# A Study on Impact of Social Media on Educational Efforts in Guwahati City, Assam

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## Abstract

*This paper attempts to highlight the impact of social networking sites on educational efforts of students and their dependability on social media for educational purpose. As Ricky Fu in his "Formal Essay: New Media and Education" has mentioned, Students in today's generation grew up with new media. As a result, they may have skills and experiences that differ from those of many faculty members who are currently engaged in instruction. Despite this, many faculty members propose that blogs and new media should be used to exploit the social networking abilities of students, breaking out of the classroom in order to reach the tech-savvy students of today's era. Through the usage of new media into the framework, educators are able to tap into the hidden abilities and potentials of their students while maintaining focused learning and positive outcomes. For example, Lee (2010) reported on the use of blogs as an assignment – he concluded that regulated blog entries have a positive impact on learners' writing fluency and linguistic accuracy. It is also important to note that micro-blogging sites, such as Twitter, require students to phrase thoughts and ideals efficiently, improving their word usage and efficiency of text. Though many authors believe in a great future for Social Media in education, there is a few that believe it is actually harmful. This paper explores the efficacy of social networking systems as instructional tools by presenting the results of a study that examined the perceptions of college students randomly selected from the study area i.e. Guwahati City of Assam. An effort has been made to study both positive and negative views of students in this regard using Descriptive Survey Method and Observation Method.*

## Keywords

*Internet, Social Media, Education, Students` perspective*

## I. Introduction

In the newly revolutionizing world of technology, social networking media has become a need in communicating with others. The worldwide phenomenon of Social Media has impacted the world in numerous ways. One of the most crucial areas in which it has made an impact is the world of education. The impact is still young, yet the results already show fascinating changes. Through the inevitable usage of internet based social media in not only a educational environment, the rate of learning, spread, and evaluate knowledge and information is changing the way that we used to define learning few decades back.

The impact of the Internet on education is an important issue that has caught both educators' and practitioners' attention in recent years. According to Harasim, three new modes of education delivery make online education distinctive. They are-

- Adjunct mode: using networking to enhance traditional face-to-face education or distance education;
- Mixed mode: employing networking as a significant portion of a traditional classroom or distance course;
- Pure online mode: relying on networking as the primary teaching medium for the entire course or program. Among these three education delivery modes, the pure online mode has caught the most attention.

A social network service (also social networking site or SNS) focuses on building and reflecting of social networks or social relations among people, e.g., who share interests and/or activities. A social network service essentially consists of a representation of each user (often a profile), his/her social links, and a variety of additional services. Most social network services are web based and provide means for users to interact over the internet, such as e-mail and instant messaging. Although online community services are sometimes considered as a social network service in a broader sense, social network service usually means an individual-catered service whereas online community services are group-centred. Social networking sites allow users to share ideas,

activities, events, and interests within their individual networks. The main types of social networking services are those that contain category places (such as former school year or classmates), means to connect with friends (usually with self-description pages), and a recommendation system linked to trust. Popular methods now combine many of these, with American-based services such as, Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, Instagram, Reddit, Pinterest, Vine, Tumblr and Twitter are widely used worldwide.

Social networks and their educational uses are of interest to many researchers. According to Livingstone and Brake (2010), "Social networking sites, like much else on the Internet, represent a moving target for researchers and policy makers." Pew Research Center project, called Pew Internet, did a USA-wide survey in 2009 and in 2010 February published that 47% of American adults use a social networking website. Same survey found that 73% of online teenagers use SNS, which is an increase from 65% in 2008, 55% in 2006. Recent studies have shown that social network services provide opportunities within professional education, curriculum education, and learning. However, there are constraints in this area. Researches, especially in Africa, have disclosed that the use of social networks among students have been known to negatively affect their academic life. This is buttressed by the fact that their use constitutes distractions, as well as that the students tend to invest a good deal of time in the use of such technologies.

## II. Location

### An account of the area taken for the study-

Guwahati is the largest city of Assam and one of the fastest developing cities of India. *Guwahati* city of country India lies on the geographical coordinates of 26° 11' 0" N, 91° 44' 0" E with an area of 216 km². As per provisional reports of Census India, population of Guwahati in 2011 is 963,429; of which male and female are 502,255 and 461,174 respectively. Guwahati Literacy

Rate according to 2011census report, total literates in the city is 798,726 of which 426,401 are males while 372,325 are females. Average literacy rate of Guwahati city is 91.11 percent of which male and female literacy was 92.89 and 89.16 percent.
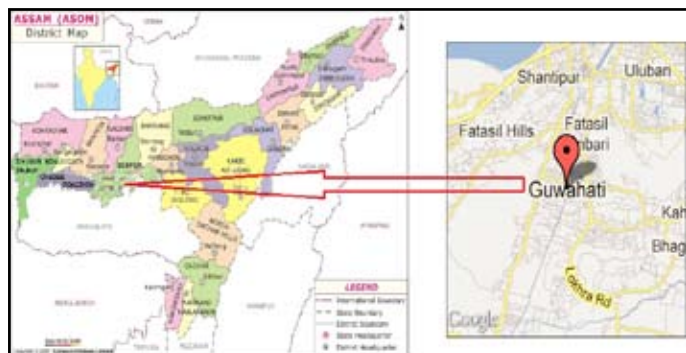


Map of the area taken for the study (Guwahati City)

## III. Need of the Study

Social Networking Sites have recently showed a value of social and political movement. In the Egyptian Revolution, both Twitter and Facebook played a pivotal role in keeping people connected to the revolt. Egyptian Activists have credited Social Networking Sites with providing platform for the planning and sharing news from Tahrir Square in real time. By presenting a platform for thousands of people to instantaneously share videos of mainly events featuring brutality, Social Networking Sites proves to be a vital tool in revolutions.

Studies conducted by the Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (IPTS) suggest that the high take up of social media applications outside of formal educational settings provides new opportunities for innovating and modernizing Education and Training institutions and for preparing learners for the 21st century as it opens the entire world of information because of which it has a greet relevance in educational field. Social media networks are considered crucial for educational and professional skill development now-a-days as it eliminates geographical and time barriers providing scope for wide connectivity to vast community sharing information and interests. It also provides speedy dissemination of information and ideas. Within the social media Facebook, Twitter and others are now gaining more and more patronage. These websites and social forums are way of communicating directly with other people socially. Hence, Social media has the potentials of influencing decision-making in a very short time regardless of the distance.

Using social media by students in higher educational level is certainly a fascinating portion of research for educationists and social scientists. Maintain that in the available literature there are beneficial designs and styles of employing it at school level. It describes the introduction of contents and focuses on how to share, interact, and collaborate and socialize by its use. There appear different top reasons to justify using social media in greater education. But there is no denial by a group of researchers about the adverse impact of social media in educational efforts which calls for proper study of the issue. Hence, to study interrelation of social media and education and impact of social media in education hold important place in the field of advance educational technology.

## IV. Objectives

1. To study students` views on impact of social media in educational efforts,

2. To study purpose of using social media by students,
3. To point out both positive and negative effects of social media on education.

## V. Delimitation of the Study

Following are the delimitation in the development of present study-
1. The study restricted to a particular area of Assam i.e. Guwahati City,
2. In the study attention is given to degree level students drawn from various colleges of the study area.
3. The study was conducted on 40 samples selected randomly.

## VI. Methods Used in the Study

In present study the investigator has used- **Descriptive Survey Method** and **Observation Method** to explain educational phenomena in terms of the condition or relationship that exist, opinion that are held by students and other sample group, processes that are going on, effects that are evident and trends that are developing in the areas under investigation.

### A. Sample

To meet the objectives of present study 40 students from different colleges of Guwahati City from higher education level (specifically, degree level) were selected randomly by means of one of the non-probability sampling methods i.e. Judgement Sampling Method on the basis of available information thought to be representative of total population.

### B. Tools

The present study is carried by using following tools-
1. **Questionnaire**- The investigator in this study collects necessary information from the sample with the help of questionnaire schedule comprising of 15 questions related with usage, impact and perspective of students on other aspects of social media and education.
2. **Interview**- The investigator collects needed information by verbal interaction with the sample group to meet the objectives of present study.

## VII. Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Data Collected through Interview Schedule on the impact of social media on education has been forwarded as follows-

While studying the opinions of students regarding popularity of various social networking sites among them, it was found that for 90% students Facebook is the most favourite social networking site, while remaining 10% students has their account in both Facebook and Twitter. It was observed that students were interested in communicating with students from other states and countries through sending or receiving friend requests.

Table 1

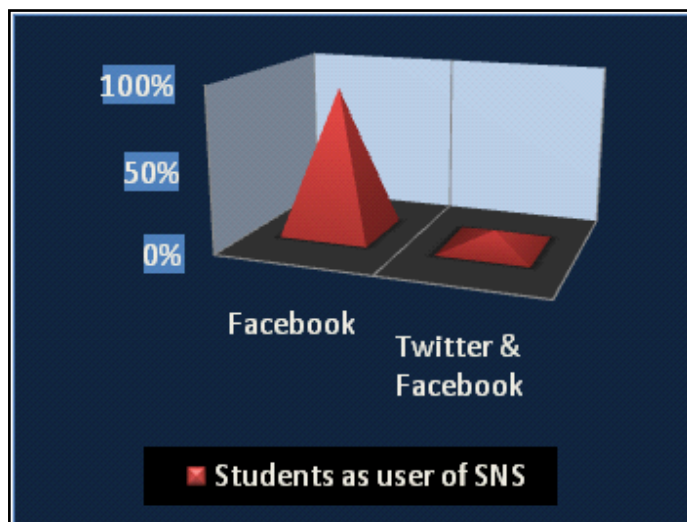| Students` Response as User of Social Networking Site | |
|---|---|
| Facebook | Both Facebook and Twitter |
| 90% | 10% |

Graphical representation of data shown on Table I

Fig.1 - Percentage of students having account in different SNS

Regarding students` view impact of social networking sites in education 75% students believe it has positive effect while 10% believe it has negative effect and 15% consider that their educational efforts are not affected by social networking as they opined education and social networking are different things.
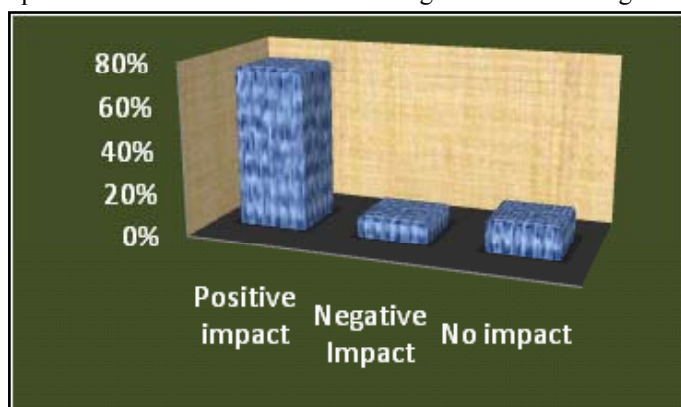


Fig. 2 : Percentage of positive and negative views on impact of social media on education

Questions on reasons for using social media among students shows that, 55% students use Social media for making new friends, 50% students for sharing ideas and learn from others` experiences, other 5% students for recreational purpose.
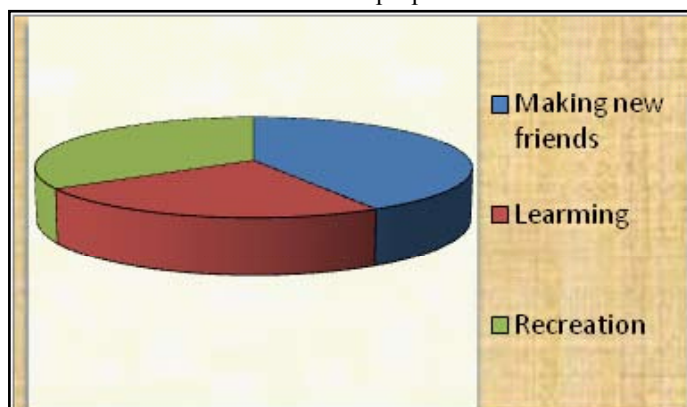


Fig. 3 : Students` responses for using social media

In response to positive impact of social media in education 35% students replied that it has helped in technological skill

development, 30% believe social media is helpful in development of communication skill while 35% supported it helps in gathering information and reference material for studies.
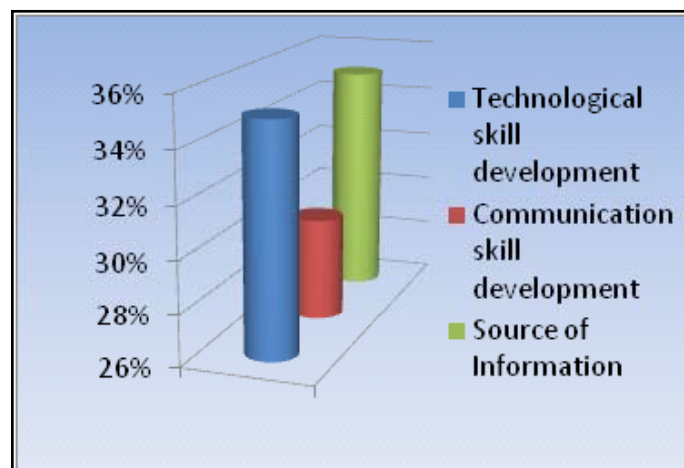


Fig. 4 : Students` views on positive impact of SNS on education

Regarding negative impact of social media students` did not deny that social media may hamper educational efforts, which is proved from their responses. 40% students agree that getting involved in chatting through social media leads to reduction in study hours, 30% students accepted that cyber bullying and threats to privacy produces adverse impact on mental setup which influences academic life, for 20% students increasing cyber crimes and for 10% students lack of initiative from the owner and designer of social networking sites for spreading academically relevant data are two factors that stands as a barrier in effective utilization of social media as a tool of learning.
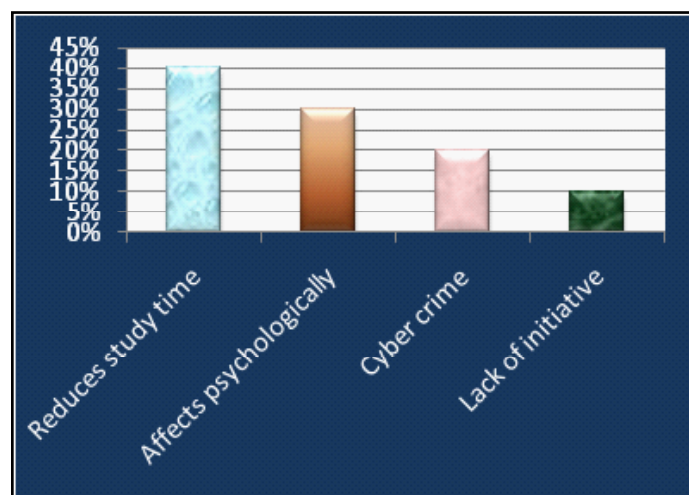


Fig 5 : Responses of students on negative effect of SNS on education in Percentage

While studying usage of social media in personal life of sample group for educational purpose it was observed that 40% students use social media for sharing educational information and article while 60% students are not interested in sharing educational information over social networking sites.
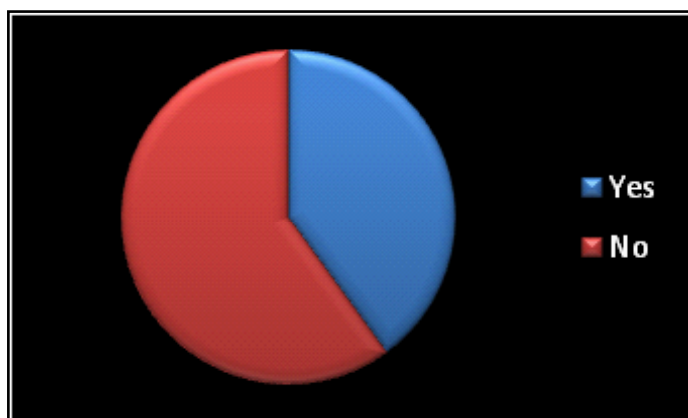
Fig. 6 : Percentage of students sharing educational information using social media

Factors influencing opening of an account in social networking sites were found, 50% agreed that they joined SNS for sharing own pictures and feelings with friends, 20% for sharing own opinion in different matters and educational activities, 30% for online gaming and connecting with celebrities.
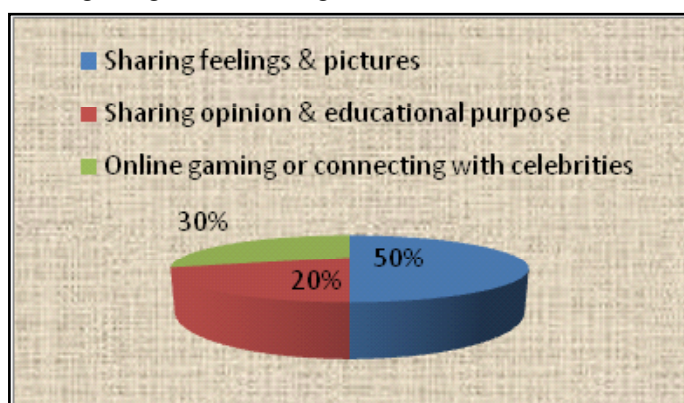


Fig. 7 : Percentage of students identifying different factors behind joining of social networking sites

Regarding factors affecting motivation to click on the link provided in social media WebPages it was observed that attractiveness of the content (design, colour etc) is a cause for 40% students, urge to get entertained serves as a cause for 30% students and for 10% students cause is getting educational information. While, for 10% students it is the urge to get connected with long and short distance friends.
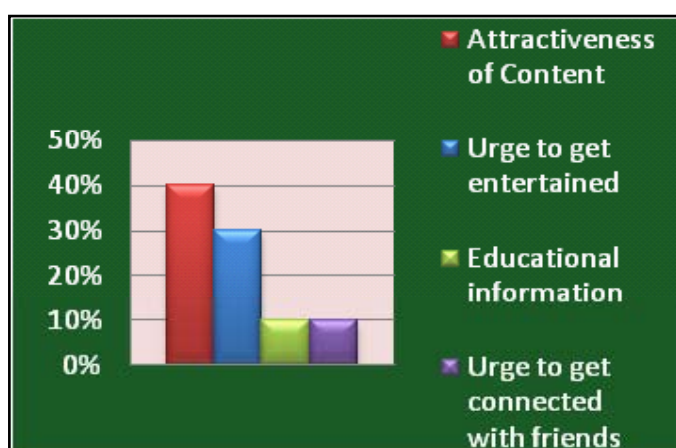


Fig.8 : Percentage of students accepting factors behind clicking links in social networking Webpages

## VIII. Suggestions

The study reveals the fact that the degree level students of Guwahati City uses social networking sites for varied purposes. Their views showed both positive and negative impact of social media on educational efforts. For making Social Networking Service more relevant for educational purpose some suggestions can be provided. These are as follows –

I. Students must learn to distinguish the skill needed to locate information online from the ability to understand that information. Using social media to cultivate and demonstrate deep learning is possible, but that requires overcoming the persistence of distraction, the surfeit of irrelevant information, and the temptation to wander.

II. Students should try to develop a capacity for practical reasoning when using social media. Educators and students should have multiple, purposeful discussions about social media's pros and cons.

III. Social media can enhance and impede student learning, and educators can use realistic case studies to help students identify trade-offs. For example, the use of social media in educational settings may incorrectly suggest that learning should be easy and quick. If so, students should be shown the value of reinvesting the time and effort saved by technology into higher-order tasks that really matter to their learning, such as writing a complex argument, reading difficult texts, and debating ideas with others.

IV. While using social networking sites, students must be informed why it's important to keep information like their name, Social Security number, address, phone number, and family financial information like bank or credit card account numbers to themselves. They should not share personal information about themselves, other people in the family or about their friends. Privacy must be maintained to avoid cyber crime.

V. Awareness should be created among the students regarding serviceability of internet and social media as a source of information and its utility in academic field.

VI. Arrangements should be made for teleconferences and video conferences among students and dignified scholars through social media foe sharing educational information.

VII. Students should act like a "Good participant" not become "An Addict" of SNS. To become a good participant they should know when and how to post a comment on a blog considering what comment will be appropriate and provide informative ideas.

## IX. Conclusion

Social networking sites allow us a fast and free resource for communicating with people around globe. Science Daily, June 21, 2008 in a first-of-its-kind study, researchers at the University of Minnesota have discovered the educational benefits of social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook. This study found that low-income students are in many ways just as technologically proficient as their counterparts. Educators and advocates of new digital literacies are confident that social networking encourages the development of transferable, technical, and social skills of value in formal and informal learning. In a formal learning environment, goals or objectives are determined by an outside department or agency. Tweeting, instant messaging, or blogging enhances student involvement. Students who would not normally participate in class are more apt to partake through social

network services. Networking allows participants the opportunity for just-in-time learning and higher levels of engagement. The use of Social Networking Sites allows educators to enhance the prescribed curriculum. When learning experiences are infused into a website, students utilize everyday for fun; they realize that learning can and should be a part of everyday life.

But it may be noted that often frequent users of SNS become addict and starts to live in virtual world rather real world. Consequently, they cut themselves from real life conflicts, issues and facts. Some researchers also have correlated heavy Internet use with greater impulsivity, less patience, less tenacity, and weaker critical thinking skills. Moreover, attention to pronunciation and grammar are neglected to a large extent while communicating through social media because most of the students do not write complete sentence or use proper grammatical method while writing text/message.

Social technologies are here to stay. Connolly says that it is important to help students learn how to use social media in an instrumental way, learn how to think deliberately about their use, and consider the sorts of outcomes for which using social media are proper. In the real world, students will find themselves facing a difficult situation involving social media that rules alone cannot resolve. The problem will require their best judgment—a kind of practical wisdom that cannot be taught, but instead is learned through practice accompanied by guidance and support.

## X. Acknowledgement

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