**The Negative and Positive effects of Social Media**

Over the past decade, social media- which are rapidly changing and evolving- have surged and considerably impacted people's lives. The availability of the internet and smartphones has increased social media usage such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, TikTok, etc. in everyone's life. While on one hand it is fun to use social media for posting photos, stories, sharing your thoughts and experiences, and getting updated with the latest news and trends, social media are also believed to pose a serious threat in people’s lives.

**Negative effects**

**Anxiety and depression**

One of the most prominent negative effects social media has on people is their **mental well-being.** Too much usage of social media apps can lead to mental health issues such as **anxiety disorder and depression.** Reading and browsing through the unrealistic news, post, and photos videos of others can trigger your brain to compare your lives to theirs, which is necessarily not true, causing **psychological distress.** The heavily edited photos through photoshop, image editors and filters create unrealistic body images. The constant disclosure of **unrealistic beauty standards** and glittering lifestyles on social media can generate negative feelings and may lead to **body image issues, dissatisfaction, lessened self-worth. It can also develop** **eating disorders** in some people, especially teenagers suffer from low self-esteem.

**Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying has taken its toll with the availability of the internet and multiple numbers of social media. Online bullies can misuse innocent users, **blackmail** them that can create deep mental scars, and even **compel people to self-harm** in some cases.

**Addiction**

Too much consumption and usage of social media can lead to social media addiction which in its turn can lead to **negligence of your personal life**, **bad academic performance, disruption of sleeping patterns-** especially if you use social media until late at night.

**Fear Of Missing Out**

**Fear of Missing out (FOMO)** is a common term used nowadays on the internet and social media, where people fear missing out on essential activities if they are not active on social media. People experiencing FOMO think that everyone they know is having a great time outside, partying, traveling, living luxurious lives, meeting up with friends, and they are the only one missing all those enjoyments. FOMO can lead people to feel stressed, unproductive, exhausted, and often develop the symptoms of anxiety and depression.

**Positive Effects**

Human beings are social creatures; they crave companionship, care, and affection from their associates. Being socially connected to others is crucial for us, whether in reality or through social media.

**Better Communication**

Social media enables everyone to communicate with their friends and families worldwide, it fosters **better communication** and makes it easier to **make new friends.** Before the rise of social media platforms, communication was linked to short distances and took a long time to reach far places. Now, you can contact your relatives, long lost friends who are miles away in another part of the world within a click. Being connected with old friends and people and families has helped many **people feel connected and stay closer** than ever. Also, you can have hundreds of friends with whom you can interact.

Social media enables people to **share their posts, content, ideas, experiences,** and many other things that can lead to a more significant number of connections worldwide. Isn't that amazing?

**Building relationships and communities**

Social media is a crucial means to **boost our communities and build relationships.** Through social media, you can make **new connections** and start building relationships with **like-minded people** to easily communicate and share content, ideas, experiences, and knowledge. Social media enables us to find and connect with thousands of people who **share a common ground** as you from across the world. You can find like-minded people, groups, and communities with **shared interests and ambitions**. This level of connectedness helps develop a sense of community that is only possible through social media platforms.

**Offers kindness and empathy**

People can offer **kindness and empathize** by sharing their part of stories on social media. With engagement in different support groups such as **anxiety, and depression support groups,** people can help each other when they need it most.

The kindness and support that people get on social media are positive impacts of social media on their mental health and offer a way to see the world from a whole new perspective.

**Source of knowledge and learning**

The multiple posts, tweets, videos, and articles shared on social media serve as valuable information sources to **learn new skills** every day.

Students can find different **free educational websites, mentors, and online seminars,** which help them learn new skills to move ahead in their careers. They can find valuable tutorials to **upgrade their skills** from YouTube.

**Raise your voice on important issues**

People engaged in **charities, funding, fighting injustice, and combating diseases** are helping raise their voices and providing the subjects to relevant authorities and organizations through social media platforms Social media is a powerful platform, especially for those individuals and groups whose voices are **oppressed**. Thus, social media can have the most significant impact on people coming out of their shell to cover their issues and share those concerns across the globe.

**Ground for creativity and self-expression**

You can see several posts, videos, and tutorials where **people showcase their incredible talents, skills in DIYs, hacks**, etc. It has become a medium of **self-expression** for teenagers and youths. Social media has provided students with hands-on experience acquiring creativity.

It provides an outlet to share your art and skills with users across the globe, and you can get their feedback. Not only does it help to boost your **skills and creativity,** but also it can help you pursue these ideas to earn money.

**Source of Entertainment**

Today, people of all age ranges use social media as a source of entertainment. Social media posts have certainly put a smile on your face and made you giggle. You can find **songs, videos, games, movies,** and every possible thing for your entertainment on social media. From fans following their favorite celebrities to performing live streams, and seeing viral memes, and videos, people have been hooked on social media platforms for their entertainment.

**Conclusion**

In today's world of digitization, most people are engaged in social media platforms which have allowed people to build relationships, learn new skills, and find common ground to **raise awareness and voices.** As there are many positive aspects of social media, we can use it in the right way to positively impact our lives.

**ADVANTAGES**

1. Promote social connection

The main purpose of social networking sites is to facilitate people to socialize, regardless of distance and other barriers. It can have a positive impact on relationships. Young people can make new friends and maintain existing friendships by frequent communication and sharing experiences online. For those teenagers who struggle to make social connections in the physical world, social media can offer a virtual alternative and prevent young people from feeling isolated.

2. Mental health benefits

Social media use stimulates the production of oxytocin which reduces stress levels and promotes feelings of happiness. Online interactions are often much easier than socializing in person — they require little to no emotion and are less demanding. The reward and happiness we receive from likes and positive comments are often the result of very little effort and time. Of course if the comments are negative or the amount of likes deemed too low, it could have a detrimental effect on mental health. In response to consumer feedback, Instagram recently made the number of likes for posts visible only to the profile owner, with plans for Facebook to follow suit. This goes some way to addressing the problem of teens (and people in general) judging their peers on the number of likes they receive for a post, or comparing themselves to others based on number of likes.

3. Provide opportunity for education

Children can watch videos, view pictures and read blogs, many of which have educational benefits. Social networking sites can also facilitate discussion of homework and assignment topics and provide a base for research and fact-finding initiatives.

4. Enhance globalization

The advent of social media has meant that the world has become smaller. We are no longer bound by geographic borders or physical distance. Teenagers can now easily communicate with people from all over the world and experience all the benefits that exposure to other cultures and ideas brings.

5. Promote creativity

Many social media tools provide an outlet for creative self-expression. Not only are you able to share work such as photography, film, written works and illustrations, other users can offer comments and feedback which can offer the added benefit of building self-esteem and confidence.

DISADVANTAGES

1. Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying is the use of technology to bully a person or group with the intent to hurt them socially, psychologically or physically. If a child is the victim of cyber-bullying, he or she should seek help immediately.

2. Can compromise safety

Unfortunately, social media provides a platform for predators to groom and abuse children. Users are able to create fake profiles and children are at risk of communicating with people who are unknown to them and who might cause them harm. Children should never disclose their personal information and location to any person on social media. Consider ensuring that your child’s social media profiles are set to ‘private.’

3. Addiction

Since social media use can generate reward and feelings of happiness so easily, there is a risk that it may become addictive. It can also be very time consuming — teens can waste hours online. Parents should limit screen time and set clear expectations about social media usage.

4. Lack of focus

Social media can also be a distraction. It can divert attention from an activity that your child is supposed to be focusing on, such as study, sporting commitments or assignments. It’s important to ensure your child is maintaining a healthy lifestyle and participating in social activities away from the computer or devices. Removing devices from bedrooms and monitoring social media online usage is also advised.

Overall, social media does not have to be scary. Even though it can be exploited by bullies, instilling good digital etiquette and maintaining an open dialogue about online safety can go a long way in keeping kids safe online.

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