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RESEARCH ARTICLE

FACEBOOK ADDICTION SEEN AMONG YOUNG ADULTS.

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Abstract

The popularity of using social-networking sites, especially Facebook has increased drastically in the recent past. Even if Facebook has its positive side in terms of optimizing communication or fast flow of information, the other side shows a negative impact on an individual's life. The main objective in this study is to find the addiction of social-networking sites particularly Facebook addiction among young adults. The Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale (BFAS) was administered on 240 Indian young adults (90 males; 150 females). Findings reveal the majority of sample had Mild or Moderate Facebook addiction (47.5%), 5.83% had Severe addiction, putting more than half of the sample under Facebook addiction, whereas only 46.67% were not addicted to Facebook. It was concluded that Facebook addiction is increasing, with a deteriorating effect on peoples' lives.

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Introduction:-

Addiction can be defined as the condition of being dependent on a particular substance or an activity. Under formal psychiatric disorder, pathological gambling is the only behavioural addiction to make it to the list. But, increasing researches have been conducted to throw light upon other potential behavioural addictions, such as video-game addiction (Fisher, 1994), exercise addiction (Adams & Kirkby, 2002), mobile-phone addiction (Choliz, 2010), online sex addiction (Griffiths, 2012), shopping addiction (Clark & Calleja, 2008), workaholism (Andreassen, Hetland, & Pallesen, 2010), and internet addiction (Young, 1996; Beard, 2005). Internet addiction is defined as any online-related, compulsive behaviour which interferes with normal living, and causes severe stress on family, friends, loved ones, and on one's work environment. It has also been called Internet dependency or Internet compulsivity. In case of Internet addiction, it has been questioned whether people become addicted to a platform or to the content of the Internet (Griffiths, 1999). Social networking sites (SNS) are online platforms which people use to build social networks or relations with other people who share similar personal or career interests, activities, backgrounds or real-life connections, are a major reason for Internet addiction. Social networking addiction may be defined as "being overly concerned about SNSs, to be driven by a strong motivation to log on to or use SNSs, and to devote so much time and effort to SNSs that it impairs other social activities, studies/job, interpersonal relationships, and/or psychological health and well-being" (Andreassen & Pallesen, 2014). This definition brings into picture some common addiction symptoms present in formally recognized chemical and non-chemical addictions such as salience (preoccupation with social networking), tolerance (spending much time social networking in order to feel satisfied), mood modification (using SNSs to feel better), conflict (social networking over most other important life aspects),

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withdrawal (experiencing withdrawal symptoms when prohibited from social networking), problems (social networking cause some kind of harm), and relapse (finding it difficult controlling or stopping the social networking behaviour) (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Andreassen, 2015; Brown, 1993; Griffiths, 2005; World Health Organization, 1992). Young (2009), in her studies argued that Internet addicts become addicted to different aspects of online use. She differentiated Internet addicts into three types: excessive gaming, online sexual pre-occupation, and e-mailing/texting. In which the last category being the most predominant of the three. Kesici & Sahin (2009), in their study saw that students who were classified as 'Internet-addicted' used the Internet more for social functions than the students who were classified as 'Non-addicted'. Facebook is by far the most popular networking site, with over 600 million users worldwide (Carlson, 2011). In this study, there were two main reasons for selecting Facebook over other SNSs. First, Facebook is considerably most popular among all the SNSs suggesting that there may be unique factors associated which help in gratifying the needs of large number of internet users (Bar Graph 1). Second, Griffith, et. al., (2014) demonstrated that empirical studies based on Facebook outweigh studies focusing on any other SNS. The Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale (BFAS) used in this study to assess Facebook addiction, a questionnaire of six items, was developed by Andreasson and his colleagues, Torsheim, Brunborg & Pallesen, (2012). It measures six core features, i.e., salience, mood modification, tolerance, conflict, relapse, and withdrawal. Also, all BFAS questions are worded in accord with formal diagnostic addiction criteria (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). The main aim of the study is to whether the six criteria can account for one higher-order factor; Facebook addiction.

Method:-

Participants:-

The sample consisted of 240 Indian young adults which included 90 Males and 150 Females, who were either studying or working. Their average (Mean) age was 23.97 and standard deviation (SD) was 4.91. Their socio-economic background was middle or high. No compensation was provided to them for their time in any way.

Materials:-

Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale (BFAS) – This scale was designed by Dr. Cecilie Andreassen, comprised of 6 items, each for the core features of addiction: salience, mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal, conflict, and relapse. Each item is scored on a Likert's 5-point scale using anchors of 1: Very rarely and 5: Very Often. Total score which could be obtained range from 5-30. Higher scores indicate greater Facebook addiction.

Procedure:-

The questionnaire was circulated electronically where the participants were first briefed about it being related to Facebook and its importance in an individual's life. Once the informed consent was received, they were given the questionnaire to fill, which instructed them initially to read the questions very carefully and choose any one option, which could be the most suitable option according to them, for each of the questions from the options ranging from "Very rarely", "Rarely", "Sometimes", "Often" to "Very often". Age and gender of the participants were also noted down. They were even instructed to not let any questions be unanswered. Filling the questionnaire took approximately 5 minutes. No monetary or any other material incentives were offered in return for the participation. Once all the responses from all the participants were collected, further interpretations and conclusions were drawn.

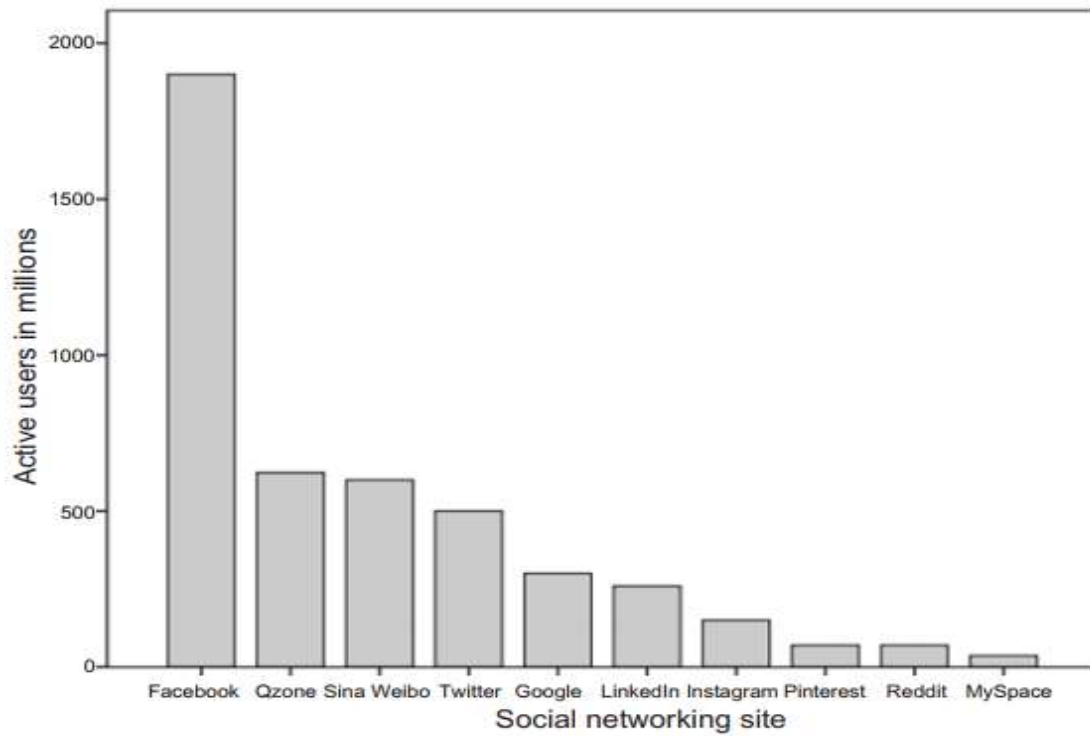
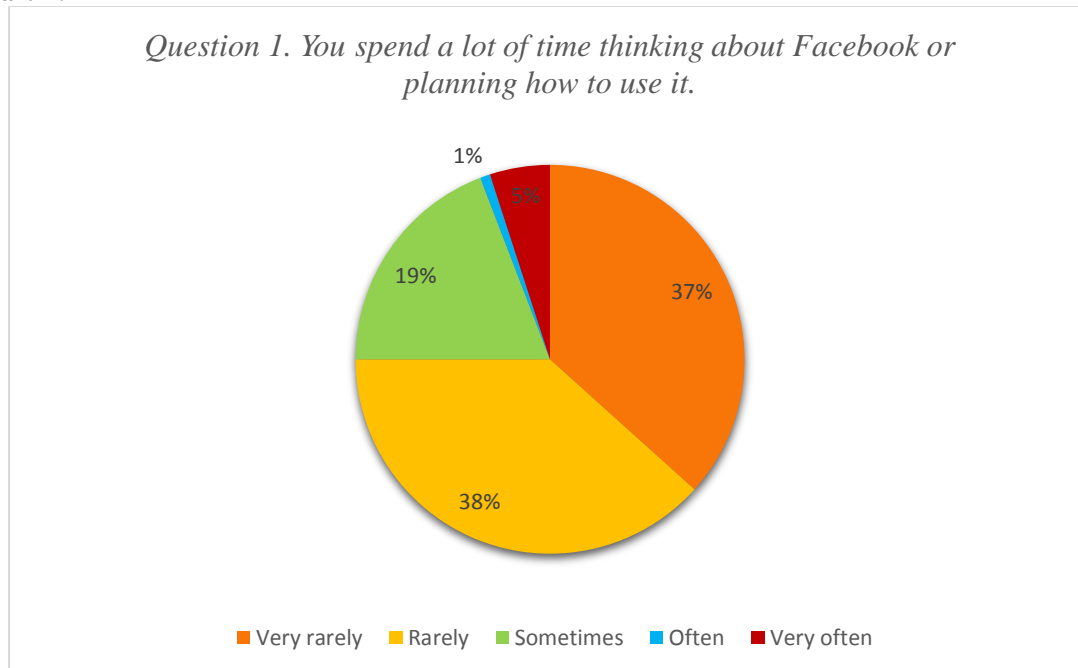
Results:-

Table 1:- Levels of Facebook addiction among participants.

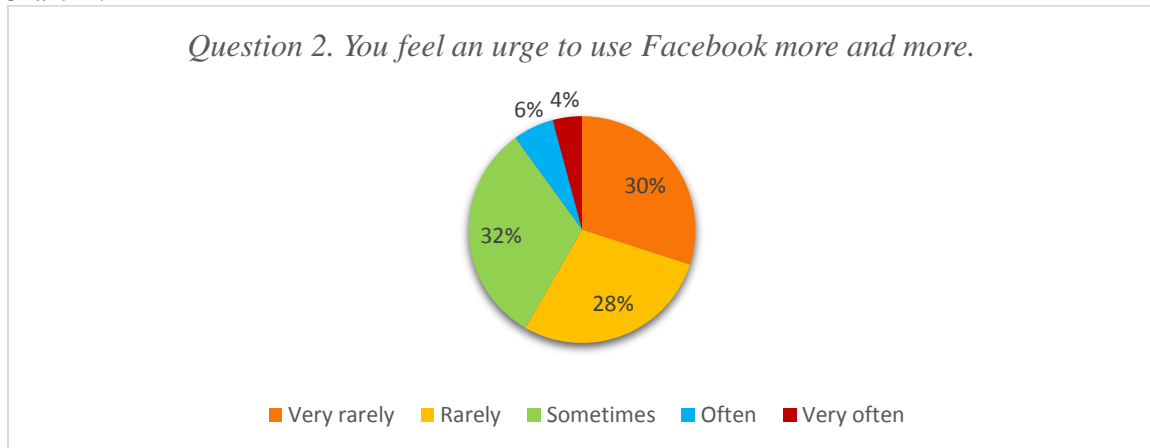
RANGE OF SCORES	LEVELS OF FACEBOOK ADDICTION	PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS
5-10	No addiction	46.67%
11-14	Mild addiction	33.33%
15-20	Moderate addiction	14.17%
21-30	Severe addiction	5.83%

It was seen that the median score obtained from the total scores of 240 participants was 11 and the standard deviation was 4.41.

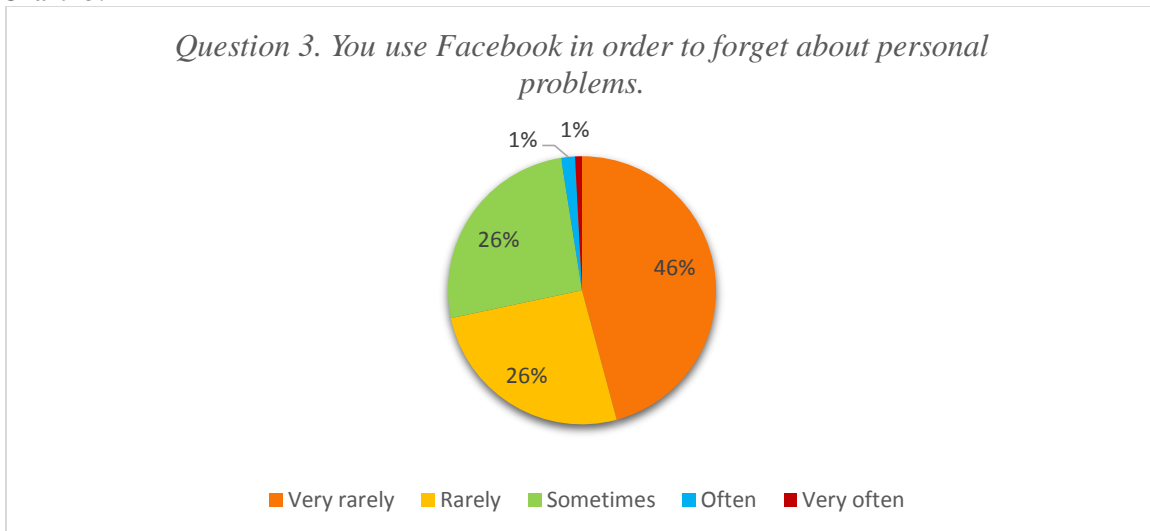
The number of participants scoring between 5-10 were 112, 11-14 were 80, 15-20 were 34 and 21-30 were 14, as illustrated in percentages in Table 1.

Bar Graph 1:- Active users of 10 popular networking sites**Pie Chart-1:-**

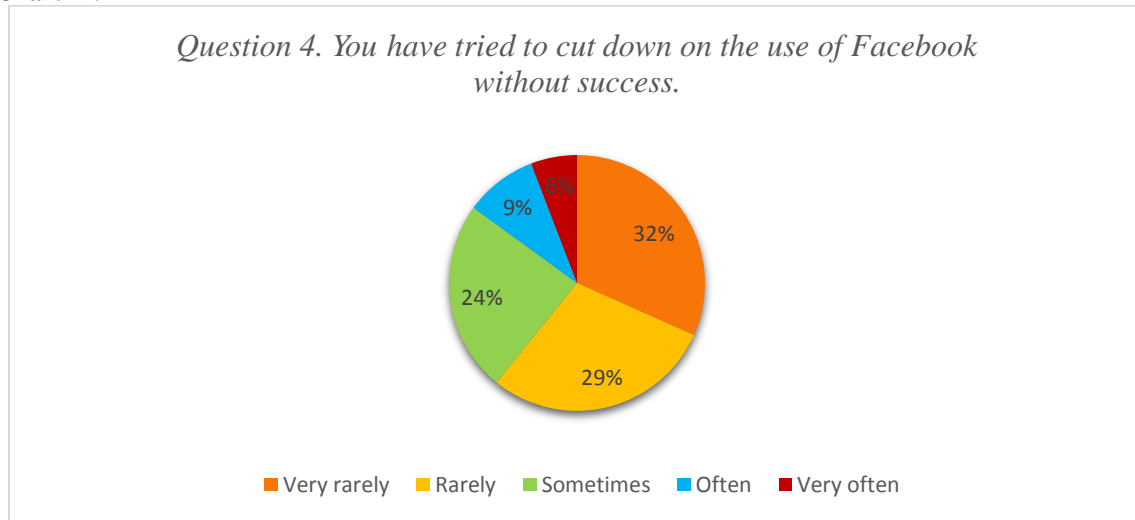
The first question, which asks *if you spend a lot of time thinking about Facebook or planning how to use it*, 88 participants chose “Very rarely”, 92 participants chose “Rarely”, 46 participants chose “Sometimes”, 2 participants chose “Often” and 6 participants chose “Very often”, as illustrated in percentages in Pie Chart 1.

Pie Chart- 2:-

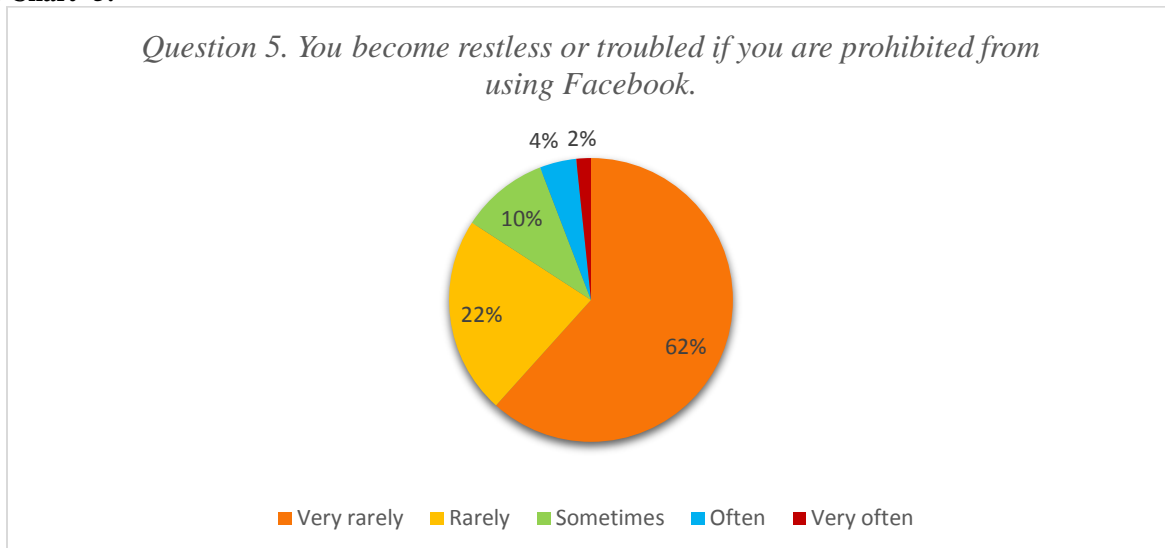
The second question, which asks *if you feel an urge to use Facebook more and more*, 72 participants chose “Very rarely”, 68 participants chose “Rarely”, 76 participants chose “Sometimes”, 14 participants chose “Often” and 10 participants chose “Very often”, as illustrated in percentages in Pie Chart 2.

Pie Chart- 3:-

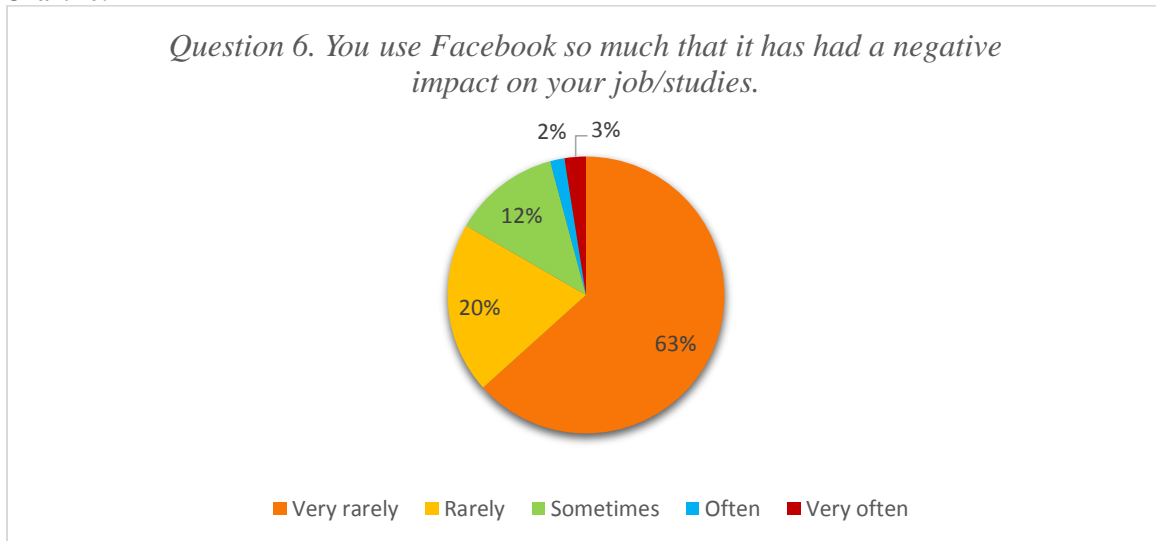
The third question, which asks *if you use Facebook in order to forget about personal problems*, 110 participants chose “Very rarely”, 62 participants chose “Rarely”, 62 participants chose “Sometimes”, 4 participants chose “Often” and 2 participants chose “Very often”, as illustrated in percentages in Pie Chart 3.

Pie Chart- 4:-

The fourth question, which asks *if you have tried to cut down on the use of Facebook without success*, 76 participants chose “Very rarely”, 70 participants chose “Rarely”, 58 participants chose “Sometimes”, 22 participants chose “Often” and 14 participants chose “Very often”, as illustrated in percentages in Pie Chart 4.

Pie Chart- 5:-

The fifth question, which asks *if you become restless or troubled if you are prohibited from using Facebook*, 148 participants chose “Very rarely”, 54 participants chose “Rarely”, 24 participants chose “Sometimes”, 10 participants chose “Often” and 4 participants chose “Very often”, as illustrated in percentages in Pie Chart 5.

Pie Chart- 6:-

The sixth question, which asks *if you use Facebook so much that it has had a negative impact on your job/studies*, 152 participants chose “Very rarely”, 48 participants chose “Rarely”, 30 participants chose “Sometimes”, 4 participants chose “Often” and 6 participants chose “Very often”, as illustrated in percentages in Pie Chart 6.

Discussion:-

From the above data, it has been found that 46.67% of participants are not addicted to Facebook, 33.33% of participants are mildly addicted to Facebook, 14.17% of participants are moderately addicted to Facebook and 5.83% of participants are severely addicted to Facebook (See, Table 1). This means that about 53.33% of participants are a prey to Facebook addiction, which is more than half the sample size selected from the population. Scores reflect problematic Facebook use than general use and general attitudes towards Facebook. The same was seen during the development of the BFAS (Andraessen, et. al., 2012).

The first question, which asks if you spend a lot of time thinking about Facebook or planning how to use it, measures the core feature “salience”, which means the quality of being particularly noticeable or important. About 25% of participants showed an inclination towards being salient as they chose “Sometimes”, “Often” or “Very often” (Pie Chart 1), which means that they have a particular need to being noticed or considered important in front of other individuals. In relation to social media, it has been suggested that anxious people may use social media to obtain support and company (Correa, et. al., 2010). A further hypothesis is that shy and anxious people may prefer to interact on the web rather than face-to-face, since the former allows more time for planning and rehearsing as compared to the latter (Ehrenberg, et.al., 2008).

The second question, which asks if you feel an urge to use Facebook more and more, it measures the core feature “tolerance”, which means the capacity to endure continued subjection to something, here something being the use of Facebook application. About 42% of participants chose an option “Sometimes”, “Often” or “Very Often” (Pie Chart 2), which means that they are not much tolerant when it comes to use of Facebook application, rather they tend to use it at a frequent rate. It has been suggested that extroverts use social media for social enhancement, whereas introverts use it for social compensation, each of which appears to be associated with elevated use (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011).

The third question, which asks if you use Facebook in order to forget about personal problems, it measures the core feature “mood modification”, which means doing something that tends to modify one’s mood. About 28% of participants chose an option “Sometimes”, “Often” or “Very Often” (Pie Chart 3), which means that sometimes to direct their mood towards a positive direction people tend to use Facebook. They try to divert their mind or express themselves, portray their feelings being good or bad, on a larger platform for modifying their mood. Ross, et. al., (2009) suggested that people who score high on extraversion do not use Facebook as a means of social interaction but rather an additional way of expressing themselves.

The fourth question, which asks if you have tried to cut down on the use of Facebook without success, measures the core feature “relapse”, which means to deteriorate after a period of improvement. About 39% of participants chose an option “Sometimes”, “Often” or “Very Often” (Pie Chart 4), which means so many participants have tried to reduce their usage of Facebook and have been unsuccessful in doing so. Neuroticism is assumed to be positively related to use of social media as it may be a way of seeking support. In addition, social media gives people with high scores on Neuroticism more time for contemplation before acting compared to face-to-face interactions (Ehrenberg, Juckes, White, & Walsh, 2008; Ross, Orr, Sisic, Arseneault, Simmering, & Orr, 2009; Correa, *et al.*, 2010).

The fifth question, which asks if you become restless or troubled if you are prohibited from using Facebook, measures the core feature “withdrawal”, which means removing or taking away something from a particular place or position. About 16% of participants chose an option “Sometimes”, “Often” or “Very Often” (Pie Chart 5), which means only a few percentage of participants had a problem if they were being stopped from using Facebook.

The sixth question, which asks if you use Facebook so much that it has had a negative impact on your job/studies, measures the core feature “conflict”, which means showing great level of disagreement. About 17% of participants chose an option “Sometimes”, “Often” or “Very Often” (Pie Chart 6), which means very less percentage of participants agreed on the fact that they tend to use Facebook so much, that it in turn hinders their job performance or studies in case of participants who are currently studying. Andreassen, *et. al.*, (2010) indicated that heavy Facebook use may interfere with sleep, and as such, leads to postponement of bedtimes and rising times. This interpretation was also in line with previous studies showing that people who use computers in their bedrooms and/or late in the evening typically have a delayed sleep-wake rhythm (Suganuma, *et. al.*, 2007; Brunborg, *et. al.*, 2011). Poor and short sleep, in several studies, have been linked to impaired academic performance (Dewald, Meijer, Oort, Kerkhof, & Bogels, 2010). This can be one of the reasons why excessive Facebook use has a negative impact on job/studies.

Participants who belonged to the “no Facebook addiction” category, which included 46.67%, may have conscientiousness as a trait. Wilson *et. al.*, (2010) studied the heavy use of Facebook and Gnisci, Perugini, Pedone, & Di Conza (2010) with studies on Internet addiction also align by saying that people who score high on conscientiousness trait give less priority to activities such as Facebook in order to fulfill other obligations and meet deadlines for tasks they have undertaken.

Conclusion:-

In an upcoming world of technologies and new softwares, it is but natural that people will be inclined towards using these technologies and being tech savvy. Hence, it is no surprise that we have found in our research that majority of the people are addicted to Facebook, even if not severely but at least mildly. Studies have shown that social network site use can lead to a variety of negative consequences such as decrease in real life communities, worsening of academic performances and relationship problems (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011). This should be eye opening for us and people should decrease their addiction and redirect their energy in better things, since no kind of addiction is a good-life habit any one should keep.

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