use from an early age, but they have been supportive and provided guidance, which influenced me to post responsibly." This indicates that parental involvement was more preventive and educational rather than authoritarian. Such guidance helped participants develop an understanding of responsible posting, privacy awareness, and respectful online behaviour without feeling excessively controlled.

A recurring theme across responses was parental advice related to limited and purposeful use of social media. Several participants mentioned that their parents consistently advised them to avoid excessive use, focus on educational or meaningful content, and stay away from unnecessary games

or distractions. One participant explained, "They advise me to use it only occasionally and not excessively, to view content that is useful, and not to share private information." Another added, "My parents' guide me in a positive way. They tell me to focus on study-related content, avoid unnecessary games, and use my phone wisely." This reflects parents' concern about academic performance, time management, and exposure to harmful online content, especially in the context of rising cybercrime and digital risks.

Parental control was found to be stronger during school years and gradually reduced as children grew older and demonstrated responsibility. Many participants noted that during their school days, phone usage and social media access were closely monitored or restricted. One participant shared, "During my school days, I was not allowed to use my phone, but after I started college, my parents guided me rather than giving strict instructions." Another mentioned, "Until grade 8, I did not have a social media account because my parents believed it could affect my studies." As participants matured, parental control shifted into trust-based guidance, indicating a transition from external regulation to self-regulation. Overall, the findings suggest that parental guidance plays a crucial role in fostering responsible social media habits, encouraging self-discipline, and promoting digital awareness. Rather than strict control, supportive guidance combined with trust appears to be the most effective approach in shaping healthy social media use among youth.

11. Conclusion

The study examined the influence of social media on youth behaviour and social relationships in Godawari Municipality, focusing on peer influence, online social comparison, emotional impact, and parental guidance. The findings revealed that social media plays a significant role in shaping youth identity, social interactions, and emotional responses. While many youths reported feeling motivated and inspired by observing their friends' posts, others experienced subtle pressure to conform or engage in risky behaviour, though most avoided extreme risks due to personal caution or parental guidance. It was also observed that youths tend to maintain consistent behaviour online and offline, with some expressing themselves more freely in the digital space, highlighting the nuanced ways social media affects self-perception and social engagement.

Overall, the study underscores the importance of responsible social media use in the context of youth development. Parental guidance emerged as a key factor in helping youths navigate digital spaces safely and mindfully, encouraging educational and positive content consumption while minimizing exposure to harmful influences. The research demonstrates that social media can support learning, peer connection, and self-expression when used thoughtfully, but it also requires awareness of potential emotional

impacts and social pressures. These findings contribute to understanding how urban youth in Godawari interact with social media, offering insights for promoting balanced, safe, and socially responsible digital practices aligned with the objectives of the study.

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