

A Study on Implementation of Minimum Age Rules to Access Social Media

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ABSTRACT

Social media is a collective term used for those apps and websites which focus on communication, content-sharing, collaboration, and business too. In this study we focus on those apps and websites which mainly facilitate communication and content sharing i.e; Instagram, Facebook, etc... Content shared in social media can be either good or bad, and the contents shared can be classified into two (UUA) unrestricted public exhibitions and (A) restricted to adults. The term adult contents include pornographic, sexually explicit and other contents which manipulates or corrupts the mind of the minor to have sexual contents or into a negative path such as using of drugs, intention to have sexual intercourse with a person, etc... in most of the there is no separation of contents based on the age of the users of social media and the contents which are publicly available can be accessed by everyone without any restrictions based on their age. This study attempts to find whether social media spoils the life of the minors, rating over the present terms and conditions to access social media, whether age restrictions are needed to access social media and the age the respondents prefer to access social media. It is an empirical study with 206 samples collected using a convenient sampling method among the general public of Chennai, Tamilnadu, India. As a result of this study, it was inferred that usage of social media may spoil the life of the minors, the terms and conditions to access social media should be more stringent and the minimum age to access social media should be altered to 16.

Keywords: Social media, access, good contents, sexual contents, age restriction.

Introduction

Social media is a virtual space where the people can stay in touch and interact with their family, friends, and even with strangers too. Social media is a collective term used for those apps and websites which focus on communication, content-sharing, collaboration, and business too. In this study we focus on those apps and websites which mainly facilitate communication and content sharing i.e; Instagram, Facebook, etc... Content shared in social media can be either good or bad, and the contents shared can be classified into two (UUA) unrestricted public exhibitions and (A) restricted to adults. The term adult contents include pornographic, sexually explicit and other contents which manipulate or corrupts the mind of the minor to have sexual contents or into a negative path such as using of drugs, intention to have sexual intercourse with a person, etc... In Most of the social media platforms there is no separation of contents based on the age of the users and the contents which are publicly available can be accessed by everyone without any restrictions based on their age. Adult content are those contents which should not be available to the minors or children, since it is not a right age for them to access those contents, this is because the minors may get addict of those contents, as per Indian Contract Act, 1872 and Indian Majority Act, 1875 and a person who is above the age of 18 a person is said to be an adult. And as per the Indian Contract Act, 1872 an agreement made with a minor is said to be void ab initio which means void from the beginning and a minor is not competent to enter into a contract. Most of the social media the minimum age to access is thirteen while entering into a social media there is a digital agreement made between the social media platform and the users but as per the Indian Contract Act, 1872, such agreement is said to be void ab initio when it is made with the minors who is below the age of eighteen. In USA (United States of America) there is a rule known as Children Online Privacy Protection Rule (COPPA) which deals with minor's social media usage and it states that the children under the age of thirteen should not be given the right to access social media, but in india there is no provisions or legislations regarding minors to access social media. In December 2020 while responding a plea petition filed by three law students from Uttarpradesh and a three-judge bench of Supreme Court held that there are no provisions regarding minor social media accessing and suggested the Union Government to formulate a law regarding minor social media usage to prevent the minors who were being corrupted and exploited in social

media.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this is to find

- To examine the effectiveness of current enforcement mechanisms in preventing underage access to age-restricted products or services.
- To identify potential challenges and opportunities associated with the implementation and enforcement of minimum age regulations,
- To evaluate the long-term societal benefits and costs associated with enforcing minimum age rules, including impacts on public health, safety, and individual rights.
- To analyse the potential disparities in access to age-restricted goods or services based on demographic factors such as socio-economic status, geographic location, or cultural background.

Review of Literature

Jacqueline Nesi, 2020, the aim of the study is to find the impact of social media on youth mental health among us children and adolescents and found that Recent nationally representative statistics suggest that 95% of adolescents aged 13-18 have access to a smartphone and 88% have access to a desktop or laptop at home In 2018, 45% of US adolescents reported that they were online “almost constantly,” up from 24% only three years prior and this media environment has introduced numerous challenges and risk of the mental health of the youth.

Gwenn Schurgin O'Keeffe & Kathleen Clarke-Pearson, 2011, this study attempts to find the impact of social media on children, adolescents and families and found that social media usage is most common among teenagers in nowadays and the parents should be aware that not all of the social medias will be a healthy environment for the children and adolescents by urging parents to monitor for potential problems with cyberbullying, Facebook depression, sexting, and exposure to inappropriate content and by encouraging healthy usage of social media the life of children can be saved.

Selasi Kwame Ocansey, Wolli Ametepe & Charles Fynn Oduro, 2016, the main objective of this study was to investigate the extent of social media use and the purposes, access and impact of its use by the young people in Ghana (a West African country) Two hundred youth aged between 15-25 participated in the study. It was found that the majority of respondents were using social media on an enormous scale, mainly for communication purposes, although social media has a positive impact on the youth, yet quite a large number of respondents reported having met with negative experiences on these online sites. And also found that there is a need of awareness about the risks of the social medias among the youth of Ghana

Sarah E.O. Schwartz, Jean E. Rhodes, Belle Liang, Bernadette Sanchez, Renee Spencer, Sarah Kremer & Stella Kanchewa, 2014, this study examined how digital media is used in formal mentoring programs and investigates associations between digital media use and mentoring relationship characteristics using the cross-sectional data from 258 mentors and 147 mentoring program staff from the United States and Canada and found that the impact of digital media use on mentoring relationship quality and duration was generally perceived by mentors and staff to be neutral or positive, and use of digital media between mentors and mentees was associated with greater relationship quality and duration.

Rebecca dredge & Lara Schreurs, 2020, this study aims to find the associations between social media use and offline interpersonal outcomes in youth among the youth people aged 10-24 years and the most consistent findings regarding interpersonal challenges associated with social media use across the included studies were alienation from peers, family, and school, relational aggression, relationship quality with parent, and perceived isolation.

Monica Munjial Singh, Mohammad Amiri & Sherry Sabbarwal, 2019 this study highlights the main purposes of utilising social media by the youth, and an attempt has been made to find out the time spent on browsing social networking sites by the youth. and the positive and negative effects of utilising social media on the life of youth. The result of study shows that, over utilisation of social media leads youth towards addiction

Herring Shava Willie T. Chinyamurindi, 2018, the research investigated the relationship between knowledge sharing, habit and obligation in relation to social media usage among a sample of rural South African youth. Primary data were collected from 447 youths of South Africa. And found that there is a significant correlation between knowledge sharing, habit, obligation and social media

Rachmah Ida, Muhammad Saud & Mustain Mashud, 2020, this study aims to identify whether social media is enhancing the youth in political learning, political participation and political efficacy. This study was

conducted through online and offline surveys in Pakistan and Indonesia at the time of general elections and as a result it was found that social media is enhancing the youth in political learning, political participation and political efficacy. As such role of youth has changed the political situations in both countries.

Sebastian Valenzuela, Arturo Arriagada & Andres Scherman, 2012, This study attempts to find the association between social media use and youth protest and the survey data was collected in Chile (a country in South America). And it was found that there is a significant association between social media and youth protest, Facebook use and protest activity was explained by using the social network for news and socialising rather than when it was used for self-expression.

Rea Alonzo, Junayd Hussain, Saverio Stranges & Kelly K. Anderson, 2021, This study attempts to find the relationship between active social media use, sleep quality and common mental health of youth and it was found that there is a significant association between excessive social media use with poor mental health, poor sleep quality and there is a significant association between negative mental health with poor sleep quality.

Sarah M Coyne, Adam A. Rogers, Jessica D. Zurcher, Laura Stockdale & McCall Booth, 2019, The main objective of this study is to examine the association between time spent in social media and depression and anxiety at the intra individual level. It is a longitudinal study of 8 years in which 500 adolescents were involved who completed once yearly questionnaires between the age of 13 to 20 and as a result it was found that there is no association between time spent on social media and increased mental health issues.

M. Nick Hajli, 2014, the main objective of this study is to find how social media facilitates the social interaction of consumers, leading to increased trust and intention to buy. And as a result, it was found that trust has a significant direct effect on intention to buy and thus social media interacts the consumers and also increases the trust upon the sellers.

Sonja Gensler, Franziska Volckner, Yuping Liu-Thompkins & Caroline Wiertz, 2013, this study reviews the social media's impact on brand management and as a result of this study it was found that consumers play a pivotal role in brand management by sharing the brand experiences in such networks & social medias. And thus, consumers play a pivotal role in brand's success.

Lisa M. Cookingham & Ginny L. Ryann, 2015, the objective of this study is to describe the role of social media in the evolution of social media norms to illustrate how online activity can negatively impact adolescent self-esteem and contribute to high-risk adolescent behaviours and its consequences in real life. And as a result of this study, it was found that social media has both negative and positive effects in the society.

Yobo Hou, Dan Xiong, Tonglin Jiang, Lily Song & Qi wang, 2019, this study examined the relationship between social media addiction to college student's mental health and academic performance. The survey was made among 232 college students and it was found that there is an association between social media addiction to college student's mental health and their academic performance

Suzanne Zivnуска, John R. Carlson, Dawn S. Carlson, Ranida B. Harris & Kenneth j. Harris, 2019, this study investigates the association between social media addiction of the employees and their job performance and family balance. The samples were collected from 326 full time employees and as a result of this study it was found that there was a negative relationship between social media addiction and work-family balance and a positive relationship between social media reactions and job burnout.

Janarthnan Balakrishnan & Mark D. Griffiths, 2017, this study analysed the association between content viewing, content creation and YouTube addiction and the study was made among 410 Indian students. As a result of this study, it was found that there is a significant association between YouTube content creation and YouTube addiction than content viewing

Fayez Azez Mahamid & Denise Ziya Berte, 2019, this study examines the patterns of maladaptive addiction on social media usage. The samples of this study were collected from 744 students of a university located in Palestine. As a result of this study, it was found that the males are more addicted towards social media than females and UG students are more addicted than PG students towards social media.

Jamal J. Al-Menayes, 2015, this study aimed to examine social media addiction in university students of Kuwait, using an internet addiction scale survey questionnaire and it was distributed to 1327 undergraduate students. And the data explicitly shows that social media addiction has three independent dimensions and they are the user's experience with social media, time spent using social media and satisfaction with them.

Ravi Kant, 2020, this study aims to determine the level of social media addiction. This survey was done on the students of Central University of South Bihar, in this survey 200 students were participated from School

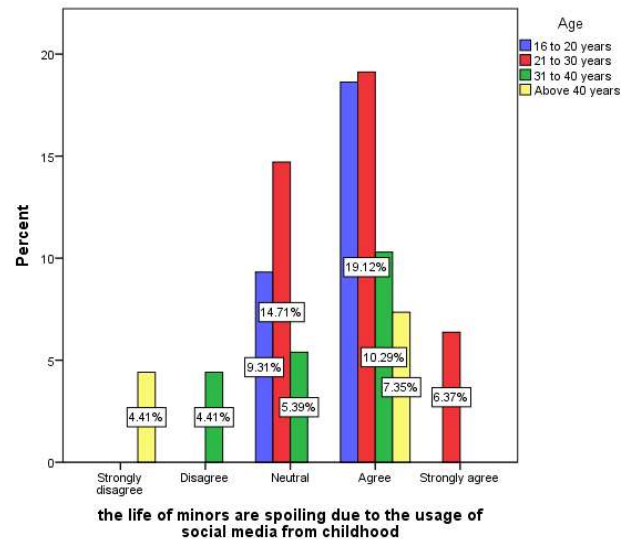
of Education and School of Law & Governance. Most of them were Facebook and WhatsApp users. As a result of this study, it was found that among the participants most of them were addicted to social media. Social Media Addiction was not significantly differing on the basis of gender, but male students were more addicted to social media.

Research Methodology

The research methodology followed here is empirical research. A total of 204 samples were collected using a convenient sampling method. Samples are collected among the general public of Chennai, Tamilnadu, India. The independent variables are gender, age and educational qualification and the dependent variables are whether suicide among the teenagers are increasing, whether the respondents ever have a suicidal thought, reasons of suicidal thoughts and way to overcome suicidal thoughts.

Analysis

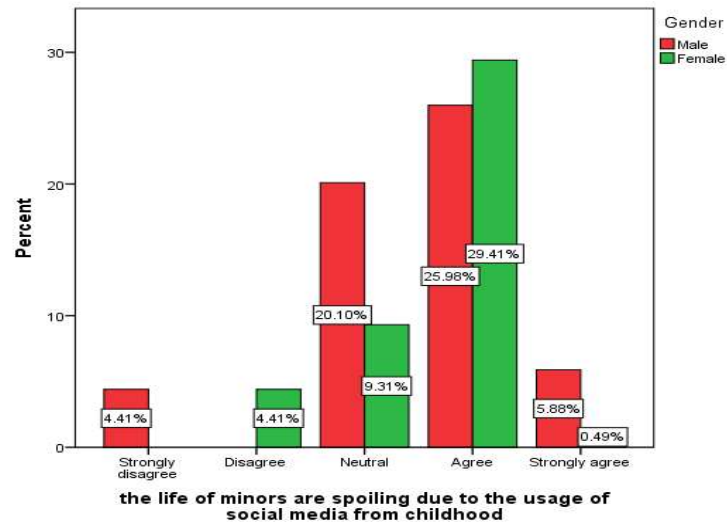
Figure 1



Legend

This figure (fig.6) shows the respondents agreeability towards the statement that over usage of social media spoils the life minors

Figure 2



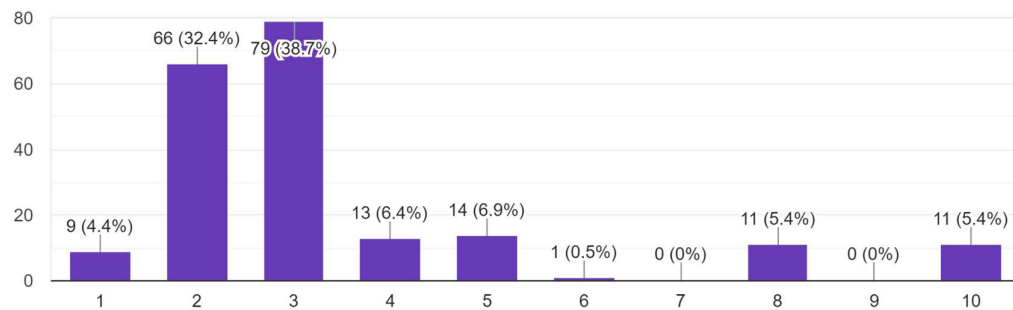
Legend

This figure shows the agreeability of the respondents towards the statement that the life of minors are spoiling due to the usage of social media compared with gender of the respondent

Figure 3

On scale of 1-10 rate your agreeability for the following statement "terms and conditions of social media platforms for permitting access to their platforms are sufficient"

204 responses



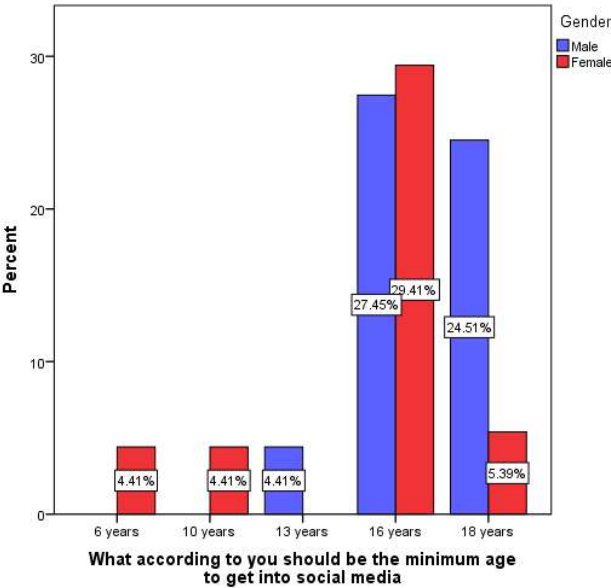
(1- should be more stringent)

(10- more than enough)

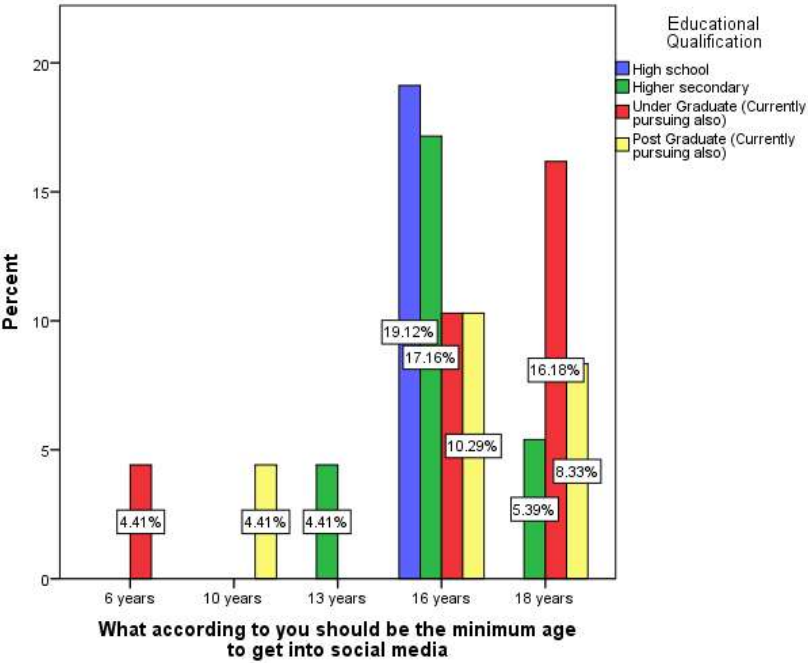
Legend

This figure shows the respondents rating over the present terms and conditions to access social media

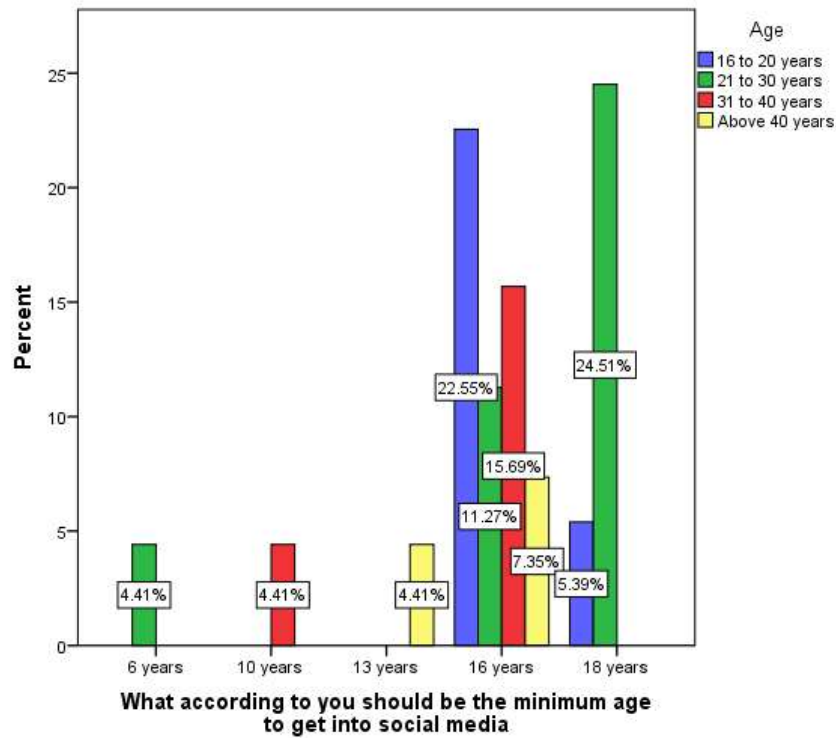
Figure 4



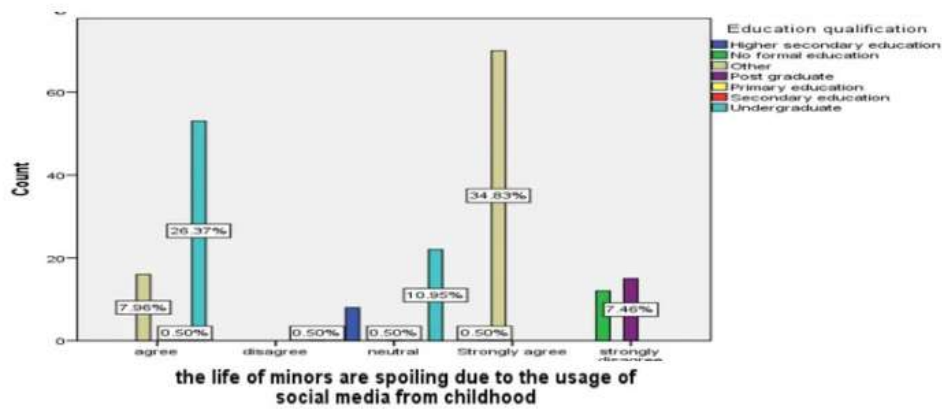
Legend
This figure shows the age that respondents prefer to access social media compared with the age of the respondents
Figure 5



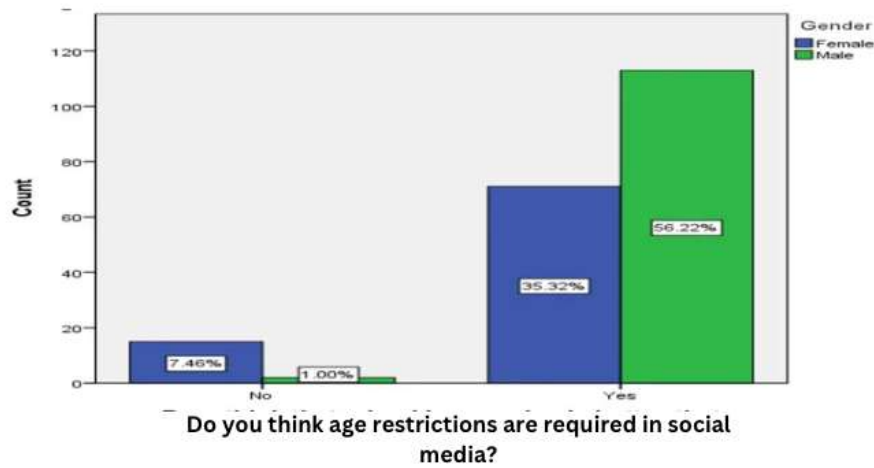
Legend: This figure shows the age that respondents prefer to access social media compared with the educational qualification of the respondents
Figure 6



Legend
This figure shows the age that respondents prefer to access social media compared with the age of the respondents
Figure 7:



Legend:
Figure 8:



Legend:

Figure 9:

Inferences

Chi square

Null hypothesis: There is no significant association between the minimum age they prefer to access social media and their age

Alternate hypothesis: There is a significant association between the minimum age they prefer to access social media and their age

What according to you should be the minimum age to get into social media * Age Crosstabulation

Count		Age				Total
		16 to 20 years	21 to 30 years	31 to 40 years	Above 40 years	
What according to you should be the minimum age to get into social media	6 years	0	9	0	0	9
	10 years	0	0	9	0	9
	13 years	0	0	0	9	9
	16 years	46	23	32	15	116
	18 years	11	50	0	0	61
Total		57	82	41	24	204

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	185.769 ^a	12	.000
Likelihood Ratio	168.236	12	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	13.306	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	204		

a. 12 cells (60.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.06.

interpretation

The calculated p value is 0.000 since p value < 0.05 null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level of significance and alternate hypothesis is accepted and there is a significant association between the minimum age they prefer to

access social media and their age

Result

In this study a total of 204 respondents were participated out of which 56.37% are male and 43.63% are female respondents among those respondents 27.94% are 16 to 20 years old, 40.20% respondents are 21 to 30 years old, 20.10% respondents are 31 to 40 years old and 11.76% respondents are above the age of 40 years old respondents among those respondents 19.12% are qualified at high school level, 26.96% respondents are qualified at higher secondary level, 30.88% respondents are graduated with UG degree and 23.04% respondents are graduated with UG degree among those respondents 27.94% respondents are with less than 15000 monthly income, 16.18% of respondents are with 15000 to 30000 monthly income, 33.33% of respondents are with 30001 to 50000 monthly income and 22.55% respondents are with more than 50000 monthly income. Most of the respondents (85.78%) of this study agreed that there should be some restrictions in social media based on their age to access and to use social medias, most of the respondents of this study agreed that usage of social media from childhood may spoil the life of the minors and they may get addict over such social medias and the respondents rated above 5 out of 10 for the present terms and conditions to access social media which represents that the respondents were not satisfied with the present terms and conditions, and most of the respondents preferred that the minors can access social media above the age of 16 years.

Discussion

Most of the respondents agree that there should be some restrictions based on their age to access or to use social media since social media contains both good and bad contents and the by viewing those bad contents the children may get addict of those contents and it may affect their academics and their day-to-day activities. Most of the respondents agreed that the life of the minors are spoiling due to the usage of social media from the childhood since social media is only for entertainment and for pastime the children may get addict on such social medias and they may distract from focusing on their future passions, aims and goals. Most of the respondents rated above 5 out of 10 for the present terms and conditions to access social media which represents that the respondents were not satisfied with the present terms and conditions since the minimum age limit to access most of the social medias is 13 and who is above the age of 13 can access those social medias and the users are given with the privilege to select their age and the users below such respective age are accessing by misrepresenting them as above such respective age to access social media and a person become adult once after attaining the age of 18 and he has the access to view such adult contents but in most of the social medias the contents were not even separated as public and adult contents and so the minors and children has the access to all the contents which is publically available and most of the respondents preferred 16 to be the minimum age to access social media and it may be the right age to access social medias.

Limitations of the Study

One of the major limitations of this study is sample frame there is a major constraint in the sample frame as it limits in a small area thus it proves to be difficult to explore it to a larger population another limitation in this study is sample size of 204 which cannot be used to exploration the population of whole population of country, state or a city

Conclusion

Social media is a collective term used for those apps and websites which focus on communication, content-sharing, collaboration, and business too. Content may be good or bad and the contents are of two types namely public and adult contents and pornographic contents and most of the social media does not contain such differences and the contents can be accessed by everyone without any restrictions based on their age. This study attempts to find whether social media spoils the life of the minors, rating over the present terms and conditions to access social media, whether age restrictions are needed to access social media and the age the respondents prefer to access social media. As a result of this study, it was inferred that usage of social media may spoil the life of the minors, the terms and conditions to access social media should be more stringent and the minimum age to access social media should be altered to 16.

Suggestion

Laws should be created in India regarding minor accessing social media and the social media contents should be

monitored and not only the contents which affects the sovereignty, integrity of the nations, defamatory contents should be removed but also the content which manipulates the mind of the minors into a negative path and the present terms and conditions should be altered and the minimum age should be altered from 13 to 16.

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