

**SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE, ADDICTION AND DEPRESSION IN YOUNG AND MIDDLE ADULTS OF CHENNAI AND BANGALORE**

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**ABSTRACT**

Social media has become inseparable part of everyone's life especially because of covid-19 pandemic. The present study was undertaken during the year 2020 with the objective to explore types of social medias, its usage, social media addiction and depression level in young and middle adults in Chennai and Bangalore cities. Three hundred and twenty samples in total were equally distributed across cities, age, and gender. Social Media Addiction Scale developed by Unal. T et.al. in 2015 and Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) developed by Beck et al. in 1961 along with the interview schedule were used. The data was collected online and subjected to different statistical methods. The results across cities are almost similar and states that Whatsapp and YouTube are the most common apps used by middle adults. Instagram, twitter and Snapchat are most commonly used sites by young adults. Facebook is most used site by middle adults. Other social media apps include telegram, signal, Pinterest, Hike, and Discord which are used only by very few young adults. Majority of the young and middle adults are moderately addicted to social media and have mild to moderate depression. Very few individuals are into severe social addiction and severe depression who requires immediate attention from the professionals. Intense intervention is required for these individuals. As moderate social media addiction and moderate depression also indicates that there is necessity to intervene these individuals to avoid them from reaching the severe stage. Hence, intervention for both young and middle adults at family and community level is required.

**KEYWORDS:** social media, social media usage, social media addiction, depression

**INTRODUCTION**

Humans are social creatures. The environment plays a very important role for the growth, development, and survival of an individual from birth to death. It is the natural tendency of human beings to seek the proximity of another individual and communicate with others. Being linked socially to others will help people cope with stress, anxiety, depression and improve self-esteem, provide people with warmth and joy, avoiding loneliness.

Many theories describe the role of environment or society on the human development. One of the greatest psychologists, Erik Erikson in his theory of psychosocial development mentioned the importance of other people on the personality development. He described that people around will

constantly influence the growing individual in many ways from infancy to old age. One more scientist Vygotsky, worked in the field of cognitive development of human beings explained how assistance from the superiors positively impact the cognitive development of an individual. According to him, an individual can learn more with the help of another superior individual's assistance/guidance. He mentioned this aspect as "Zone of Proximal Development" i.e. the difference between what the individual can learn alone and what he can learn with the help of another skilled individual.

Similarly, Bronfenbrenner in his ecological theory, explained that all the five systems like microsystem, mesosystem, ecosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem have their role in moulding the personality of an individual. Bandura in his observational theory mentioned that individuals learn most of the things by observing others. Hence, society plays very important role in one's life.

Social media are Internet-based platforms that enable users to opportunistically engage and selectively self-present with both wide and narrow audiences that enjoy user-generated content and the perception of contact with others, either in real-time or asynchronously. The amount of information and entertainment media consumed by a person or community is described as media use, also known as media consumption.

Social media addiction is a form of behavioral addiction characterised by excessive concern for social media, an uncontrollable desire to log in to or use social media and devoting so much time and attention to social media that it interferes with other important aspects of one's life. Depression is a common and severe medical condition that has a negative impact on how you feel, think, and act. Depression induces depression and/or a lack of interest in previously enjoyed hobbies. It can trigger a slew of emotional and physical issues, as well as a reduction in your ability to function at work and at home. Hence the present study was undertaken with the objective to explore different social media usage, addiction level, and depression in young (18-40 years) and middle adults (41-60 years) in Chennai and Bangalore.

## **Methodology:**

The study was done on 320 sample in total. Equal number of participants (160) from Chennai and Bangalore were taken in the study. Among one hundred and sixty samples, equal participants were considered from young and middle adulthood as well as males and females. Hence the total samples in Chennai consisted of equal number (40) of male young adults, female young adults, male middle adults and female middle adults. The distribution of samples was similar in Bangalore also. Because of the pandemic convenient sampling method was chosen.

An interview schedule was developed by the researcher to get the basic details of the respondents and to understand the social media usage. Social Media Addiction Scale, developed by Aylin Tutgun Unal and Levent Deniz from Uskudar University and Marmara University, respectively, and published in AJIT-e Online Academic Journal of Information Technology in 2015 was used to understand the level

of social media addiction in young and middle adults. The scale was pre-tested by administering it on 30 individuals and found reliability as 0.76. The scale consisted of 41- questions that assesses four main sub-dimensions of social media addiction: occupation (12 items), mood modification (5 items), relapse (5 items) and conflict (19 items). Each item of the scale is scored on five-point Likert scale graded with the frequency expressions in the range of “Always”, “Often”, “Sometimes”, “Rarely”, and “Never” and the highest score to be taken from the whole of the scale is 205 and the lowest score is 41. The higher scores in the social media addiction scale indicates higher social media addiction. Based on the total scores on social media addiction scale, the subjects are divided as “Not Addicted” if the scores range between 41-73, “Less Addicted” if the scores ranges between 74-106, “Moderately Addicted” if the scores ranges between 107-139, “Highly Addicted” if the scores ranges between 140-172, and “Severely Addicted” if the scores ranges between 173-205.

The Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) developed by Beck et al. in 1961, was chosen to measure depression in young and middle adults. Pretesting of the scale was done by the researcher on 30 subjects and the scale was found reliable. The BDI-II contains 21 items scored on a 4-point scale from 0 (symptom absent) to 3 (severe symptoms). Anxiety symptoms are not assessed but affective, cognitive, somatic and vegetative symptoms are covered. Scoring is achieved by adding the highest ratings for all 21 items. The minimum score is 0 and maximum score is 63. Higher scores indicate greater symptom severity. The subjects are divided based on the total score. Subjects are categorised as “Normal” if the scores range between 1-10, “Mild mood disturbances” if the scores range between 11-16, “Borderline clinical depression” if the scores range between 17-20, “moderate depression” if the scores range between 21-30, “Severe depression” if the scores range between 31-40, “Normal” if the scores range between 1-10, and “Extreme depression” if the scores are above 40.

All the scales and interview schedules were converted to google forms and the detailed purpose of the research and consent letter was sent along with the form. Detailed instructions to be part of study like age, gender and district were mentioned in the beginning and instructed to be a part of study if only they are eligible. The forms were circulated to the participants via different medias like e-mail, whatsapp, facebook, twitter etc. The data was collected, screened based on its eligibility criteria, and organised systematically to apply statistical analysis. The incomplete data was not included for the study. Frequency, percentages t-test and correlation were applied.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:**

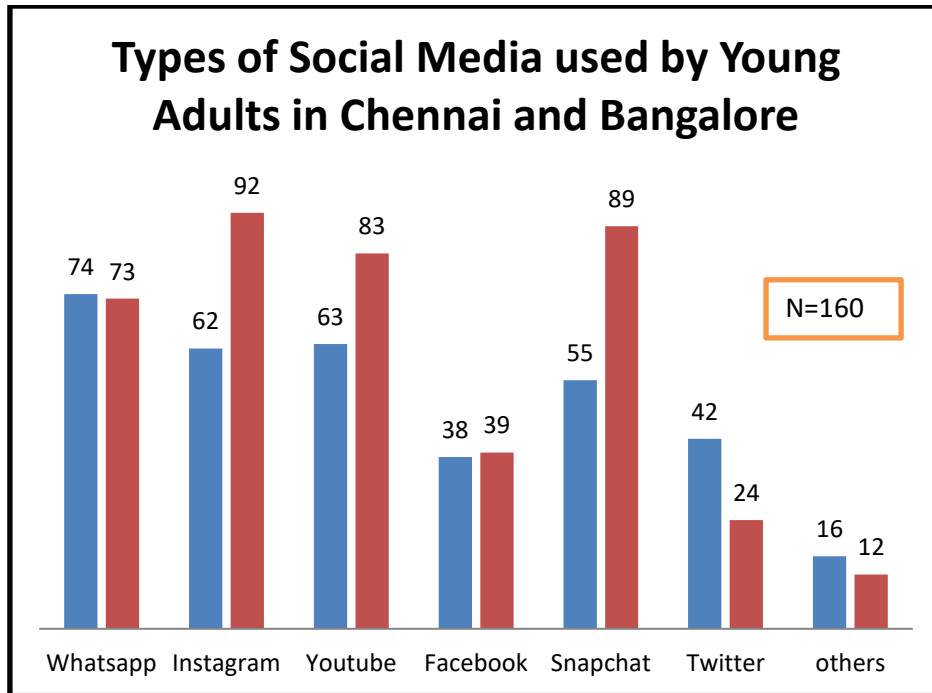
The data collected from both the cities through online mode was organized properly and subjected different statistical methods like frequency and percentages and tabulated as follows.

**Table 1: Demographic characteristics of sample from Chennai and Bangalore (N=320)**

Demographic characteristics	Categories	Chennai	Bangalore
		f (%)	f (%)
Age	18-40	80 (50.0)	80 (50.0)
	41-60	80(50.0)	80(50.0)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>160 (100.0)</b>	<b>160 (100.0)</b>
Gender	Male	80 (50.0)	80 (50.0)
	Female	80(50.0)	80(50.0)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>160 (100.0)</b>	<b>160 (100.0)</b>
Educational Qualification	School passed	3 (1.88)	2 (1.25)
	Undergraduate	55 (34.37)	50 (31.25)
	Postgraduate	56 (35.0)	66 (41.25)
	PHD	32 (20.0)	31 (19.38)
	Other	14 (8.75)	11 (6.87)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>160 (100.0)</b>	<b>160 (100.0)</b>
Occupational Status	Student	50 (31.25)	42 (26.25)
	Employed	58 (36.25)	58 (36.25)
	Unemployed	20 (12.5)	9 (5.63)
	Self-Employed	30 (18.75)	45 (28.12)
	Other	2 (1.25)	6 (3.75)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>160 (100.0)</b>	<b>160 (100.0)</b>

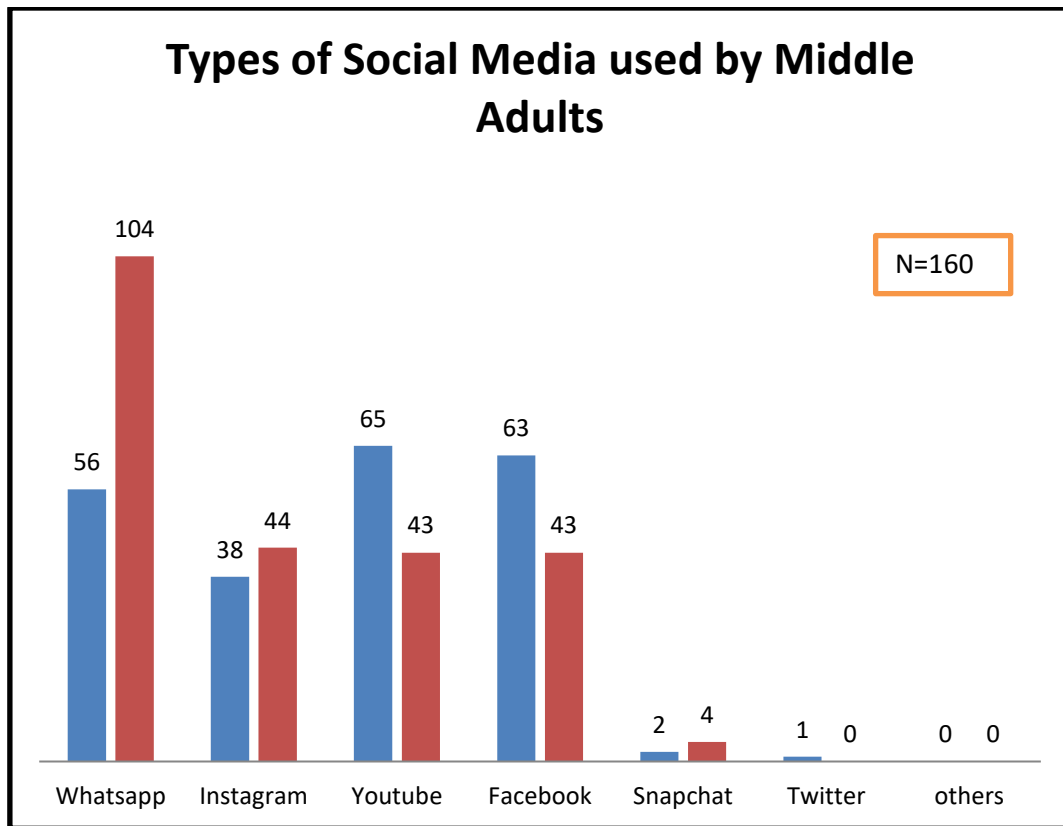
From table 1, it was found that the total sample was divided equally across age group, gender, and locality. Among the participants from Chennai, very few (1.88%) of them were school passed, followed by undergraduate (34.37%), postgraduates (35.0%), twenty per cent were Ph. D graduates and nearly nine per cent were either interns or doing business. Among the participants from Bangalore, very few (1.25%) of them were school passed, followed by undergraduates (31.25%), postgraduates (41.25%), thirty-one per cent were Ph. D graduates and only seven per cent were either interns or doing business. According to occupational status among participants from Chennai, thirty-one per cent were students, thirty-six per cent were employed, twelve per cent were unemployed, nineteen per cent were self-employed and very few (1.25%) of them were jobless, agriculturist or activists etc. Among participants from Bangalore, thirty-six per cent were employed, twenty-eight per cent were self-employed, twenty-six per cent were students, nearly six per cent were unemployed, and very few (3.75%) of them were jobless, agriculturist or activists etc.

**SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE IN YOUNG AND MIDDLE ADULTS FROM CHENNAI AND BANGALORE**



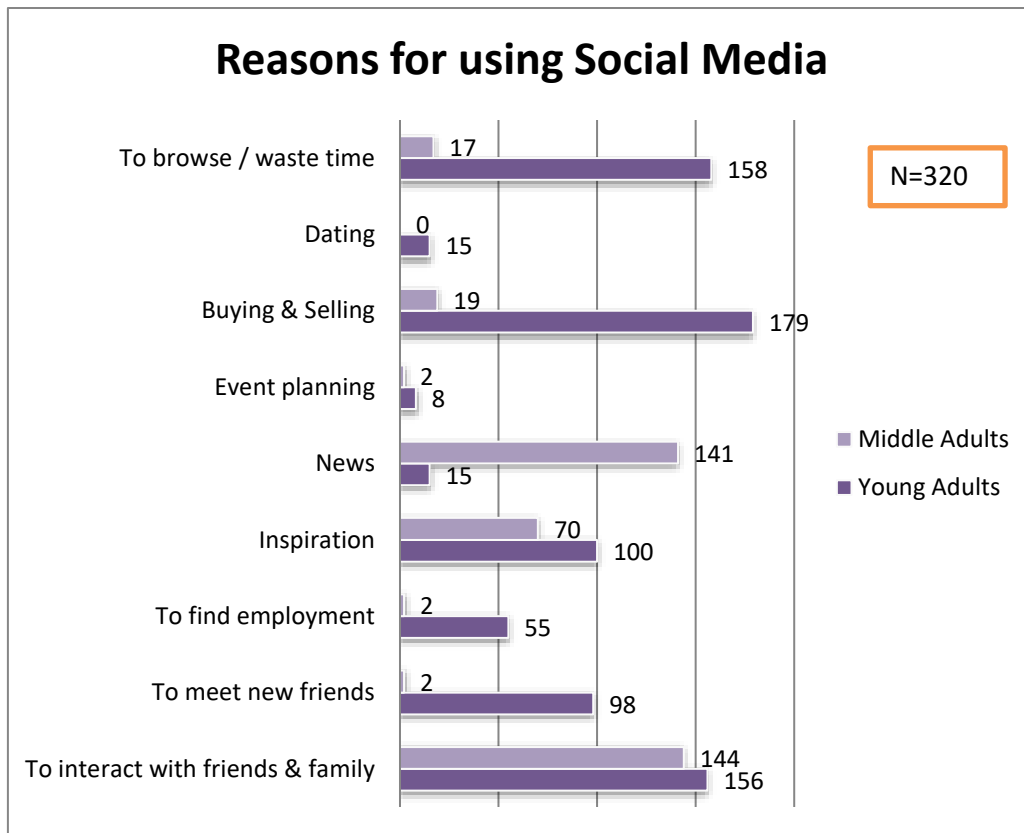
**Fig 1: Types of social media used by young adults of Chennai and Bangalore.**

Figure 1 illustrates the types of social media used by young adults in from Chennai and Bangalore. Instagram and snapchat are the most common apps used by young adults in Bangalore. It was followed by youtube, whatsapp, facebook, twitter and others. Whatsapp was most common social media used by young adults which was followed by youtube, Instagram, snapchat, twitter, facebook and other medias. Villanti 2016 found that among regular users of social media sites in 2016, the top five sites were Tumblr, Vine, Snapchat, Instagram, and LinkedIn.



**Fig 2: Types of social media used by middle adults from Chennai and Bangalore.**

Figure 2 illustrates the types of social media used by middle adults in Chennai and Bangalore. WhatsApp is the most common app used by middle adults in Bangalore which was followed by Instagram, Youtube, Facebook. Very few used the snapchat. Youtube and Facebook were commonly used by middle adults from Chennai which was followed by whatsapp, Instagram and snapchat.



**Fig 3: Reasons for using social media among Chennai and Bangalore participants**

Figure 3 illustrates the reasons for social media by young and middle adults in Chennai and Bangalore. Most of the young adults use social media for browsing, interact with friends and families, online shopping. While majority of the middle adults use social media for news.

From this, we can understand that social media is being used for various reasons but when young adults are compared with the middle adults, we can see that young adult spending more time to browse or to waste time.

**Assessment of social media addiction in Chennai and Bangalore**

**Table 2: Distribution of young and middle adults of Chennai by social media addiction level**  
**N=160**

	Young adults		Middle adults	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Not Addicted	9 (22.5%)	6 (15%)	6 (15%)	4 (10%)
Less Addicted	7 (17.5%)	7 (17.5%)	5 (12.5%)	6 (15%)
Moderately Addicted	23 (57.5%)	25 (62.5%)	27 (67.5%)	29 (72.5%)
Highly Addicted	0 (0.0%)	2 (5%)	2 (5%)	1 (2.5%)
Severely Addicted	1 (2.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
	40 (100.0%)	40 (100.0%)	40 (100.0%)	40 (100.0%)

Table 2 illustrates the distribution of young adults in Chennai according to social media addiction. Among males, fifty-seven point five per cent are moderately addicted, twenty-two point five per cent are not addicted, seventeen point five per cent are less addicted and two point five per cent are severely addicted and no one is highly addicted. Among females, nearly sixty-three per cent are moderately addicted, seventeen point five per cent are less addicted, fifteen per cent are not addicted and five per cent are highly addicted and no one is severely addicted in females. Monacis in 2017 found that young adults obtained the higher scores on social media addiction concluding that the young adults are more addicted to the social media than the adolescents.

In case of middle adults, sixty-eight per cent are moderately addicted, fifteen per cent are not addicted, twelve per cent are less addicted, five per cent are highly addicted and no one is severely addicted. Majority (72.5%) of them are moderately addicted, fifteen per cent are less addicted, ten per cent are not addicted, and two point five per cent are highly addicted and no one is severely addicted. No one is severely addicted among young adults in Chennai. Khoo 2020, found that older females spent the most time on Facebook making them more addicted to social media than males.



**Table 3: Distribution of young and middle adults of Bangalore by social media addiction level**  
**N=160**

	Young adults		Middle adults	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Not Addicted	3 (7.5%)	2 (5%)	3 (7.5%)	2 (5%)
Less Addicted	7 (17.5%)	9 (22.5%)	6 (15%)	3 (7.5%)
Moderately Addicted	22 (55%)	24 (60%)	25 (62.5%)	27 (67.5%)
Highly Addicted	7 (17.5%)	3 (7.5%)	4 (10%)	7 (17.5%)
Severely Addicted	1 (2.5%)	2 (5%)	2 (5%)	1 (2.5%)
	40 (100.0%)	40 (100.0%)	40 (100.0%)	40 (100.0%)

Table 3 illustrates the distribution of young and middle adults in Bangalore according to social media addiction. Among males, fifty-five per cent are moderately addicted, seventeen per cent are both less and highly addicted, which was followed by not addicted (7.5%) and only few (2.5%) of them are severely addicted. Among females, sixty per cent are moderately addicted, twenty-two point five per cent are less addicted, seven point five per cent are highly addicted and five per cent are both severely addicted and not addicted. Monacis 2017, found that young adult’s females obtained the higher scores concluding that the young adult females are more addicted to the social media than the adolescents.

Among middle adult males, sixty-two point five per cent are moderately addicted, fifteen per cent are less addicted, ten per cent are highly addicted, seven point five per cent are not addicted and only five per cent are severely addicted. Among females, sixty-seven point five per cent are moderately addicted, seventeen point five per cent are highly addicted, seven point five per cent are less addicted, five per cent are not addicted, and only two point five per cent are severely addicted. Khoo 2020, found that older females spent the most time on Facebook making them more addicted to social media than males.

**Assessment of depression in young and middle adults from Chennai and Bangalore**

**Table 4: Distribution of young and middle adults from Chennai by depression level.**

N=160

Categories	Young adults		Middle adults	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
No Depression	2 (5%)	4 (10%)	3 (7.5%)	2 (5%)
Normal	3 (7.5%)	5 (12.5%)	5 (12.5%)	2 (5%)
Mild Mood Disturbance	12 (30%)	12 (30%)	13 (32.5%)	2 (5%)
Borderline Clinical Depression	6 (15%)	3 (7.5%)	4 (10%)	3 (7.5%)
Moderate Depression	13 (32.5%)	11 (27.5%)	12 (30%)	21 (52.5%)
Severe Depression	3 (7.5%)	5 (12.5%)	2 (5%)	3 (7.5%)
Extreme Depression	1 (2.5%)	0	1 (2.5%)	1 (2.5%)
	40 (100.0%)	40 (100.0%)	40 (100.0%)	40 (100.0%)

Table 4 illustrates the distribution of young and middle adults from Chennai according to the level of depression. Among males, thirty-two per cent have moderate depression, thirty per cent has mild mood disturbance, fifteen per cent have borderline clinical depression, seven point five per cent each have no depression, are normal and have severe depression, five per cent have no depression, and two point five per cent are extremely depressed. Among females, thirty per cent have mild mood disturbance, twenty-seven point five per cent have moderate depression, twelve point five each are normal and have severe depression. Seven point five per cent have borderline clinical depression, and four per cent does not have depression. No one is severely depressed in young adult female. Haand 2020, found that depression was a strong predictor of social media addiction and the higher a student's addiction level, the higher his or her depression level.

Among middle adult males, thirty-two point five per cent have mild mood depression, thirty per cent have moderate depression, twelve point five per cent are normal, ten per cent have borderline clinical depression, seven point five have no depression, five per cent have severe depression, and two point five per cent are extremely depressed. Among females, fifty-two point per cent have moderate depression, seven point five each have either borderline clinical depression, or severely depressed. Remaining five per cent each are either normal, have no depression, or has mild mood disturbance. Only two point per cent are extremely depressed. Shensa, et. al. (2018) found that twenty-three per cent, thirty point one per cent, and six point nine per cent said they had mild, moderate, and extreme symptoms, respectively. However, there was no evidence of a correlation between active social media use and depression.

**Table 5: Distribution of young and middle adults from Bangalore by depression level.****N=160**

Categories	Young adults		Middle adults	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
No Depression	2 (5%)	3 (7.5%)	1 (2.5%)	3 (7.5%)
Normal	3 (7.5%)	4 (10%)	2 (5%)	2 (5%)
Mild Mood Disturbance	9 (22.5%)	14 (35%)	13 (32.5%)	20 (50%)
Borderline Clinical Depression	3 (7.5%)	2 (5%)	1 (2.5%)	3 (7.5%)
Moderate Depression	22 (55%)	13 (32.5%)	20 (50%)	8 (20%)
Severe Depression	1 (2.5%)	3 (7.5%)	2 (5%)	4 (10%)
Extreme Depression	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.5%)	1 (2.5%)	0 (0.0%)
	40 (100.0%)	40 (100.0%)	40 (100.0%)	40 (100.0%)

Table 5 illustrates the distribution of young and middle adults from Bangalore according to depression level. Among young males, fifty-five per cent have moderated depression, twenty-two point five per cent has mild mood disturbance, seven point five per cent each are either normal, or has borderline clinical depression. Five per cent has no depression only two point five per cent are severely depressed. Among females, thirty-five per cent have mild mood disturbance, thirty-two point five per cent have moderate depression, ten per cent are normal. Seven point five per cent either has no depression or they are severely depressed. Five per cent have borderline clinical depression. Two point five per cent are extremely depressed. Haand 2020, found that depression was a strong predictor of social media addiction and the higher a student's addiction level, the higher his or her depression level.

Among middle adult males, fifty-five per cent have moderated depression, thirty-two point five per cent has mild mood disturbance, five per cent each are either normal, or has severe depression. Two point five per cent has either no depression or extremely depressed.

Among females, fifty per cent have mild mood disturbance, twenty per cent has moderate depression, ten per cent are normal. Seven point five per cent either has no depression or they are severely depressed. Five per cent have borderline clinical depression. Two point five per cent are extremely depressed. Shensa, et. al. (2018) found that about a third of participants (39.50%) said they had no depressive symptoms, while twenty-three per cent, thirty point one per cent, and six point nine per cent said they had mild, moderate, and extreme symptoms, respectively. However, there was no evidence of a correlation between active social media use and depression.

## CONCLUSION:

Social media plays a very important role in today's life especially in young adults' and middle adults' life. Whatsapp and YouTube are the most common apps used by middle adults. Instagram, twitter and Snapchat are most commonly used by young adults. Facebook is most used by middle adults. Other social media apps include telegram, signal, Pinterest, Hike, and Discord which are used only by very few young adults. Majority of the young and middle adults are moderately addicted to social media and have mild to moderate depression. It is good to know that both in Chennai and Bangalore very few individuals are into severe social addiction and severe depression who requires immediate attention from the professionals. Intense intervention is required for these individuals. As moderate social media addiction and moderate depression also indicates that there is necessity to intervene these individuals to avoid them from reaching the severe stage of mental stage. Hence, intervention for both young and middle adults at family and community level is required.

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