

Gadgetry Enslavement: Abolition of Innocence among Youth

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ABSTRACT: Gone are the days, when outdoor games used to play a pivotal role for the physical, mental and spiritual development of the youth. Now with the technological development in the world on account of ever increasing trend in population, their all these enthusiasms have been taken over by the current means of communications over their skills that plays a vital role in the growth and development of adolescents. Today we do not find anyone playing Tipcat, flying kites, playing marbles, hide & seek and so many other activities meant for their over-all visions. We have become enslaved to Candy Crush, Farm Heroes Saga, Wats app, Facebook, Instagram, Hang out, Imo and many other related applications spoiling our characteristic values. Exclusion of thought processes is increasing day by day. The present paper attempts to consider the impact of Gadgets on our youth's career, profession, and personal life. An effort has been made to highlight abuse of gadgets with a title as 'Gadgetry Syndrome'. It has been found that gadgets especially mobile has deteriorated the three domains of adolescent's academic performance which includes reading, writing and, expression. Certain health issues for example insomnia, impulsiveness, depression, anxiety and related psychological problems have been reported in many research findings because of the overuse of gadgets.

KEYWORDS: Gadgets, Adolescence, sexting, preventive measures and art therapy.

I. INTRODUCTION

The origin of gadgets can be traced back to hominoid culture that began to create tools to make their life easier. Humans have always used their creativity to make the appliances or devices purposeful and were once thought of as novelties. Brookstone and Richard Thalheimer have augmented the industry of new gadgets to a sky-scraping level. The foresight of Benjamin Frankl, Thomas Edison, Alexander Graham Bell and Leonardo da Vinci was commendable as they understood that there will be a time when these senseless necessities and gadgets would become a part of requisite technology. It was rightly stated;

"The iPhone may someday be looked upon as the device that started as second revolution in computing. Desktop computing was the first revolution. Hand held computing will someday be regarded as the second revolution, and the iPhone is the product that started it."

Richard Thalheimer, Richard Solo.com

The world of gadgets is tiered into four categories: mechanical, electronic, programmable, and application so is gradually with the advent of these gadgets they have made a special position in an individual's life in the shape of functional necessities (Ben Anton, 2008). Back to 19th century there was a time when people had no phone, no landline sets at home or mobile phones and one has to go down to the road to use letter box. But in today's time, it seems to be an inevitable part of human existence.

Adolescents are going away from real world experiences and entering into the virtual world of imaginative relationships. Students have forgotten old gold methods to read, write and, express. They prefer taking pictures of the lessons through mobiles; expect teachers to send the syllabus and extra notes on their respective email addresses so that they don't have to write anything. Of course audio-visual aids are beneficial for students as they are able to visualize objects at the same time of listening to the lectures. Power point Presentations, study videos help students a lot but the percentage is very less. Generally students are seen chatting, listening songs, and indulging into various brain-draining activities.

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II. RELATED WORK

In 2011, CBC news reported that many students were diagnosed with physical and mental symptoms of distress, craving, and depression, when they were asked to remain unplugged for a day. Not only this, there are researchers that reports physical problems due to abuse of technology and has resulted into stronger blood volume pulse and respiratory responses, and the weaker peripheral temperature reactions which also indicated the high activation of sympathetic nervous system (Lu et al., 2010). The radiofrequency waves emitted from laptops, mobiles can lead to pruning of traces to the frontal cortex which is involved in the decision making process. There is an eye problem called as Computer Vision syndrome also known as Digital Eye Strain which includes eye strain, blurred vision, irritation, and even double vision. It is directly related to number of hours spend in front of a computer screen. Everyday we use our hands in a great variety of tasks. One task that is increasing rapidly is the use of hand-held devices like cell phones.

Mobile phone use has been implicated in the rising incidence of Carpal tunnel syndrome. This syndrome results into pain, numbness, and tingling, burning sensation in thumb and fingers (index, middle & ring) that is often debilitating. This disease affects inside the wrist due to pressure on median nerve. The causes of carpal tunnel syndrome can be due to excessive, repetitive behaviour (typing, texting, holding phone when talking. In 2015, “Candy crush” freak, a 30-year old man reported the feelings of numbness in his thumb and index finger for some months. A senior orthopedic surgeon from the Indian Spinal Injuries Centre in New Delhi, Dr. Maninder Shah Singh diagnosed him with early carpal tunnel syndrome. On nudging him further, the culprit was found to be an excessive smart phone user. The news industry (2015) reports frequent use of gadgets has led to rise in musculoskeletal problems. According to the sources from the survey of Kaiser Family Foundation, children are spending an average of more than 7 hours a day on the electronic device which includes television, electronic games, internet and some mobile devices. These data show that kids today are easily used up more than 50 hours weekly, which means the time consume is more than working hours of an adult (an average of 8 hours per day).

In a commentary in the journal Pediatrics, researchers (Boston University Medical Centre, 2015) review the numerous types of interactive media along with its use in educational purposes and its abuse in stunting the development of important tools for self-regulation. A lot of research studies have found children under the age of 30 months cannot learn from television as well as they can from real-life interactions. The commentary notes that the use of mobile devices to entertain children during humdrum tasks can deteriorate their socio-emotional development. Numerous studies have reported that increased hours of watching television can hamper the development of language and social skills in children. The impact of technology is vast. It has engulfed nearly all spheres of life. Youngsters have a fascination for online shopping these days. They prefer buying things online rather than going by themselves for making purchases in physical forms.

Today's even school going children are so much prone to the latest gadgetry that they feel something missing in the absence of these said to be vital brain draining misfortunes. They have become fully matured of their age filling themselves with all stress, strain and, uncalled for information they derive to spoil their bright academic careers. Open fresh air has become a thing of the past. They prefer isolate sitting keeping themselves away from other family members to avoid disturbance. Many researchers have found that more the time spent by an adolescent on a mobile phone, laptop, or a computer, the less they sleep especially if the gadget is used at bedtime. **Recent research reported that time spent on electronic devices during day and during bedtime were both related to sleep measures, with an increased risk of short sleep duration, long sleep onset latency and increased sleep deficiency (Hysing et al., 2015).** The risk of violence among youth may be increased due to increased exposure to electronic media. The amplified use of text-messaging, e-mail, and chats by our adolescents have augmented new zones of social interaction filled with grubby conversation in which aggression can occur and can be mistreated. Earlier parents keep a check for their children's peer group so that they might not get entangled with ghastly friends but now an implicit cluster of so called 'bad' friends is easily available to most youth now.

III. SYMPTOMS OF GADGETRY ABUSE

1. Attention problems
2. Weakened memory (Digital Dementia)
3. Vision problems

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4. High infertility rates due to exposure to harmful radiations
5. Anxiety, stress, depression and other perilous ailments, and others.

Individuals have been facing difficulty in differentiating between virtual world and emotions in real world and gender differences were reported highly among females. It has been revealed that in South Korea that women in their survey came out with more use of mobile phones (52%) and for four hours a day or higher as compared to ratio of 29.4% men. And the ratio of females that were using their smartphones for six hours a day was 22.9% whereas men ratio lasts up to 10.8%. Professor Chang Jae-yeon (Ajou University) confirmed from his findings based on 1,236 students of colleges that females using mobile phones have been warned to keep their phones out of reach from time to time. He reported that women has been found to make use of their mobile phones more than just making phone calls and using different social networking sites and playing games. At the same time, men were found using their phones mainly during breaks. Few women also reported anxiety when they were not able to use their phone frequently. Intense, irrational fear of being out of mobile contact, named as 'Nomophobia'

The Hindu (2015) reported that with smartphones (mobile phones with built-in internet connectivity) expected to number 651 million by 2019 in India according to networking technology giant Cisco, nomophobia (no-mobile-phone-phobia, coined in 2010 by the UK Post Office), may be just one of the many problems that the new generation of 'digital natives' will face over the long term. We are still the slaves of our own urges. Rapes, Substance-abuse, bullying, and anti-social behaviour has already led a horrifying impact on our youth and now the addiction of gadgets and internet has made its own place in the list of psychological disturbances. The abuse of gadgets have made the present generation weak in practical skills. They fear to write but prefer the photo clicks of their lessons or assignments. The auto check spelling mode in mobiles has left the youth with less verbal and comprehension abilities. The rise in anti-social acts, violent behaviour can be due to inability in channelizing the energy to some outdoor activities and spending more time on video games. The research has reported poor time management and poor eating habits among youth as an effect of addiction.

The impulsivity level among youth has been found to be high among high gadget users which in result make them anxious. They prefer staying out of touch with the society avoiding communication and withdrawn towards their own whimsical world. The excess use of gadgets has led to increased pornography among adolescents. The video games contain more or less adulterated images in the form of cartoons or animated images which results in imbalance of hormones and developing as a curse for our innocent teenagers. The abuse has resulted into intrapsychic-conflicts and relapse among youth (Cabral, 2011).

The addiction of gadgets has led to the development of different comorbid disorders such as anxiety-depression, substance abuse and mood disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder. The feeling of disconnected can escort to depression and suicidal thoughts among teenagers. In today's time we prefer TV, Mobiles, Laptops, I-pads, I-pods over parents, grandparents, sister or brother. We avoid sharing our talks or experiences with our loved ones but stay all night awakened to watch serials, movies or miscellaneous. There has been a huge decline in the quality of relationships that we used to have when there was less accessibility to such muddy puddle. Gadgets had all the way trapped the human being in emotional isolation leading to an imaginary world and outgrowing various maladaptive and pretentious behaviours. The review collected on the negative effects of gadgets reported that Sexting has been on the verge of evading the innocence with an increase in accessibility to mobile phones, and other social networking sites. Gill et al. (2012) defined Sexting as exchange of "sexually explicit content communicated via text messages, smart phones or visual and web such as social networking sites." A study conducted by Ouytsel, Ponnet, & Walrave (2014) to investigate the association of media use and its influence on sexting behaviour and the results demonstrated a significant association between sexting behaviour and pornography use. High exposure to gadgets has become a stimulant for young adults and their access to websites containing sexual content can lead them to develop permissive sexual attitudes, and to indulge in risky sexual behaviour.

IV. PREVENTIVE MEASURES

The Generation Z (born 1995-2012) is a generation growing up in a savvy world of technology and making significant inroads in academics. A study conducted by International University & Colleges (Malaysia) reported that 55% of Gen Z is so much in love with their gadgets that they have an intense fear of being offline. It also found that 80% of students were looking at between one to three screens on a daily basis. The study was carried out with more than 500 Gen Z

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participants and revealed that 49% of the Gen Z has preferences for short and snappish messages while 34% prefer to converse in short form. Not only this but the top five social networking sites used by Gen Z are Facebook (92%), WeChat (70%), YouTube (66%), WhatsApp (66%), and Google+ (33%).

“As a nation, we should be pleased that Gen Z is self-starter, wanting to be entrepreneurs to carve out their own unique career path. They are hungry to acquire skills such as creativity, teamwork, leadership and problem solving.” (Sharma, R., 2015).

Few studies report that creative individuals can be at heightened risk of experiencing psychopathologies (Glazer, E., 2009). Before this creativity leads to self harming behaviours, we must formulate certain preventive measures as an amniotic sac to save our Gen Alpha (the Next Generation).

V. ROLE OF PARENTS

As Geoffrey Holder rightly said, “Education begins at home. You can’t blame the school for not putting into your child what you don’t put into him”. As such, the first and the foremost duty of the family is to educate their children in order to discourage the misuse of gadgets. Parents must afford sufficient time to their children in their seminal years of life approximately to puberty period. They must make special efforts to frame family hours to focus their attention specifically to their children. During that time, the child be asked about his school routine, the communication gaps be plugged and share their own experiences to help them for avoidance of these addictions. The single child family need to spend quality time with their only child and should explore his curiosities in a healthy manner that will accelerate the child’s growth and development. Rather than curbing the use of electronic gadgets permanently it can be made to a limited extent under their own supervision as a source of knowledge and day to day developments. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that parents should edge the amount of time spent on any gadget screen to less than one or two hours per day.

G. Stanley Hall, has defined adolescence as a period of “storm and stress” characterized by intergenerational conflicts, mood swings, enthusiasm for risky reactions. This enthusiasm may lead to impulsivity among adolescents which might force them to act on ones’ desires without knowing the consequences. This impulsivity may also involve them in positive, negative and risky decisions due to lack of practical experience in life. Further, these preventive measures shall also help as remedial measures too for Gen Z from developing various maladaptive behaviour patterns;

- The family can plan leisure trips during the vacations for their rest and recuperation and to understand other cultures which can also serve as good distractions.
- Use of smart-phones be prohibited by small children.
- The habit of seeking information on international and national level from News Broadcasting be made a part of daily routine to update oneself.
- Take a pledge to really stop using gadgets as a pastime. Fix the hours to watch TV before going to bed.
- Parents can prepare some fascinating play material for when a child comes back from school. Maybe Barbie waiting for a tea party.
- Think outside the Box ideas can help children to choose themselves the priorities they think that are cooler than TV.
- Encourage playground sports like football, cricket, badminton, and parents try participating in them and playing. This can serve as a motivation to their children at the same time challenge to their kids to win from them.

VI. ART THERAPY

The term art therapy was coined by Adrian Hill in 1942. He discovered the therapeutic benefits of drawing and painting during his own treatment for tuberculosis. He inscribed that the value of art therapy lay in “completely engrossing the mind (as well as fingers) ... releasing the creative energy of the frequently inhibited patient”, which enabled the patient to “build up a strong defence against the misfortunes”. Art therapy may be as good as a preventive measure which can be introduced into the schools to facilitate personal growth and change through the use of art materials (BAAT, 2003).

Art therapy is a form of psychotherapy, that is an interdisciplinary practice across health and medicine, using various visual art forms such as drawing, painting, sculpture and collage. Generally, it is based on psychoanalytic or

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psychodynamic principles, but all therapists are free to utilize whatever theoretical base they feel comfortable with. (ANATA, 2003).

The aim of art therapy may vary according to the needs of the individual from encouraging them to share and explore an emotional difficulty through the creation of images and discussion; to enabling them to hold a crayon and make a mark, thereby developing new means to give shape to previously cramped feelings.

VII. CONCLUSION

Some incidents and emotional states are beyond words and art therapy may prove helpful in the psychological and social integration as well as facilitate the emotional growth, self-esteem of an individual. Introducing art therapy as a subject in schools and colleges can benefit our youth by providing them a channel to express their urges, pleasant-unpleasant imaginations or experiences which is not possible in today's time because of the dependence over the gadgets. This will channelize their libido and will make their souls free from the virtual world that they are living with and earning a false identity in their lives. Stress, strain, depression, anxiety, guilt, conflict and other related feelings can be carved out with the help of art therapy.

Therefore, we can keep trying to bring discipline in our children's lives because the strong foundation of any child depends upon two things that are discipline and decorum. Parents should play a pivotal role for harnessing such type of shortcomings in the children for their better development and their responsible services to the nation.

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