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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

According to Cambridge Dictionary, (2024) youth can be defined as a period of life when one is young, or a condition of being young. In the initial stage their priorities concerned on training, education, marriage and employment, all of which are progressively achieved by the conclusion of the period. As majority of the global population consists of youth the forenamed circumstances and advancements have highly impacted politics, economy, societal change, demography and ideologies. In other words, it can be called as transformation, because the growth of youth is mainly associated with societal transformation. Since youth exhibits the transformation of childhood to adulthood, it is different from other age groups and people in this age group are expected to be healthy, employed and educated (Raj, 2016).

Each country defines its youth based on circumstances, demographic, financial and economic socio cultural conditions (Gnanaselvam and Joseph, 2018). India has the largest youth population, 70 percent of the total population is under 35 years old (Singh, 2018). According to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare Report 2021, on statistics of the Indian youth, 3,71,426 people belongs to the age group between 15-29 years, in which, 1,94,576 are male and 1,76,850 are female; of the total population, 27.3 percent belong to youth group. In the state of Kerala, there are 22.1 percent of youth are in total population. In 2021, the census projection reveals an approximate 1.3 billion young people between the ages of 15-29 years accounts for a substantial portion of the demographic landscape. This youthful segment comprised around 365 million individuals, representing a significant proportion of the nation's population. In India, the National Youth Policy 2017 has made public 'youth' as persons at intervals in the age group of 15-34 years.

Also, in February 2014, to strengthen Indian youth, the National Youth Policy started the holistic inspiration for the youth to be ready to reach their full potential and open the right place for fulfilling their skills and development. The youth group with their dynamic nature poses the most important section of the population. Youth show aspects like passion, motivation and power, that makes them the most valuable human resource for fostering a nation's economic, cultural and political development. The size of youth population estimates a country's ability for its potential growth and defence capability. If appropriately utilized, the energy and enthusiasm of the youth can bring an extensive favourable modification to society

and build the nation. Youth are the inventive technology pioneers in their communities and participate as functional voters, needing to contribute to sustainable development. This section of the population is controlled, motivated, dedicated and economically appropriate to bring speedy progression to a country (Verma et al., 2019).

According to National Youth Policy, (2017) youth can be divided into two groups. They are, Urban Youth and Rural Youth. Other minor divisions like working youth, student youth, illiterate youth, unemployed youth and youth with physical and mental disabilities. Social networking usage is increasing among youth. Two hundred ninety million Indian youth are active users in various social networking websites. Meanwhile, Facebook and Instagram are popular among 18 to 24 years old, accounted for 97.2 million users in Facebook and 69 million users in Instagram (Chetty, 2021). According to the latest statistics, 5.56 billion individuals are using social networking worldwide, which amounts to 67.9 percent of the global population. The usage of social networking is high among a youngster, which surpasses the usage in older generation people (Ospina, 2019).

Social networking is an action and engagement tool for communicating with a large audience. Among the younger generation, there were two types of social networkers. They are digital natives and digital immigrants. Those who grew up after the advent of social media can be called digital natives, while those who grew up before the advent of social media are called digital immigrants. The older generation is represented by digital immigrants (Badaway and Yashim, 2015).

In early period of 550 BC, long distance communication took place through handwritten letters between people. In 1792, people began to use the postal service, which was a primitive and wide spread method of delivery. In 1792, telegraphs and horse drawn carriages were used to deliver messages to recipients (Hendricks, 2020). Since 2000, social media channels have spread all over the world and have proliferated. In accordance with Samuel Morse (the inventor), social media, with the parallel sending of telegrams from Washington, DC to Baltimore, began in 1969, another network of advanced scientific research institutions that connected universities to the original Internet. The first recognized 'six degrees' of social networking sites were launched between 1997 and 2001, with around 1 million people posting profiles on these sites (Ahmad, 2018). These are used for communication purposes.

Later in the modern era, the invention of the Internet led to social networking sites and the U.S. Government approached it in 1960. It had been a proper proposal for decentralized network communication. The essential of the Internet may be a proto sort network designed by the National Science Foundation. Tim Berners Lee, the father of the World Wide Web in 1993, widespread on the globe, as a result of the simple usage of the Internet, which is not a simple process, as it brought graphics, sound and video to the screen because the web is a part of the Internet. The Internet is for networking and transmission. People use it to transfer and download information and over 50 million users currently use it (Madoff and Kaye, 2017).

In the 1970s, social media was based mainly on multiuser dungeon development tests. It has been used in real time digital environment, enact games, interactive narration and online chat. Later, the Bulletin Board System (BBS) was launched. Users can login to the system to transit and download software, read and commute messages, but other than that, there are no colours and graphics on the system. Using the web is the same as using a bulletin board system. Six Degrees, Black Planet, Asian Avenue and Moveon have been used in social networking since the 1990s. The emergence of social media can share joint interests, such as music, educational films and friendship relations (Baker and Zaini, 2022). The conquer of social media companies, which are redesigning human activity to help them connect, has been repeatedly demonstrated by researchers (Hensley, 2018).

Social media is typically treated as a singular form of technology. It is concerned with different types of platforms based on their usage and purpose, such as networking, microblogging, video streaming and knowledge sharing. Earlier, sites like Blogger, Tumblr, Facebook, Twitter and Square Measure were the specific social media platforms (Treem et al., 2016). Based on the social media's involvement on interaction and participation that is divided into two ages they are: broadcast age and interactive age. In the broadcast age, social network was a centralized entity that included radio, television, newspaper companies and movie production studios. In this system, indirect, delayed, impersonal feedback existed. However, in the interactive age, an enormous scale of interaction occurred. An individual might interact with several profiles of people and feedback is received instantly (Manning, 2016).

Social networks are defined as communication platforms with distinctive, identifiable profiles and user generated content that are provided by different users and their interactions.

The public viewed the articulated content either by acknowledging by adopting to the materials of their interest or disregard them (Clark et al., 2019). Approximately 63 percent of the world utilizes social networking sites. It has been used by 5.04 billion people worldwide and in the past years, 266 million new people have registered for accounts. The average usage of social media is determined as two hours and 23 minutes (Chaffey, 2024). A DataReportal in 2024 enumerates the social media platforms in India based on their popularity. In the beginning of 2024, about 383.0 million Indians aged 18 years and older used social media, which translates to 38.1 percent of the country's entire adult population.

Social media and social networks are divergent in nature, because social media broadcasts or shares information with many people; anyone can create and distribute information, because the only requirement was an internet connection. Nevertheless, social networking is an act of involvement; in social networking sites, groups of people with similar interests or mindsets form communities and develop connections (Tafesse, 2022). Social networking sites are virtual communities where users can create individual public profiles, interact with real life friends and meet new people based on shared interests (Watermeyer, 2022).

According to Ruhrberg et al., (2017), social networking sites are an increasing trend on the web, because millions of people follow it and it also has become a part of their life. The word 'social' expresses the socialization of the individual. Socialization is forenamed by communication and social networks act as a medium for communication and socialization. For social network profile creation, users have no discrimination, based on status, race or job. Everybody gets equal opportunities to create social media accounts and initiate relationships with people, companies, businesses and job opportunities anywhere around the world and it also aids individuals for their self development. The accessibility of social networking sites varies across countries, due to their legal framework. Nevertheless, the popularity of the application influences the users. Facebook is used worldwide, whereas Indonesia prefers 'Instagram', meanwhile African countries widely use 'Linked in'. On the other hand, some Chinese social networking applications are not on the market and it recalls the problem of India's ban over Chinese applications, cause of territorial problems (Chan and Leung, 2018).

Use of social networks has both positive and negative aspects on youth. In education, it acts as an online tool to help students learn better and faster, extending the curriculum to include learning related topics. It also encourages political interest in youth, with increased

awareness on social movements, public news and high employment opportunities (Raut and Patil, 2016). At the same time, it leads to the loss of user data through the application, due to unauthorized access to public profile information, plagiarizing and privacy concerns open up vulnerable crimes such as hacking, cyber attacks, identity theft, phishing and loss of time are identified as negative aspects (Jain et al., 2021).

Indian society is a mix of various cultures, tribes, castes and languages. The same applies to the gap between urban and rural areas; rural people have come to rely on Internet radio, as they cover all the issues, government implements using radio through social networks. Family planning, dowry related issues, female birth, child protection, health awareness, agriculture, political news and other information reach the rural population that supports rural development. For the illiterate, updates on social networks are more effective than printed information. The social media campaign by the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) has been very effective. Moreover, it will have a determined impact on marriage, Anganwadi schemes, nutritional benefits, breastfeeding and contraceptives.

The invasion of technology has brought about sweeping changes in the urban environment, but rural social life has always been based on family ties and traditions. However, for city dwellers, it is even less. Urban residents are usually assigned a higher socio economic status. Such a person does not like to interact with neighbours or social issues. Issues such as social isolation are common in this area (Francisco, 2010). Among urban youth, visits to natural places are associated with decreased physical and mental health due to online engagement (Mackenzie et al., 2017). Everyone in downtown or top cities uses information technology. Computerized files are available in train, plane and bus at all locations. Youth depend on home bank settings to access their banking activities at available spaces. The same content that appears in newspapers can be found online. Urban people have always been interested in education and learning from universities worldwide. They can also access educational learning materials. Real estate, e-governance, selling and buying are all based on the Internet (Rajaraman, 2020).

According to the Economic Times newspaper (2024) myths say that urban and rural youth are equally addicted to the Internet. Statistics show that the study was conducted in a rural town with internet availability. Urban and rural coexist but are mixed with specific problems, such as anxiety, depression, stress and frustration in high use people. Such problems may affect mental health (Kaushik, 2019).

Student and employed youth are the two categories discussed throughout the research. Social media plays an essential role in creating a social presence among students. Mainly, online learning is motivated by them (Saraminah et al., 2019). Education has changed in every way. They are focused on the online environment. Hence, self learning is made possible. Collaborative learning for students and support for their performance through online learning includes active learning, communication and engagement to get information. However, there are disadvantages as well. Students' social networking engagement increased, whereas challenges and concerns over shadow children (Felix et al., 2019). Social networking aids in job seeking, helps employed youth grow and take advantage of opportunities. Social media helps people to get employment opportunities and empowers them further. Social networking has enabled employment and new job opportunities include online editors, web developers, data security specialists, online training and certification, e-marketing, blogging, vlogging and paid promotions (Ukozar et al., 2020). Employed youth must know how they rely on social networking and its potential. Social networking has affected the youth in rural and urban areas. Employed youth and students are likely to be different from each other. Therefore, social media influences youth by enhancing learning and career opportunities while posing concerned challenges.

### **1.1. Need for the Study**

In current scenario, people are more dependent on social media, they can obtain all the information at hand and it forms the reason of why illusory world of social media matters. People of all ages from all walks of life use social networking sites, however, the youth are the major users. The youth are the ones who should help build the nation and we must recognize their potential and interests and nurture them. Therefore, there is a need to analyze the social networking activities of the youth. The discrepancies in social media usage can be ascribed to multiple facets, such as poverty, unequal access to technology and limitations due to geography. Since India is a developing nation, a crucial set of population lives below the poverty line that makes equality a challenge in digital space. Accessibility of Internet is solely based on the location and infrastructure, often highlighting disadvantages in rural communities where development in economy is a concern. Meanwhile, the need to understand the environment of urban youth is important, as their circumstantial experiences reflect both the advantages and risks in their digital space. With rapid advent in technology transformation in social and economic landscapes becomes

crucial to examine these dynamics. Therefore, the study is essential to assess how social networking influences youth across diverse notions and to highlight its broader outcome for development.

## **1.2. Scope of the Study**

According to the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), India has a large youth population and the situation could continue in 2030. The Internet provides opportunities for the youth in every possible way. Beyond being poor or wealthy, everyone with skills and intelligence could achieve the desired result. Social media and social networking sites are one of the various possibilities on the internet axis. Apart from contributing to communication and education, the study also paves the way for curricular activities, business and social development. Along with their formal education, the youth also acquire essential skills, knowledge and information through social networking. Therefore, the study assessed whether the youth should take advantage of such situations. Similarly, the study also thrived in understanding the possibilities and problems available in urban areas vary, because there is a difference between the ordinary youth in the villages and the city, who had rather distinct lifestyles and experienced different crises.

If all these are found and the right way is suggested, the youth would have a hopeful change. The youth intend to record different opinions through social networking and how they evaluate the current social networking area as relevant. They are a mixed bag of merits and demerits. The study explores youth development and aids in acquiring constructive solutions as well as advanced strategies. It also examines the hindrances faced by young people like the time to pursue education and find employment, the obstacles of early married youth and their disadvantages in career opportunities, those leading non productive lives, those youth who yet to attain financial independency and those youth with uncertain future prospects. By exploring the role of social networking in surpassing living standards, the study highlights its potential contribution to economic development and the creation of a more promising future for the youth.

## **1.3. Statement of the Problem**

With the occurrence of social networking, social media has become indispensable. The approach to social networking is different for each individual and they often use it to avoid communication. So, a study on social networking is important. However, social

networking often has both positive and negative effects. It is essential to identify and solve the problems. The study found the gap in awareness among the youth and disparities in social networking between rural and urban youth. At the same time, the researcher narrows down a focus group and find a solution to their problem through need based awareness programmes.

The highlighted research gap shows that social networking and youth are a wide range of possible areas to research. But, most of the previous studies do not focus on both urban and rural perspectives, similarly, students and employed youth are also not focused. Most of the studies required more educational or awareness programmes to empower society. The research study guides the youth in focusing on social networking better and properly.

#### **1.4. Definition of the Key Terms**

**An Analytical Study:** In social science research, an analytical study involves a detailed examination of data to identify patterns, relationships and causal connection between variables. Such studies enable the development of insightful conclusions that support evidence based decision making and policy formulation (Soren, 2023).

**Social Networking:** Social networking platforms operate on internet infrastructure and enable users to create, interact and sustain online connections (Halston et al., 2019).

**Youth:** Youth is the transitional stage between babyhood and adulthood. It is characterized as a period of exploring different roles and identities, relatively free from rigid cultural expectations and duties, while cautiously preparing individuals to become active, contributing members of society (Chandrashekar and Shivanna, 2020). The age group of the present study is 15-34 years.

Hence, the present study, ‘**An Analytical Study on Social Networking among the Youth**’, was framed with the following objectives.

#### **1.5. Objectives of the Study**

##### **Primary Objectives of the Study**

- To understand and explore social networking among the selected youth

### **Secondary Objectives of the Study**

- To know the socio demographic profile of the youth
- To identify the social networking knowledge of rural and urban youth
- To find out the attitude towards social networking in rural and urban youth
- To assess the social networking usage and the impact of social networking on youth
- To educate the focus group and to create awareness through a short movie
- To find out the personal experience in social networking usage and problems through case studies

### **1.6. Hypotheses of the Study**

A hypothesis is a claim or statement that a random sample must validate to determine if it is true. We determine whether to accept or reject a hypothesis based on data obtained from a sample. This testing technique continuously uses null and alternative hypotheses (Chawla and Sondhi, 2018). The hypothesis of the study is described below:

1.  $H_{01}$  = There is no significant association between the location of the youth and social networking knowledge

$H_a$  = There is a significant association between the location of the youth and social networking knowledge

2.  $H_{02}$  = There is no significant association between the location of the youth and attitudes towards social networking (Emotional, Behavioural, Positive and Negative)

$H_a$  = There is a significant association between the location of the youth and attitudes towards social networking (Emotional, Behavioural, Positive and Negative)

3.  $H_{03}$  = There is no significant association between the location of the youth and social networking usage

$H_a$  = There is a significant association between the location of the youth and social networking usage

### **1.7. Limitation of the Study**

The present study has been conducted only in one district of Kerala (Thiruvananthapuram) and it needs to be extended to many other areas. Similarly, not only district wise but also the inability to extend to many parts of India can be seen as a limitation. Similarly, youth could only be attended in the study. Other age groups were not involved.

#### **Inclusion Criteria**

- Age: 15-34 years old
- Literate
- Youth who are active social networking users
- Individuals who are willing to participate and share their experiences and perceptions of social networking activity

#### **Exclusion Criteria**

- Age: Individuals outside the 15-34 age range
- Non-users of social networking or those who are not active in social networking platforms
- Those who are not willing to participate or share their experiences and perceptions of social networking activities
- The study was not focused on unemployed youth