INTERNET AND ITS IMPACT ON THE SOCIETY

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Abstract

Internet plays a vital role in the twenty-first century. It has brought and brining changes in the entire world. It has brought the whole world into a small villages. It is rendering a yeoman service to every human being living in the twenty-first century. It has become a global network connecting millions of people across the world. Its biggest impact on the lives of human beings is such that it has completely metamorphosized and improved their way of living. It is no exaggeration to say that without internet the society will not develop and modern man cannot survive in this highly technological world

In the present paper a study is made on the Internet and its impact on the society. The paper examines various fields – Media, Communication, Banking, Medical, Politics, Government, Education, and Business – in which the Internet has changed the world and discuss and how they have their impact on the common man. To prove the point how Internet had its impact on the society, most recent and current illustrations are provided. The paper are also highlights some of ill-effects of Internet and their impact on the society. Thus, in the present paper an attempt is made to show how Internet may be a great source in serving the man in the 21st century.

Key Words: Internet, exaggeration, society, way of living, impact.

In the 21st century Internet is playing an important role in changing the entire world and bringing the whole world into a single village. It is described as the most important development in the history of humankind since the industrial revolution. It is a global network connecting millions of computers. It is an "international computer network connecting other networks and computers from companies, universities, etc."[1] Characterized as 'The Third Wave' by Alvin Toffler, in his book of the same title, "it has the potential to change the ways of man and society beyond the wildest of imaginations."[2]

Internet has brought a revolution in society allowing people from all over the world to share information, express their ideas, feelings, and communicate with each other quickly and easily. Being an international network of networks it is helping the society by providing huge information through multiple sources. Its impact on society and on the lives of people is in many

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ways. It has changed the way one works, one studies, one does research, one spends his/her free time, and the way one communicate. The biggest impact of internet on the lives of human beings is such that it has completely metamorphosized and improved our way of living. It is no exaggeration to say that without internet the society will not develop and modern man cannot survive in this highly technological world.

According to a source of http://www.internetlivestats.com/internet-users/, today "there are about three hundred billion (3,196,187,350) people using internet in the world and around 40 percent of the world population has an internet connection."[3] Like a mobile, internet has become a part and parcel of their lives. They are creating new forums of social interaction and social relations with the help of some social networking websites such as Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace. They feel that such an interaction with the people all over the world would easily break the barriers of social class and age as well. They spend a part of time on the internet for umpteen purposes. Some persons may evince interest in chatting with others, some may show interest in collecting information on various topics and improve their knowledge, some would like to convey their opinions and views, some may use internet to do their business, some use the internet to contact with others by sending and receiving emails, some may use it to make more friends from many countries, etc. Whatever they are looking for, whatever they want to share, they can do it within a short span of time. Some advanced learners create their own homepages and BlogSpot to express their views, to pass on information to others. Some universities and research institutions link internet to their institutions to exchange their ideas, experiences, and novelties. Sometimes they send the material to the students through internet and conduct even online examinations. Students make use of the internet extensively to find reference books and dictionaries as they believe that it is cheaper and easy to get the information that is renewed and up-to-date. Some others read international and national daily newspapers from all over the world to enrich their knowledge and also to know what is happening around the world.

Internet is available at cheaper price due to various service providers. It has replaced the traditional mode of sending letters. Today it has become very easy and simple to send letters within seconds through email. Sending huge data, adding files is much faster through internet. Another great help than an internet is doing is sending SMS. We can save a lot of money by sending free SMS to any part of the world. There are a good number of free SMS websites such as way2sms, fullonsms, 160by2 that are helping the mankind. Apart from these, there are others apps like WhatsApp and hike which have become so popular that every smartphone user is using these applications to send text messages, picture messages, audio messages, and videos to friends, colleagues, associates, workmates, acquaintances, and even strangers.

Internet has made banking transactions faster and more convenient. Banking via Internet is considered as a remarkable development in the banking sector. "The ability to carry out banking transactions through the Internet has empowered customers to execute their financial transactions within the comfort of their homes."[4] The most important advantage of Internet banking is that the customers are no longer required to wait in the long and wearisome lines to request a financial transaction or statement. Internet banking has made the entire procedure of opening and closing of an account quite simple and easy by reducing paperwork and also saving huge bundles of papers. Conventional banking has always been slow and time-consuming, but internet banking has tremendously reduced the time. With Internet banking one can access any information regarding her/his account and do transactions at any time. If s/he wants to transfer

money, s/he can do it immediately without going to bank. If s/he wants to buy a demand draft, s/he can buy without paying visit to bank.

Besides availing banking facility all around the clock, one can also collect important information regarding policies, rates of interest on various types of accounts. But a caution. While doing internet banking, one must be very careful to ensure the security of the computer and personal information, like the password and the username. Otherwise, one may become a victim to unauthorized use of her/his account by computer hackers.

In medical field, internet has become the ultimate frontier to access information for health providers. It is doing great service to the doctors and the patients. Doctors from all over the world can share their expertise, clear doubts, seek opinions from other doctors, and learn the better techniques of performing an operation. Some specialists in the medical field may give tips and help other doctors to complete the operation successfully. Doctors may even suggest the patients by giving health tips. Surgeons use it as a communicating tool. They form groups and carry on discussions and debates on clinical cases, operations, research techniques, and career opportunities.

Internet is helping the doctors who remain and practice in smaller cities and rural areas. Usually, such doctors feel isolated due to lack of access to the latest developments. Internet can greatly assist such doctors through cyberspace where they can interact with the doctors. They can become members of information groups and search through free information database on the Internet. Through internet, they can now consult a specialist sitting at any distance by providing him all images and data online and eliminate the risk involved and save the time and money spent on travel. They can even subscribe journals that are published in other countries and learn the latest trends in medical field.

The internet has achieved new relevance as a political tool. It became a core element of modern political campaigns. Communication technologies such as email, web sites, and podcasts are delivering a message to a large audience very faster than earlier. The recent Prime Minister's address may be taken as an example. Due to internet, people in general and employees in particular were able to watch and listen to his speech in online television channels by sitting in their own places. Individual political candidates are also using the internet to promote their election campaign. They are using popular Internet social networks like Facebook, Twitter, as ways to reach groups of potential supporters with similar political views or cultural interests. This has allowed a low cast, yet an efficient method of mobilizing voters and increasing participation among various voter populations.

Slowly the governments are largely depending on the internet. They are using internet to carry out their activities.   To promote their schemes, the governments are making effective use of Internet. At present, even the judicial department is utilizing the services of internet. Judges are trying to handle the legal cases with the help of internet in convicting the criminals. Such an incident took place in one of the district courts in Vijayawada. This has saved the time and the problems that are involved in taking the culprits from police station to the court.

Especially in business sector, internet is doing yeoman service to the mankind. Before they buy any product, they visit number of business websites such as eBay, Flipkart, Amazon, Homeshoppe, Myntra, Yepme, Snapdeal, Junglee, and others, and compare the difference in the prices and then order. Particularly students are getting maximum benefit in the form of concession when they buy books. They feel that they need not go to any book stall and search

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for the book that they want. They can easily browse and order the book and get it in a short time. Sometimes, it becomes very difficult to buy a book that is released recently. For example, the latest (9th) edition of Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary is released into the market just a few months ago. The book may not available in all the places. But with the help of these business websites they can buy that book and get it immediately that too in a cheaper price than the actual price. In some cases they can even buy an old book which is out of publication as it may be available in any one of the bookstalls.

Most recently (February 10, 2015), the Government of India took initiative to help the Indians by providing a great opportunity to save their crucial documents in Internet in the DigiLocker (https://digitallocker.gov.in/public/register). "The initiative is implemented to create 'digital empowerment' among the masses. The digital storage system acts as a helping hand in providing data to government agencies, departments, and applying for different jobs."[5] In this locker, even a common man, can save her/his documents such as birth certificate, educational certificates, income certificate, etc. which can be made easily accessible to the government departments. One can also e-share her/his documents with any registered agency or department. Besides sharing with the departments when required, the government agencies like RTO (while applying for Driving Licence), Registrar Office (while buying property documents, etc) may also share their documents to the concerned person based on the Registration ID. This makes people download her/his certificate very easily. Another major advantage of this system is that one can e-sign the documents and have a monopoly over 10 MB personal space which might be increased to 1 GB if need be. Since the data will be a part of the personal account, it ensures privacy. Moreover, for those who do not have a Unique Identification Number, e-Aadhar can be downloaded from the DigiLocker portal. In brief, the DigiLocker system is an imperative measure to collect our data and store it in one particular account. The government of India has initiated a wonderful service that can potentially make it easy to accumulate our documents and acquire them from different authorities. This entire process can be easily done with the help of Internet.

From the aforesaid samples, one may say that the Internet's impact on society is enormously increasing. It has expanded and impacted the society in almost all areas of the human endeavour. One can also say that Internet will undoubtedly prove as a great source to each and every person and can go a long way in service.

While coming to the negative aspects, Internet has adverse effects too. One of the major negative effect of Internet on the users is that, if people use internet for two to three hours on a daily basis, they are likely to fall a prey to sexual exploitation. There are umpteen websites which lure the users by posting obscene/vulgar images on the web pages. Once the user becomes addict and visits such websites, their mind and thought affects. This may produce adverse effects on the mental health of the people. Recent medical studies show that "addiction to internet is causing personal, professional, as well as social problems."[6]

Secondly, the more the users use internet, there are more chances that their privacy is disturbed. As hackers have become more intelligent, they are hacking the information easily and users cannot even imagine how their confidential details and information is hacked by the hackers and misused. Thirdly, internet is the third most addictive thing after alcohol and drugs. Once the users accustom to this drug of internet, it is very difficult to come back from there.

They should realise the truth that sitting in front of the computer and using internet, they will be wasting their valuable time by visiting unnecessary websites.

Due to internet, thinking capacity among people is slowly reducing. Whenever they have any assignment to do something, immediately they browse and procure the information without any prior thinking. Particularly students, when their teacher gives any homework or assignment, they easily search material on the topic from the internet and copy down the facts. This would reduce their thinking capacity. This also makes students lazier. "If this thing continues in the future as well, chances are there that students would not do anything on their own and just cram what is given on internet, they would not even try to think whether the matter given there is actually correct or not."[7] These days, even the children have become victims to internet. They are spending their time on internet by playing online games. This is robbing away their precious time. They are unable to play many physical games which keeps their mind and physic very strong.

Above all, the most significant negative impact of internet on its users is that the loss of human touch. With the excess use of internet, even on smart phones, the people are ignoring and forgetting their real people in their surroundings. They have reached the stage ignoring their own family members, close associates, and others who direly need their attention. They are under the false impression that the social network gives more friends than the real ones.

To conclude, one may say that everything has two sides. One is good and the other is bad. Internet too may have a positive impact or a negative impact on the society. What matters is how people use the internet judiciously for their personal and professional growth. If the internet is properly used its impact on the society may be positive but if it used improperly its impact on the society will definitely be negative. In other words, the internet may make the society a better one or mar the society.

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